

February 6, 2022

## Character 1-Kind

When Hunter Shamatt discovered that he had lost his wallet, he felt sick. Hunter was 20, and traveling on an airline from South Dakota to his sister's wedding in Las Vegas. He thought he must have dropped his wallet at the airport before boarding. Unfortunately his wallet not only had his ID, \$60 in cash, and his debit card, it also had a signed paycheck. And now he feared the worst.

Luckily, Todd Brown was the man who found his wallet. Todd mailed everything back later that month, and then some. Brown included a note that read: ***"Hunter, I found this on a Frontier flight from Omaha to Denver—wedged between the seat and wall. Thought you might want it back. All the best ... PS. I rounded your cash up to an even \$100 so you could celebrate getting your wallet back. Have fun!!!"***

Don't you just love a story like that!

You don't have to be a believer in God to recognize that being kind is a great character quality. We are going to look at some great character qualities in this series.

1. Kind
2. Loving
3. Gracious
4. Faithful

### 3 QUESTIONS FOR YOU:

1. Is there anyone here who would not like to be known for being kind, loving, gracious, and faithful?
2. If we are NOT known for these character qualities, can we change?
3. If so, how?

Good questions! Let's begin.

Let's begin: There is a way that we can change our character.

### I. Let the CHARACTER of God shape your CHARACTER

In this series we are going to learn how to catch the character of God through a personal and close relationship with him.

In “Systematic Theology” there is a technical phrase for the character attributes of God.

Incommunicable Attributes  
and  
Communicable Attributes

The character attributes of God that we can catch is not the first phrase but the second phrase, “the communicable attributes”.

**“Incommunicable” Attributes** = How God is completely different from us. **Examples:** God has existed for all eternity, we have not. God does not change, but we do. God is omnipresent, but we are present only in one place at one time. We are NOT like God in these attributes, these are uniquely His attributes.

**“Communicable” Attributes** = How we can be like God in some of his moral attributes. **Examples:** God is kind and loving, and we are able to be kind and loving as well. God has knowledge, and we are able to have knowledge as well. God is merciful, and we are able to be merciful as well. These are not unique attributes to God, he wants these attributes for us!

A communicable attribute is like a communicable disease. You can catch it, and you can spread it.

I hope I have made a “tricky” phrase more “sticky” for you. We can catch the character of God through a personal and close relationship with him.

## II. **Kindness is “COMMUNICABLE”**

Kindness is contagious. (like the story of the wallet) I was inspired by that!

Catch it and spread it! Experiencing kindness inspires us to be kind to someone else.

We are talking about the opposite principle of social distancing! With ongoing personalized intimacy with God, God's Character is "caught". You "get it" (and now you are infectious too!)

## **GOD INTENDS THIS AND EXPECTS THIS**

***Romans 2:4 (NIV)** Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that **God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?***

There is a principle here: There is an appropriate and inappropriate response to kindness!

Side note: Gratitude is the central nervous system to the life of faith...and it is the path to a joyful life.

God's kindness is intended to lead you to the appropriate response which is Repentance. Repentance is a "turning back to God" response because he is so kind.

Kindness is magnetic when properly received.

MORE examples of God's Kindness:

***Titus 3:4-5 (NIV)** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>s</sup> he saved us...*

***Ephesians 2:7 (NIV)** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

***Colossians 3:12 (NIV)** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with ... kindness ...*

***Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

**All of this sounds great, and yet...does kindness come naturally to you?** Before you answer that one, here's a little test:

As Jesus forgave, we are to forgive.

Is that kind of kindness natural to you!? Me neither. I'm quick to feel hurt, and nurse my wounds rather than quick to forgive.

HONESTLY: I'd hate to see my batting average in kindness.

In the BASEBALL world and in the CHURCH world, even good batters have low batting averages. We miss more kindness opportunities than we hit! Am I being pessimistic or realistic?

*Romans 3:12 (NIV) All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*"

**"All have turned away" from what?** All have turned away from God and the paths in which he asks us to walk, and the character qualities we are to catch and spread!

You can correctly say, **"All have turned away" ...from kindness.**

**Don't raise your hands for this next series of questions:**

How many of you have ever turned away from kindness in your actions, your words, or your thoughts? "Ever turned away from kindness"? That's a big question. Let's make it more relevant? How about last month? How many last week? Yesterday? This morning? Ok. Right now are you thinking kind thoughts toward me with these pointed questions?

**None of us bats 1000 in kindness.** What are we to do? Can we change? Can we improve our batting average? Here is the Good news: With help, yes we can!

### III. **We can improve our BATTING AVERAGE in kindness**

At the cross, Jesus made this possible for us. Because of His sacrifice for us taking away our sins, we can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the power of resurrection taking up residence in our lives!

*Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...*

Jesus makes kindness possible for us even in the most difficult circumstances, and with the most difficult people.

... (story?) ...

Heavenly Father,

Open our eyes to your kindness.

Help us to respond appropriately to your kindness...in repentance.

Forgive us and fill us with your Spirit, and the fruit of your Spirit.

Help us to overflow with your kindness.

Open our eyes to the opportunities to be kind to others.

We want a close personal relationship with you where we catch your kindness and spread it.

In Jesus Name and for his Honor, Amen

### SMALL TALK

1. In a world that is often unkind, where have you witnessed remarkable kindness?

### VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Luke 10:25-37.** Who was kind and who was not kind? What reasoning do you suppose the people who turned away from kindness used to justify their actions?
3. What question led Jesus to tell this story? Given the divisions between Jews and Samaritans (see John 4), what's unusual about the plot twist in this story?
4. Why did the Samaritan help this man? (10:33)
5. Knowing these tensions, what is the point of the story? (10:27 and 10:37)
  - Jesus told a story filled with tensions. It would be unusual for a priest or Levite to travel on this road less traveled by Jews for multiple reasons even though it was a short cut. One reason was that it went through Samaria. Another reason is that it was notorious for bandits posing as someone in distress.

### GETTING PERSONAL

6. Some say that “The number one enemy of kindness is busyness”. Is your life often too busy to take time to be kind?
7. Brainstorm with a friend, your family, or group, for little ways to practice kindness.
  - What do you do with street corner people asking for handouts? Why do you do this?

### **PRACTICE!**

8. Ask God to fill you with his Spirit and his “kindness” (Galatians 5:22) and help you raise your “batting average” in kindness.