

# **Kindness and Truth**

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This week I read a book that I was very disappointed in. It was a children's book my daughter got from the library. The plot was fine; the action was good. What disappointed me was the theme of the book.

The theme, or message, of the book was that sometimes you have to say unkind things to be honest, or say untrue things to be kind. The case was presented of a young man apprenticed to an old woman, wrinkled and gray. At the end of a year of service, she asked him if she was ugly. In kindness, he could not bring himself to say that she was, and so failed the test of truth. Truth was presented as simply being truth, not caring about kindness or unkindness, or good or evil. Many people in this world use this kind of thinking: using honesty as an excuse to be cruel, or kindness as an excuse to lie.

Well, brothers and sisters, the Lord has blessed me by bringing a lot of old people into my life. And when I think of their love and care, their gentleness toward me, and firmness in the scriptures, you cannot convince me that any of them were ugly, even if they were wrinkled and gray.

I hope in this article, with God's help, to destroy (or prevent) in your mind this notion that honesty can be unkind or kindness untrue.

First of all, kindness and truth go hand in hand because both come from God.

In John 17:17, when Jesus was praying to God, He said, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*" We also see in I John 4:8 that God is love, "*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*" They both come from God. They must work together.

The definition of love includes both kindness and truth. I Cor. 13:4-6, "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*"

Notice how often mercy and truth are connected in the scriptures. Prov. 3:3, "*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:*

*bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:*". And John 1:17, *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."* Mercy and grace are definitely kind, and are connected to truth constantly in the scriptures.

On the other hand, lies do not spring from kindness. The Bible tells us the motivation for lies is hate. Prov. 26:28, *"A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."* Verses 24-26, *"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation."* We cannot use kindness as an excuse for lying.

Neither can we use honesty as an excuse to be mean. Before we call anyone names, we need to remember that God made that person in His image. James 3:8-10, *"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."* If we are calling someone "ugly" or "stupid" or other mean names, we are in effect calling God these things, because we are created in His image. Can we in honesty call God names? No, of course not. Then we cannot in honesty call other people names, either.

The desire to be mean to others is known as malice, not honesty. And malice is something we are to put out of our lives. Eph. 4:31-32, *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Often people blurt out the first thing that comes to their mind, even if it is cruel, and call it being honest, or speaking their mind. In reality it is being hasty with our tongue. Prov. 29:20, *"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him."* To think through our words is not dishonest. It is righteous, and is what we are commanded to do. Prov. 15:28, *"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil"*

things.” James 1:19, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:”.

Yes, there are occasionally unpleasant truths to be spoken, even rebuke and discipline. Yet even these should be dealt with in as kind a manner as possible, thinking them through, and given for the other person’s benefit.

2 Tim. 4:2, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Longsuffering and doctrine require both thinking your words through, and using those words for the other person’s benefit. Notice Col. 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” Even when the truth is unpleasant, our speech is to be with grace.

So, hopefully we’ve proven our point: that we cannot use honesty as an excuse to be mean, or kindness as an excuse to lie. Kindness and truth work together if we live our lives after God’s ways.

Let’s close with the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:12, often referred to as the golden rule: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

In Jesus Name,  
Bro. Terry Warford





