



BREAKING THE ICE

Do you have a go to thanksgiving (stretchy pants) outfit? If so, what is it?

If you had to choose one Thanksgiving dish to eat every day for the rest of your life what would it be and why?

MAIN CONTENT

This week Pastor Drew finished our series on what the world needs now by talking about kindness. Kindness is about how we treat people and a reflection of what we do.

1. Who is the kindest person you know? What characteristics do they have that makes them the kindest person?

Kindness can best be represented in friendship. Characteristics of kindness are pleasing, honest, compassionate. Some of our best friendships that exemplify honesty and compassion are from our childhood when we aren't as worried about what others think.

2. What is the longest friendship you have with someone? What makes that friendship so unique?

Today, we have lots of "friends" but most of these friendships aren't the deep rooted relationships God wants us to have; the friendships where we are completely vulnerable and rooted in caring for one another deeply. These types of friendships come from the Holy Spirit guiding us to honest, Godly relationships in our lives.

Pastor Drew told a story about how friendship has played out in his life. He was hurt by relationships in his life at a young age. Therefore; he doesn't let too many people get relationally close enough to hurt him.

When asked the question, "who are the close friends in your life who you could really hurt you?" Drew only had one person to list. God doesn't desire hurt for us but He does desire deep, spiritual connections for us in the form of friendships and we can't have those if we don't let people get close to us.

3. If you were to look at the friendships currently in your life, which of them—if any—are close enough to really hurt you by something they did or said? (No pressure to name names, but give it some deep thought.)

Many of us keep others at arms length so we do not get hurt. We only go so “deep” in our friendships with others. When we find out our commonality only goes so far, and things are harder to agree on, we give up. But friendship is hard work and it’s worth fighting for.

Read John 15: 9-13

In these verses we see Jesus describe friendship. The first way He describes it is sacrificial loyalty. If we want to get to the soul level of relationships, we have to be so loyal that it costs you something. True kindness in friendships make time for one another, even when it’s not convenient.

4. What relationship in your life (if any) show true sacrificial loyalty?

The next thing we see in these verses is Jesus describing friendship is vulnerable transparency. This means you can tell your friends anything and know that they will love you and give you an honest answer back. This kind of transparency allows you to feel known. There are no secrets when it comes to true friendship, we are honest because that is the kind thing to do.

5. Where or with whom have you experienced vulnerable transparency in your life?

Vulnerable transparency can require some risk but the risk is worth it for growth. When we are honest with others and can accept their truth as feedback we can grow as a person.

A true friend always lets you in (vulnerable transparency) and tried not to let you down (sacrificial loyalty).

6. Do you find it easier to have vulnerable transparency or sacrificial loyalty in your relationships? Explain.

We need to bring vulnerable transparency and sacrificial loyalty to our friendships. But we have to start with having relationships with people who aren't exactly like us.

Pastor Drew said, “You can have a wildly different world views, passions, hobbies, experiences, desires but if you have the same experience of Jesus you can have a deep and meaningful friendship.”

7. What is one friendship you have where your views and passions are different but the friendship is still strong? What makes the friendship remain strong?

It's so important that we don't see each other for our differences but that we are all saved by Jesus and in need of his grace every day.

For single people: In order to live out kindness in friendships, we have to bring friendship back to the center of relationship between men and women. In other words, don't just befriend someone of the opposite sex because you think they are attractive. Spend time with the people around you and if a relationship comes from it great. If not, you have made a new friend, and that's a good thing.

We have to bring friendship back to the center of our relationship with God. Jesus came to the earth as a man and had friendships with the people of this earth. He walked with people, shared meals with them and ultimately died for all of us. What better act of kindness and friendship can there be? Jesus is our ultimate friend and we should fully embrace Him.

8. What makes it easy or difficult to fully embrace Jesus as your friend?

CLOSING PRAYER

God thank you for showing us what kindness looks like through the context of relationships. Open our eyes to how we need to see Jesus as our ultimate friend. Show us how to have vulnerable transparency and sacrificial loyalty in our friendships. Give us the strength and guidance to where we need to open our hearts to new friendships you have for us. Help us view our friendships in the eyes of you, giving grace to where we don't agree and help us show love, kindness and mercy to those friendships in our lives. In your name, Amen.

ACTION STEP

Take account of the friendships in your life. Send a note, text or letter to those friendships who you can have vulnerable transparency and sacrificial loyalty with. Let them know how much their friendship means to you.

Pray and ask God about the friendships in your life. Ask Him to show you the relationships you need to invest more time into and which ones you need to let go of. Ask Him to bring people into your life that can help you grow in your friendship with Him and others.