

Be A Revolutionary Mom

Parenthood- Part 1

May 8, 2011 (Mother's Day)

Andy Wirt (andy@clearviewgrace.com)

Ladies- we honor you today! What a special day- an opportunity to thank, show appreciation to and highlight some of the unsung heroes of our culture.

Today- we lift up moms! Thank you for who you are and all you do. You shape lives. You have one of the most important roles in society. Our homes, schools, communities, our country and the world would not be the same without you. I hope that today you feel special...that you are celebrated...and that today stands out for you as a day you are treasured here and in your family.

But, I always want Mother's Day to be more than just celebrating ladies who have children. I want today to be a day where we celebrate women in general. There's no other day for that...so I say- *let's celebrate all ladies on Mother's Day*. I remember the three years we were desperately trying to have a child before Seth was conceived. Mother's Days were painful reminders of our infertility at the time.

Ladies- whatever you are experiencing today- I want you to feel special. Maybe you're grieving because you are missing your mom today. Maybe you feel like you weren't the mom you wish you would have been. Maybe you're not a mom. I just want you to know you are special because God made you a woman.

Ladies- do you realize the power you have? Are you aware of the influence you wield in your home, in your workplace, and your community? I think of my wife—she is so important to our family. Not only does she have her own dreams...but she has complete power over whether I can live mine as her husband. Not only does she have her own dreams, but she will be a key player in whether our 4 children discover their dreams and live them.

Think about the power women have to set the atmosphere around them. You've heard the saying that we all should be thermostats, not thermometers. Thermometers gauge the temperature. They tell us what it is—but thermostats set the temperature. Ladies, you have the power to set the emotional temperature in your home. I'm guessing your home is like mine—you've heard the saying—*If mamma's not happy... no one is happy!* That's true in my house. Ladies- do you ever realize how your husband and your children will play off your happiness...your optimism...your kindness...or your grouchiness...depression... *You get the point!*

Ladies- I could go on and on... but we celebrate you today for how special you are and the incredibly important role God has given you in our homes and society. **Bible reading passages for this week on GREAT WOMEN!**

All this week I kept asking myself two questions. *One, what is the hallmark of a great mother?* And two, *What's the greatest gift you could give a mother for Mothers' Day?* I kept coming up with the same answer. **Kindness**. It's the hallmark of a great mother – kindness. And it's the greatest thing you could do for your mother – be kind to her.

Colossians 3:12

¹² *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, **kindness**, humility, gentleness, and patience.*

What does kindness mean? Kindness is goodness of heart. In fact, in many places, the KJV translates “kindness” as “goodness”. But, “kindness” is also “goodness of heart” *that is shown...* goodness of heart that is acted upon! **Kindness is love in action. It’s something that you do.** Circle “**practice**”. It’s practical help. It’s love in action.

Today is Mother’s Day, but kindness isn’t just for mothers. The Bible says all people chosen by God...all those that have experienced the richness of God’s love and the kindness of God’s salvation...should show mercy, should demonstrate kindness, should act in humility, gentleness and patience.

I want to suggest four words that describe how we can become people that are more kind: We need to be sensitive. We need to be supportive. We need to be straightforward. And, we need to be spontaneous.

1. BE SENSITIVE

Tune in. Become aware of the needs around you. Paul teaches us in Philippians 2:3-5, ³ *Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.* ⁴ **Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.**

⁵ *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

The Message:

*Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. **Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.***

We want to learn to think of others as so important that we think of their situations, their needs, their emotions as being more important than our own. We have to learn to get out of our own selves- our own tasks, our own fears, our own problems, our own relationships... to see what is going on in others’ lives. Paul is saying- it’s not just about you. You have to take an interest in them as well. Put yourself aside...forget yourself long enough to help someone else.

Listen to Romans 12:15: ¹⁵ *Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.* Paul is saying: *Be aware of how others around you are feeling...how they are doing.* Look for clues. Listen to their words. See a smile- ask what is going well today. See a tear...care enough to see what’s wrong. Be aware. If you care, you’ll be aware. Two things about this point:

1) *Everybody is having a tough time.* Everybody sitting around you is having a tough time, just in different areas.

