

Message: “Kindness Without Conformity” by Pastor Gary Hankins, 1/2/22

Description: Romans 12 is shoe-leather, faith-in-action, back to the basics, fundamental doctrine for our Christian walk. If you want to know who you are to be, and what you are to do as a follower of Christ, this is your go-to source.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:1-21

Takeaway / Application: Am I clearly hearing, personally applying, and acting upon what the Apostle Paul instructed the church to be and to do. Does my family, do my co-workers, does the world see Jesus in me? Am I a part of the team? Do I have skin in the game? Am I making a difference? Would those who are watching my life describe me as one who is kind and loving, but who does not compromise God’s word?

- Romans 12:1-2 says we are to be living sacrifices (slaves) to Christ who are **acceptable** to Christ. Discuss what an “acceptable” lifestyle looks like: your time, finances, relationships. What do they produce? Only Temporal, or also Eternal results? What mold are you being fitted into? Christ’s or the World’s? Discuss the difference between Conformity vs. Transformation.
- Verse 4-9 challenges us as Christ followers to be **active participants** on God’s team—not just the heavenly team, but God’s earthly team—the Church. These verses clearly teach us that God gives to His children gifts, spiritual gifts and abilities. If Christ is your Savior, you have them. Are you using them? Do you have skin in the game? Pastor Gary shared that if one joint or muscle is not operating properly, it affects the whole body. This applies also to God’s body, the Church. Talk in your group about how you are being used in God’s family. If you don’t have much to show and tell, challenge and encourage one another to plug in and start making a difference. Verse 9 says that if we’re not abhorring what is evil and clinging to what is good, our “love” for God is really hypocrisy—we’re just actors, stage players, masquerading as “Christians”.
- Romans 12:14-18 is hard. Really hard. God calls us to **bless** those who persecute us, hurt us and malign us. Pastor Gary helped us in seeing that the same word that Christ used when he blessed the little boys lunch is the same word Paul uses here to bless those against us. God doesn’t just want us to endure and put up with our enemies and foes, but to find ways to show God’s love and blessing to them. This cannot happen naturally—this is only the supernatural work of God in our surrendered hearts. Pastor Gary powerfully reminded us that when we bless an opponent, it could lead to a miracle of their conversion and salvation. Could you share an anonymous example of such a person in your life? Ask your group to pray with you together for them.
- Verses 19-21 give us practical, tangible ways to live out verses 14-18. Do not get revenge. Let God be God. Feed your foe. Show love and kindness to your enemies (it will drive them crazy v.20). Overcome evil with Good. Discuss how.