

Can Reading a Book Conflict With Kindness?

Introduction

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Kindness should permeate every word we speak and every action we take. Jesus set us a perfect example of kindness. He was never too busy to answer questions, to help the poor, or to heal the sick. He was patient and had compassion for people. There is no record of Him being selfish or indulging in His own interests. He was available to bless others, and this is the lesson Jenny was going to learn with her younger sister in the story of A Good Book.

The Scripture

Read the Scripture to the group.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” —Matthew 22:39

A Real Life Example

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

A Good Book

Jenny settled down in a comfortable chair with her new book that her grandparents had given her for her birthday. This was the first chance that she had had to read it. Her chores were all done, and Mom didn't have anything else for her to do. She was soon engrossed in the story. Katie, her little sister, slowly walked into the room.

“Jenny,” she asked, “could you play a game with me? Nobody wants to play with me.”

Jenny looked up from her book and said, “Not right now, Katie. Can't you see that I'm reading?” Katie slowly walked away. Jenny settled back into her book. “Hmmm, where was I . . . oh, there,” and she began reading again, but it wasn't quite as much fun as before. All that she could think about was Katie's sad little face.

“But I would really like to read my book,” she said to herself. “I do not always need to play with Katie when she wants me to. She can go play with her toys just as well by herself.” Then she thought of the Bible scripture that they had learned last night during family Bible time. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

“Hmmm . . . If I was Katie, I would like someone to play with me. I do not like to play alone. Jesus would want me to be kind to Katie and to play with her. I can read my book later—after Katie goes to bed.” Jenny put her book down and went to play with her sister.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Jenny not willing to play with Katie?

2. Do you think Jesus would be happy with Jenny's first decision? Why?
3. Why was Jenny not happy with her first decision?
4. How did Jenny's decision conflict with the second great commandment?
5. Do you think Jenny's second decision would have made Jesus happy? Why?
6. We all associate gifts with kindness, but kindness can be shown in many ways. How did Jenny show kindness?
7. Can you name three other ways that kindness can be shown without giving gifts?
8. How do you think Katie received Jenny's act of kindness?
9. Can you think of some act of kindness you could do for your brother or sister? Will you do it?

Conclusion and Resolution

Read the Scripture again. Read or explain the conclusion in your own words. Ask the group to suggest what specific changes that they can resolve to make in their daily lives that will help them to implement needed changes in this area. Ask them to especially consider things they have learned in the Bible to use as scriptural guideposts to a more competent and productive life.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." —Matthew 22:39

Often the reason we are not kind is because we are selfish. We want to keep the things we have, or do what we want to do, or say what we want to say. We do not take the time to give the second great commandment thought. *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* If we really thought about how we would like people to speak to us, or how we would like to be treated, we would speak and act very differently. We should whisper this commandment to our hearts before we speak or act with anyone and everyone.

Teacher's Notes