Illustration:

Chamber Board- speaking before Chamber Board meeting about the challenges of starting your own business. It ebbs and flows. There are down times. Friend- *I am in one of those now...*

(BC)- speaking after Chamber Board meeting about difficult times he is going through.

Seth- connecting around challenges with moving.

2) *The number one cause that keeps us from being kind is busyness.* When I get too busy, I don't have time to be kind. I'm the least kind to my wife, to you, and to strangers. When I have my agenda, my goals, my desires, my thing – I've got to do what I've got to do and I don't have time to be kind.

Illustration:

This last week we moved. I have found myself being short with those around me. Yet, as we've started to recover, I was able to build some margin in this week. The only reason I connected with my Chamber board friend was because I got to the meeting early and we chatted as we were getting coffee. I talked with another friend for 45 minutes after the meeting. I was actually on my way to my car and I felt prompted to go back and ask him how he was doing. We prayed together right there in the corporate headquarters of Travel Solutions here in New Albany.

Application:

If I were to ask you, *What are the three greatest emotional needs of the people closest to you this last week?*, would you be able to answer? Kindness starts with a way of looking, be aware, and be sensitive. If you care, you'll be aware.

Who can you be sensitive to this week? Who do you know that needs you to take the time and find out how they are really doing?

My problem is that sometimes I feel so busy and so overwhelmed with tasks, that I forget that I need to be sensitive to those around me. I forget that Jesus wants me to be kind more than he wants me to be able to cross things off of my "to do list." Work with me this week on taking the time to be sensitive to those around you.

2. BE SUPPORTIVE

Be supportive in your speech and in the way you talk to people. Proverbs 15:4 reads, *"⁴ Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit."*

The Message:

⁴ Kind words heal and help; cutting words wound and maim.

Do you remember how ruthless kids were on the playground when you went to school? They'd exploit every weakness, rub in every failure, and go for the jugular. You'd be hurt, you'd go home and your big brother would say, "Sticks and stones may break your bones but words [or names] will never hurt you." That old saying is one of the biggest lies ever passed down through time! It is simply not true. A broken bone heals faster than a broken spirit. The Bible says *"Kind words bring life but cruel words crush your spirit."* Our words have a great power to heal or to hurt.

So how much do you support people with your words? Are you an encourager or are you a discourager? Do you lift people up or do you put them down? Do you give them strokes or pokes? Do you nag or do you brag on your children? If God had a contest and said, *"I'm going to give you a dollar for every kind word you said this last year. I'm going to take away a dollar for every critical word or negative word you said this last year."* **Would you be rich or poor?**

Some of us would be in the hole! When you belittle people, when you put them down-you are *being little!*

Instead of being little by belittling people, Ephesians 4:29 commands us to “²⁹ *Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*”

The Message:

²⁹*Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.*

Being supportive is not just about how you speak...but what conversations you allow yourself to be a part of. I believe this verse guides us in how we should speak, but also gives us good guidelines for what kinds of conversations we should participate in.

Application:

Do you ever realize how much your kids are watching you? It is not just how you speak to your children...but it is just as important how your kids observe you speaking about your spouse...or your co-workers...or your neighbors... How about it? Do your words tend to build up and benefit, or criticize and tear down?

Is there anyone in your family or at work that you need to apologize to for your words?

Who is it that you can support with your words this week? Who do you know that is doing something well, or who is trying hard to accomplish something, or who means a lot to you that you could just pour words of life and encouragement on this week? Put a name in your application space in your outline!

Illustration:

How Full Is Your Bucket? Share principle...

3. BE STRAIGHTFORWARD

Sometimes kindness means being candid and frank, leveling with people, telling them where they’re blowing it, where they’re making the mistake. Proverbs 27:5-6 says, ⁵ *An open rebuke is better than hidden love!* ⁶ *Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.*

Have you seen the bumper sticker: “*Real friends don’t let friends drive drunk*”? It’s true. A genuine friend will say, “*You’re blowing it. I’m not about to let you do this. You’re making the biggest mistake of your life.*” A real friend doesn’t say, “*It’s none of my business.*” **If you’re a friend it is your business.** Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is level with the person and tell them exactly what they’re doing wrong.

