

ESSENTIALS FOR A NEW YEAR

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. John 3:16 (CEV)

- **God** is essential to us.

...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'... Mark 12:30-31 (NLT)

- Love **God** completely and love **others** intentionally.
- **Love** is essential.
- God **measures** our lives by how we love.

God measures the **object** of our love by how we love.

If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. 1 John 4:20 (GNT)

God measures the **sincerity** of our love by how we love.

Dear children, we must show love through actions that are sincere, not through empty words. 1 John 3:18
...no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. 1 Corinthians 13:3 (MSG)
Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)
But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

- We experience **God** in the kindness of others because God is kind.

Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people. Philemon 1:7 (NLT)

Kindness

As an inner disposition:

- Kindness is the cheerful willingness to **care** for others.

As an Outward disposition:

- Kindness is the action of **doing for others** what I would want done for myself.

Do for others what you want them to do for you... Matthew 7:12 (GNT)

The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. Psalm 145:17

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:4-5

Action Step:

- Start believing that you will experience the **goodness of God** in your life.

- God's kindness is not based on **your** goodness.

I tell you, **love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return.** You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. **Our Father is kind; you be kind.** Luke 6:35-36 (MSG)

You (God) are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation. Psalm 145:9 (CEV)

Developing Kindness:

- The kindness of God is shaped by **the Spirit of God** in us.

But **the Holy Spirit** produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**...

Galatians 5:22-23

The action steps:

- Remove any **attitudes** that would prevent kindness towards others.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. **Instead, be kind to each other,** tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesian 4:31-32 (NLT)

Another Action Step is this:

- Act like the God within you not the **people** around you.

When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, **we answer kindly.** 1 Corinthians 4:12-13 (NIV)

A kind answer soothes angry feelings, but harsh words stir them up. Proverbs 15:1 (CEV)

- Kindness is expressed when we really **care** about others.

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. **Strength is for service, not status.** Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out....Romans 15:1-3 (MSG)

Action Steps:

Recognize their **needs**.

Seek to **understand** them.

Do **what we can**.

Action Step:

- Come up with **one person** you can show kindness to.



TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- How are you doing with your fast? How is your prayer time?
- Why is God essential to you?
- Have you ever experienced the kindness of God through others? Explain the impact that had on you.
- Do you believe that God is benevolent to all? Do you believe that you will experience the goodness of God?
- How do we allow God's Spirit to shape kindness in us? Why do we need to deal with the attitudes that undermine kindness? What are some of those attitudes?
- Do you find that it is easier to act like the people around you rather than the God within you? Explain.
- What are some ways we can recognize the needs of others?
- How do we seek to understand what they are going through? Why is this important?
- Caring for others requires action. Is there one person that God has laid on your heart that needs your kindness?

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