

Intentional Acts of Kindness

Week 3 | Hands

BOTTOM LINE

God calls us out of our comfort zone, beyond the walls of our churches and homes, to live a life of impact with people.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This week we examine how to make a difference in our communities.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:36-43; James 2:14-18; 1 John 3:16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Share:** When was the last time you found yourself out of your comfort zone? Share the experience. How did you react in response to being uncomfortable?
2. In week 1 of this series we asked God to give us eyes to see as He does. In week 2 we looked at the conditions of our hearts, and how important it is to have a yielded heart to God before we move forward with any action or service in our lives. Now we look at leaving comfort in order to live a life of impact. What are different ways we can become too comfortable in life?
3. **Read Acts 9:36-43 and Discuss:** In this passage a woman named Tabitha, who was well known for doing good and helping the poor, got sick and died. Peter watched Jesus raise people from the dead, but this is the first account of Peter doing it himself.
 - a. It's probably safe to assume that Peter was a little out of his comfort zone even though he was given the promise by Jesus to perform miracles in His name. What do you think Peter might have been feeling?
 - b. This is the only time in the Bible we read about Tabitha. She wasn't famous, but she spent her life helping "the least of these". Why did Peter risk his comfort zone to see if he could perform this miracle?
4. **Read James 2:14-18 and Discuss:** James calls us to stop talking about our faith and start putting it into action.
 - a. Do you believe that actions speak louder than words? Why is faith accompanied by action?
 - b. Can you think of a time in your life that you did not put your faith into action? Perhaps you felt a nudge to do something and you didn't act on it. How did you feel?
 - c. James does not say that deeds are required for faith, he says that real faith will always have good deeds. If it's not a genuine faith, then good deeds won't follow. Have you ever tried to explain faith without evidence? Is faith easier to describe when people see it?
5. Amazing stories begin with stepping outside of our comfort zones. This could be true for everyday life, and also for our spiritual life. What do you wish you could get the courage to do?

If we aren't willing to get "uncomfortable" and move out of our "comfort zones" when God asks us to do something we will miss the adventurous life of blessing and excitement God has for each of us.



TRY THIS

1 John 3:16 (NIV) says, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." God loves and serves us by giving His life away, now we are called to pass it on. What could your life look like if you lived like this? Dream about it. Pray and ask God to speak to you about how He wants you to move.

Intentional Acts of Kindness

Week 2 | Heart

BOTTOM LINE

To move forward with our faith we must first take a look at the condition of our hearts. Before we can live a life of greatness, many of us need spiritual heart surgery.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. This week we examine times when we cannot be moved emotionally and spiritually, and only God can heal our "hard hearts".

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 51:10-17; Proverbs 4:23, Ezekiel 36:26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Share:** It can be pretty frustrating to drive in stop and go traffic, but have you ever been in complete gridlock? Share your worst traffic story! How did you feel? How did that affect your day?
2. **Read Psalm 51:10-17 and Discuss:** This Psalm was written by David after he learned of God's judgement against him for an affair he had. David had not confessed his sin to God and was miserable.
 - a. In these verses David confesses his sin and asks God to purify his heart. How would you describe David's heart?
 - b. In the Bible, the heart describes our condition or the core of who we are. How would you describe your current heart condition?
 - c. If the heart is an expression of our thoughts and emotion, how could removing negative thoughts and emotions change a person's heart health?
3. Proverbs 4:23 says "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." This verse puts a lot of weight on a person's heart.
 - a. Do you think it's possible to have a spiritual "blockage"? What could a spiritual blockage look like?
 - b. How could asking God for forgiveness start the process of removing the blockage?
4. Ezekiel 36:26 connects a new heart to a new spirit. To keep a new heart strong after "surgery" God gives us the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is like an "in-house physician" filling the heart with love and helping us to obey God's commandments. Share one way you can personally surrender your heart for a check-up by the Holy Spirit.

If we want to move forward with our faith we must first take a look at the condition of our hearts.



TRY THIS

Do you know someone who has become accustomed to things over time, perhaps even building up an indifference to the voice of God? Maybe it's even you. Do you long for a tender heart? Do you long for the passion and joy of your faith to return? Do you want to experience the abundant life that God has for you? It starts by praying the way David prayed.

Ask God to "break your heart" for what breaks His heart. Ask God for your heart to beat for what His heart beats for. Ask God to give you the heart of the Father! Pray and listen. If you journal, write down what God says in response.

Intentional Acts of Kindness

Week 1 | Eyes

BOTTOM LINE

Often in our busy lives we overlook the people around us who are in desperate need.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

The goal of this week's group is to see who God places in front of us. Together, we ask the question "how can I go through life and miss what's right in front of me?" and challenge ourselves to open our eyes to see those around us.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:31-40; Matthew 22:36-40

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Share:** Have you ever looked for something that was right in front of you? Share your experience with the group.
2. **Read Matthew 25:31-40 and Discuss:** Jesus examines how we treat people around us in need. We are called to help those in need both individually and as a community.
 - a. We did not title this series "Random" Acts of Kindness, because our love for one another shouldn't be random. We titled this series "Intentional" Acts of Kindness because our lives are meant to be lived on purpose and intentionally. Consider the difference between "random" and "intentional" kindness – what thoughts come to mind?
 - b. If we ignore those that suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness, homelessness, sickness, or imprisonment, we ignore those that lack the basic necessities of life. Perhaps we take these necessities for granted. How could we live a life in which we come alongside those that lack these basic necessities?
 - c. What does Jesus mean in verse 40 when He says, "...when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sister, you were doing it to me"?
3. **Read Matthew 22:36-40 and Discuss:** Jesus summarizes the New Testament law and shows us that we are to love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbors as ourselves.
 - a. Human nature leads to self-absorbed pursuits searching for happiness. If God didn't command us to love Him and to love others, do you think we would look beyond ourselves? Why or why not?
 - b. When we love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbors as ourselves, we are obedient to God and can experience real happiness. Can you think of a time when you felt real happiness and knew it was linked to your obedience?
 - c. Can you think of a time when you pursued worldly happiness? Describe how the experience left you feeling.
4. What happens when we overlook the things God wants us to notice? Consider these three scenarios and discuss how you can relate.
 - a. When God places an opportunity in front of us and wants us to act, but we are too busy to notice.
 - b. When God brings a person to mind He wants us to reach out to, but it is out of our comfort zone.
 - c. When God wants us to change something inside, but we are unwilling to focus on it.
5. When we spend our busy lives overlooking things that are important to God and our faith, we run the risk of hurting our growth, missing out on blessings, and experiencing the true joy that is reserved for us in this life. Read John 13:35, 1 John 3:17, and 1 John 4:19. What is our motivation to love others?

TRY THIS

Our Mission: To see every[one] transformed and mobilized by Jesus

- "to see" = can mean "to observe or witness" which is the goal
- "to see" = can also mean to "see to it" – own the responsibility of a task
- "to see" = can also mean "to open our eyes" and "see" EVERY [ONE] who needs God

There is only one way to truly start seeing people the way God does. Pray these things...

1. God help me "to see" those who others may overlook (open our eyes)
2. God help me "to see" how I can be a blessing today to "the least of these" (owning responsibility)

"Preach the gospel always;
when necessary use words."
- St. Francis of Assisi