When you go to a doctor, do you want him to lie to you or do you want him to be straightforward? Do you want him to say, “*You’ve got to have surgery or you’ll die*”? Or do you want him to say, “*It’s no big deal, you might get well on your own. Relax...and think positive*”? Sometimes the surgeon has to cut you. And sometimes you have to hurt a person in order to heal a person. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is just level with people and tell them the truth. It’s far less kind to overlook a problem that you know is destroying somebody’s life.

A few years ago Dr. James Dobson wrote a book entitled Love Must Be Tough. Sometimes love must be tough. Sometimes you have to say, “*I’m not going to stand for it any more. I’m not going to set by in silence and watch you destroy your marriage.*” Or, sometimes you have to say, “*I love you, and I need to tell you that you are making the wrong decision!*” It is possible to tell someone that you dearly love them, but also that they are doing something that is against the will of God for their life. Some of us need to care enough about our relationships to take a risk and get mad... to take a risk and confront those whom we know are making sinful choices. Kindness is love in action- and love in action is often straightforward.

“*An open rebuke is better than hidden love!*” Care enough to confront. Care enough to confront that child. That mate, that friend, that employee. Don’t let them just die on their own out there. If you’re going to be a kind person you need to be sensitive and you need to be supportive and you need to be sympathetic and you need to be straightforward.

Illustration:

Application:

Is there someone you know who needs a loving rebuke? Is there anyone who you know you should talk truthfully to, but you have been putting it off? Perhaps the way you could be most kind to that individual is be straightforward!

4. BE SPONTANEOUS

Don’t wait to do a kind act. When you’ve got time to do it, do it. Do it now. Galatians 6:10 says, “¹⁰ *Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*” Circle “whenever we have the opportunity”. When should I be kind? The answer is obvious- you should be kind whenever you see a need.

We’ve all done this. Have you ever had someone do something for you that was real nice and thought, “I need to write that person a thank you note,” but you put it off and put it off and finally it’s been so long since they did it and you’re embarrassed to write it so you forget it? Or a phone call? Or you move into the neighborhood and you know you need to meet the neighbors, when you first move in or they’ve just moved in. Two years later, you still haven’t met the neighbors and now you’re embarrassed.

Opportunities to show kindness do not last. *We have to seize the moment.* You must do it now as you have the opportunity. Opportunities for kindness pass quickly. I guess what I’m saying is *give roses while people can smell them.* Husbands, a single rose given to your wives now is much more worthwhile than an entire elaborate bouquet at the funeral. It doesn’t make much sense then. Give roses while people can smell them.

When you have the opportunity, be spontaneous in expressing kindness. When it comes to kindness, good intentions don't count. Like horseshoes – close doesn't count. *"I've been meaning to do something kind for my wife/husband/parents/that teacher/that worker/that employer/that boss/that secretary.... I've been meaning to."* When are you going to do it? *"I'm aimin' to."* **Well, when are you going to pull the trigger?** Do it now.

If you walk out of this service and you have the slightest inclination to reach out and touch someone (call your mother today) do it. Be spontaneous as we have the opportunity.

The classic example of this from the Bible is the Good Samaritan. When he saw the need – the man had been beaten and robbed, mugged. His clothes were taken. He was battered. He was laying alongside of the road. Two religious leaders passed by him and did nothing. But, the Good Samaritan saw a need. He immediately stopped. He met the need. He was spontaneous. He didn't think twice. He responded immediately. He picked up the guy, bandaged him up, took him down to the nearest Holiday Inn, gave them his American Express card and said, "I'll cover the bills for him, I'll be back later." Would you do that? For a total stranger? Contrast that with the two religious guys who saw the guy in pain but instead of offering assistance, they calculated, "Is this tax deductible? I'd like to do it if I can somehow count it on my income tax." Contrast the spontaneity of the Good Samaritan with the gold calculating attitude of the priest who said, "I did my duty at the Temple. I gave at the office. I'm on my way home." Or, "It's not my fault he got hurt." It's not your fault, but you can help him out. "I might get robbed. I might get hurt myself if I stop and help that guy."

