

Alley Rundown—February 21st, 2021

Today's Bible Story: One More Time (Go the Extra Mile) • *Matthew 5:41*

Today's Key Question: Have you ever received unexpected kindness?

Today's Bottom Line: Be kinder than you have to be.

Monthly Memory Verse: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12 (*NIV*)

CG: Dude Perfect Filler Videos

"Hey, everyone! Glad to see you all here today. I hope that you have not only been learning a lot about kindness but that you're also starting to see different ways to show kindness. Speaking of, have you ever had someone just go far above and beyond when they were kind to you? In other words, what they did made you stop in your tracks because it was so kind. Have you ever experienced that? Cool!"

Tell a personal story similar to the following or use a hypothetical "Imagine if" scenario.

"There was this one time I had to go to the bank to pay my mortgage. Now, everyone seems to think that growing up is so incredible, and kids can't seem to wait to get older, but you know what comes with growing up? Bills. Payments. So I was headed to the bank to making a monthly house payment. To be honest, I was already a bit frustrated because it was just a bad time in the month to be writing a check that big because I had some other unexpected expenses that month. As I was beginning to write the check, the manager of the bank came over and asked to speak with me. I thought I was in trouble. She said, 'Each month, we are paying someone's mortgage payment for them, and I said that the next person who walked through the door to pay their mortgage would be that person. And that person is you!' I couldn't believe it. She was going to pay my entire payment for the month! And I didn't even have to do anything, sign up for anything, give blood . . . nothing. This was just an over-the-top act of kindness, and it blew me away!"

"Let's be honest, though, this sort of kindness is pretty rare. People are kind to us, and we're kind to others, but what about kindness like this that goes above and beyond what anyone would expect? Most of us don't have unlimited amounts of money to spend on people. Is it even possible to show crazy amounts of kindness? And if so, how do we keep our eyes open to the needs around us that we can meet?"

"Those are some great questions that need some great answers. And like we say a lot around here, the best place to look for answers to our questions is the Bible. Today's question is no different. To help us discover an answer, let's see what Jesus has to say about kindness.

"Let's head to the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament and take a look at something Jesus taught. It's part of collection of teachings called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus shared these with His disciples and a lot of people gathered around to hear what He had to say. Jesus was teaching His followers how to live in a new way in the world so that the world would see they are different.

“So Jesus had just finished teaching about some pretty big topics like anger and relationships and lasting promises and revenge. And then He made a statement that might seem a bit strange to us. Check this out.

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:41 (NIV) and read.

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.”

“Umm . . . what is Jesus talking about? Is this like a gym class, mile run scenario? Or has the car broken down or something? What is the deal here? Well, to truly understand what Jesus is saying here, we have to understand the world when Jesus and His followers were around.

“Now in the time of Jesus, the land of Israel was not free as we might consider freedom. Israel was a part of the Roman empire and ruled by the Romans. They called the shots. The Jewish people had to follow the rules of Roman law even in their own land. And one of those laws was called the law of impressment. You see, the Roman soldiers traveled by foot along the road, and they carried heavy backpacks.”

“Backpacks! These packs would hold armor, weapons, food rations, clothes. And they were, well, heavy! So, this rule called ‘the law of impressment’ said to ease the burden of the Roman soldiers, the soldiers could demand a Jewish person to carry their pack for them. For how long? One mile.

It really makes it interesting to read these words, when we think about the backpacks...”

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:41 (NIV) and read.

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.”

“What does it mean to be forced to go one mile? And what was Jesus now saying to His followers?”

Pause for responses.

“Exactly! Jesus was giving His followers an incredible way to be different and show next level kindness . . . kindness that we might even say is not deserved. We’ll call it ‘Extra Mile Kindness.’

“Some think the Roman soldiers might have taken pleasure in disrupting the lives of the ‘lowly people’ and forcing them to do their work for them. I’m sure they expected that everyone hated them. Can you imagine the reaction . . . (*Start to walk from one mile marker to the next*) when the Roman soldier reached for his pack at the mile marker and the follower of Jesus looked at him and said, ‘I’ll carry it one more mile for you.’ That would be so shocking! So unexpected! So . . . like Jesus.

“That is ‘Extra Mile Kindness.’ On top of that, with this instruction about going the extra mile, Jesus was helping His followers understand that this act of kindness could also send a message. Carrying a Roman soldier’s pack a second mile was like saying, ‘Sure, you can force me to go this first mile. But I’m *choosing* to carry your pack this second mile because God’s goodness will always be stronger than anything you can make me do.’ Jesus knows that kindness is powerful. It’s awesome. And it wins, every time. Let’s dive a little deeper today with the help of this week’s episode. Take a look!”

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 12:00)

“We all have things we are expected to do, even ways of being kind to others. But then, there’s ‘Extra Mile Kindness.’ I bet you have some great ideas for how to show some ‘Extra-Mile Kindness.’ Let’s try something. I’ll give you a scenario—something that most likely you have or will have to encounter in your everyday life. First, brainstorm a basic level kindness—kindness that most people would do in the scenario. Then brainstorm what ‘Extra Mile Kindness’ would be for the scenario. Got it? Okay let’s give it a try.”

“Scenario #1: You get up from your seat and notice that there is a candy wrapper on the floor by your seat. It isn’t yours, but you know that the teacher cleans up the room at the end of the day.”

“As a group, talk about what the basic level kindness is here.”

Groups turn and discuss. After a minute or two, have a few groups share. Answer may include “pick up the trash even though it isn’t yours.”

“Now, with the same scenario, brainstorm what ‘Extra Mile Kindness’ looks like.”

Groups turn and discuss. After a minute or two, have a few groups share. Answer may include “help clean up the entire room so that the teacher doesn’t have to at the end of the day.”

“Let’s try another. Scenario #2: You walk down the hallway and hear some kids making fun of someone. They ask you if you agree with the mean thing they just said.”

“As a group, talk about what the basic level kindness is here.”

Groups turn and discuss. After a minute or two, have a few groups share. Answer may include “you ignore them and don’t say anything.”

“Now, with the same scenario, brainstorm what ‘Extra Mile Kindness’ looks like.”

Groups turn and discuss. After a minute or two, have a few groups share. Answer may include “you confront the group and tell them how wrong they are/you stand up for the kid they are making fun of, etc.”

“Great job on those scenarios! There are so many more times when we could go that extra mile like Jesus taught, yet so often, we don’t even think about that kindness. We show kindness, but maybe it’s only the easiest simplest way to show kindness. It’s still kindness, but just think about what could happen if we went the extra mile. While everyone else is stopping at one mile, Jesus’ followers are still going. This gives others the opportunity to see what makes Jesus and His followers different.”

“When you are more about your opponent than the scoreboard, you’re going the extra mile.”

“When you put a stop to those who are using hateful words against others, you’re going the extra mile.”

“When you give your time or your resources to help someone who wouldn’t even think about helping you in the first place, you’re going the extra mile.”

“Today as we close our talk, think about this question:

SLIDE: Key Question Slide

“Have you ever received unexpected kindness? If so, what was your reaction to it? Then imagine what others could experience when you have the opportunity and means to show unexpected . . . ‘Extra Mile Kindness’ to them. If you’re not sure or haven’t experienced kindness like that, that’s ok, too. A lot of us haven’t, but that doesn’t mean we can’t show it to others. Before we close our talk, let’s pray and thank God for showing us extra-mile kindness by sending Jesus to rescue us! Let’s pray.”

Lead group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, dismisses kids to All Together Activities.