

1. Kindness.
 - a. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.
 - i. This is the idea that God wants us to be nice (kind), happy, and feel good about ourselves (Kendra Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*).
 1. We believe God is patiently waiting for us to call on Him so that He can intervene in our lives when we need Him.
 2. We worship God to feel good about ourselves and live in kindness because God wants that.
 - b. Uprightness.
 - i. Uprightness in one's relations with others, uprightness—do what is good. The quality of being helpful or beneficial, goodness, kindness, generosity. [William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1090.]
 1. I love the first definition: having a right relationship with each other.
 2. 1 Corinthians 11:17–21: “But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk.”
 - a. Cliques (divisions) drive a wedge between groups of people; it is not having a right relationship with each other.
 - b. The church at Corinth was using the Lord's Supper as a means of their selfish enjoyment, not as a memorial of the Savior's sacrifice. It was an example of a wrong relationship with each other.
 - c. They were not being kind to one another.
 - ii. God wants us to be kind, doesn't He?
 1. Yes, of course, He does. This kindness (or love) shows others that God loves and cares about them.
 2. This kindness is what leads people to repentance.
 - a. I want us to hear that--God's kindness leads to repentance.
 - b. The end of Romans 1 is a list of sinful behaviors. If people live a settled, practiced lifestyle of these sinful behaviors, God's wrath will come upon them.
 - c. Romans 1:24–27: “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one

another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

- d. Romans 1:28–32: “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”
 - e. Romans 2:1–6: “Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works:”
 - f. There is a lot of heavy teaching in these few verses. Paul opens this letter with some hard truths for the church in Rome (and for us).
 - g. But I am not focused on the sinful behavior; I am focused on God’s kindness.
 - c. I’ll repeat what I said earlier: God’s kindness leads to repentance.
2. Love God
- a. Kindness, or loving one another, is the second of the two commandments.
 - i. Mark 12:30–31: “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
 - ii. The first commandment is to love God.
 - iii. Loving God is the cause of our kindness.
 - iv. 1 John 4:19–21: “We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
 - v. Do we see how loving God is wrapped around loving each other?
 - vi. To love God, we must love each other.
 - b. The Gospel
 - i. The Gospel is so much more than just God’s kindness.
 - 1. The Gospel is a loving God who sacrificed His only (unique) son so that we would be redeemed.
 - 2. The Gospel is the Almighty putting on flesh and walking among His creation to experience all we suffer (and more) so that He could be our Great High Priest.

3. The Gospel is breaking the bonds of death; Jesus resurrected so that we could meet Him in the air when He comes to claim us.
 4. The Gospel is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; our bodies are the dwelling place of God.
- ii. Our response to the Gospel.
1. Romans 12:1–2: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
 - a. Living and sacrifice are opposites.
 - b. To sacrifice something, you kill it.
 - c. We kill our selfish desires and live for Christ.
 - d. Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
 2. We must desire to look more like Christ, to be transformed into the image of Him, and to suffer for the Gospel as he suffered.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:20–23: “For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
 - b. This is what it means to follow Christ and be a Christian.
 - c. To walk in the steps of Jesus, giving of ourselves, suffering while we serve others, glorifying God with every step.
3. Be Kind!
- a. Kindness is the fruit of the Spirit.
 - b. We must love one another.
 - c. And we must love God!