You might. **Kindness always costs.** There's always a price tag to kindness. The Good Samaritan paid the bill for this guy. It's not just a free thing.

But as I said earlier, *I believe the number one enemy of kindness is busyness.* We get so busy we don't have time for anything except our own personal agenda. I hear people say all the time, *"I'm too busy to serve. I'm too busy to have a ministry."* Let me be straightforward with you because I love you and I love God's work... **Then you're too busy.** You're out of God's will. You're out of balance. Life involves blessing yourself and that comes by blessing others.

1 Peter 4:10

¹⁰ *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Who can you be kind to this week? If we look around us, there are people everywhere that are discouraged, hurting, and bleeding. Sometimes we just need to open our eyes.

How about at home? Is it possible that this week you could just possibly be a little bit kinder to your wife/husband/children? Do an act of kindness. Spend some time with them. How many divorces could have been prevented by kindness? A lot of them could. Just common courtesy being kind to people

How about at work? Who is that person that just gets under your skin who could use an act of kindness this week? How about the new worker at work who always seems lost? You could show kindness by standing with them, helping them through the next three or four months.

Who is that person that is continually unkind to you? How about if you try being kind to him/her. When people are unkind to others- it could be because they've never experienced kindness. In my experience it is almost always true that *hurting people hurt people*.

How about at church? Do you speak to people you don't know? You see someone who is obviously new here- do you reach out to them? Do you ever sit by somebody you don't know and talk to them, give them a handshake, a hug, a word of encouragement? Churches that are cliques aren't healthy and they don't grow.

How about that friend who doesn't know Jesus Christ? The kindest thing you could do with somebody is share your faith with him or her. Perhaps you need to be straightforward about your faith! You might just make a friend for life. Tell them that God loves them. That's the kindest thing you can do.

Why am I talking about kindness this morning? Because the Christian life is a life of kindness. The Bible tells us in Titus 3:4-5, ⁴ *But—“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.* ⁵

God expressed His kindness to us in Jesus. Jesus Christ is the kindness of God! Jesus is the kindness of God incarnate, in flesh, in person, in a body. If you're ever going to be like Jesus Christ, you've got to learn to be kind. The mark of Christ-likeness is kindness. Love in action.

The Romans in the Roman Empire used to confuse two Greek words – *Christos* which means Christ, Christian, and the word *chrestos* which means kind. They were always confusing Christians and kindness. I can't think of a better confusion. I can't think of two words that ought to be synonymous. To be a Christian is to be a kind person. That's what it's all about.

Couple of projects:

1. Do you know that Jesus Christ is the kindness of God to you? God has given you something you don't deserve- His Son, Jesus Christ, who did in your place and paid the penalty for your sins. All you have to do is accept God's free gift of grace and ask Jesus to be the forgiver and leader of your life! Today is the day to acknowledge God's kindness and accept it!
2. **Exit out of a non-supportive conversation.**
3. I challenge you to find a place to serve. Find a place where you can give out, give back. Where you can say, "This is what I'm going to do, not because I get anything out of it. I just do it as an act of kindness." Is there anything you're doing like that for the Lord? Just out of an act of kindness?
4. Then, this week, I want you to do seven secret "Random Acts of Kindness." This week, do 7 acts of kindness for people around you and don't tell them who did it. Don't even hint. "*Honey, did you notice the flowers?*" ... "*Did you notice the bathroom was clean?*" ... "*Did you notice the car was washed?*" ... "*Did you notice that you went out shopping for three hours and the baby's diaper had actually been changed?*" Do seven acts of kindness and don't tell anybody. Get your joy from the Lord.
5. **Share your experiences with a friend.**