

So You Want to Change the World?

Be Kind.

Introduction

"If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed." – Adm. Wm. H. McRaven

My Version: If you want to be like Jesus, start out by being nice.

This may sound obvious, but it is not.

- 80% of teenagers say achievement and happiness are more important than caring for others. [Harvard Study](#)
- Kindness more surprising and important than efficiency and cleverness. [HBR Story](#)

Big Question: Taking an honest look at your actions, what are the values that compete with kindness?

- Productivity
- Efficiency
- Time-Management
- Justice (That checkout person was slower than they should be, so I'm justified to be a grump.)
- Upward Mobility
- Status

| Self-preoccupation is the biggest obstacle we need to overcome in order to grow in kindness.

Our own schedules, our own needs, our own rights... too often they are at the forefront of our brains, distracting us from the needs of the people around us, and dulling us to the voice of Jesus and his ideas for any particular moment. And, don't we agree that his ideas are better than ours?

Kindness isn't passive. It's not neutral. It's active. It's a way of being toward other people. Not a way of thinking.

Definition: being friendly, generous, and considerate.



So You Want to Change the World?

Be Kind.

Embracing Everyday Interactions

Be willing to be “interrupted.” Consider that the person in front of you, just might be front and center on the mind of God. Put your phone down and make space for a “holy interruption.”

Biblical Text Options

Jesus tells us there is a different way to live.

Luke 6:31 – DO to others as you would have them do to you.

In this passage (v. 27-36), Jesus is talking about enemies. That is the context when he says “DO Good.” After all, what is so surprising about doing good, being kind, to those who are kind to you? That is nothing significant. But, to be kind, to do good, in situations when it is not expected or deserved, that is the way of Jesus. (Most religions say to avoid doing evil to another. Jesus says, do good. Love.)

Matthew 13 – Kingdom compared to a mustard seed; yeast mixed into dough, hidden treasure, a pearl. Small. Not seen as powerful. Upside-down, even. Think of the kingdom imagery his hearers were used to...military power, wealth, and palaces. Jesus way is different, and often the very beginning, is nearly invisible.

Application

How can we grow in “doing love”, “doing kindness”? The book offers several suggestions. But, my guess is many of you glossed over it. “I’ve got this”. But, do we really?

- Say hi
- Acknowledge those who are often overlooked
- Ask another question
- Do something small
- Say hi to the kid.

Story or example from leader/preacher which emphasizes doable kindness, and surprising impact.



So You Want to Change the World? Be Kind.

Closing

As you leave today ask these questions: God what holds me back from being a kinder, gentler person? Is there anyone in my neighborhood or circle of acquaintances for whom I can do some small kindness?

