One of the major things we should do for each other in discipleship is character building.

- To help each other develop into the character of Christ
- Not into the designer character that the world prescribes
- That includes developing holy attitudes
- That includes learning how to take a stand and not giving ground

To do that we must

"finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."
Ephesians 5:10-11 NKJV

A major strategy of the enemy today is to

- To get us to be socially correct wanting us to tread lightly not being accused of toxic masculinity (adding adjectives)
- Because strong men are a threat to the woke agenda
- And / or homophobic or afraid of homosexual ideology
- And now there is another term: Islamophobic
- Adding the word phobic to anything evil to accuse you of being fearful
- If you're not afraid to take a stand and confront they call you phobic - fearful. Which is it?
- The enemy wants you to be man-aphobic or brave- aphobic
- To be men who are agreeable, conforming and tolerant of wickedness - to be NICE
- Nice men!
- That's not the character of Christ!

That's truly what the 5-fold ministry is supposed to do for you (help you achieve the true nature of Christ)

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,"
Ephesians 4:11-14 NKJV
https://bible.com/bible/114/eph.4.11-14.NKJV
"till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;"
Ephesians 4:13 NKJV

- We need more men developing and standing in the fulness of the stature / character of Christ
- Taking a stand against wickedness (deceitful plotting) - fighting the good fight of faith: Eph: demonic influences
- Eph 6:12 in AMPC states that our fight is **not only in the flesh:** this implies that natural action is also part of the fight
- We have to be together on this. Moving together. Unity of the faith: Moving in accountability to the next level from new levels of relationship - not a meeting but a movement
- No longer children allowing ourselves to be tossed to and fro: double-minded nature, looking for

the next cool thing, etc.

- **To do so We have to stop being nice: indecisive and agreeable to different things usually to appease others**

Too many men - believing men - are way too nice

Jesus isn't nice - Jesus is kind.

- There are no scriptures in the Bible that describe a nice Jesus

Was He nice when He was:

Doubling down of the moral law by cutting off your hand if it causes you to sin, plucking out your eye if it offends you , if you even think of a woman in lust you have committed adultery.

- May not seem nice to double down on the moral law
- **But niceness doesn't set standards - kindness does**

Kindness extends mercy and grace that leads to transformation
Niceness can extend tolerance and appeasement that lead to no change at all

- Jesus was not tolerant against sin, evil or wrongdoing
- It's about time we start turning the tables of wickedness in the world and stop covering them cloth and doilies
- Many times Jesus dealt with these things through radical forgiveness
- Radical forgiveness is not weakness - this was authority
- This was not nice it was kind

"Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"
Romans 2:4 ESV

- Kindness leads you to repentance by confronting your sin
- **Kindness confronts niceness avoids**
- Niceness avoids confrontation and sets you up to fall again
- **Kindness**: GK: chrestos: fit for use, virtuous
- Niceties are not fit for use but just to make you feel better about yourself: and lead others to avoid change
- It's God's kindness: the revelation of His mercy and His grace extended to us that don't deserve it - is what leads us to repentance (changing [renewing] your mind).

Jesus said in Matt 5:13 - we are the salt of the earth - not the sugar!

- Not sweet and powdery but having zest and zeal for truth and justice
- *Matt 5:13 (AMPC)*: if salt has lost its taste (**<u>strength</u> and quality) - it is of no use!**

Kindness speaks truth in love
Niceness can mask the truth to spare feelings

- Pastor Al that really hurt! - hey I'm just being kind
- **Truth is kind**
- ***It's the kindness of Jesus towards us and that we extend to each other in love that leads to transformation because it's the truth makes you free***
- How do we help others grow up through transformation?

"till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, **speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—"**
Ephesians 4:13-15 NKJV

- Speaking the truth in love is what helps others grow into His image
- Kindness towards others: speaking the truth in love - leads to removing deception and growing up in the Lord - so you won't be deceived

The fruit of the Spirit reveals the character of God

- You won't see niceness in the there but you will see kindness
- Kindness is His character

We have to stop looking at biblical words in the Bible and ascribing our English language definitions to them without studying what they really mean.

- How about *gentleness?* GK: moral goodness & integrity (not treading lightly)
- How about *meekness?* GK: humility (not sheepish and cowering)
- Kindness is what it truly means to love

God is love - so what is love?

"Love is patient and **kind**; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant"
1 Corinthians 13:4 ESV

- Again love is kind not nice and kindness is extended in humility

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
Ephesians 4:32 ESV

- Kindness forgives as God in Christ forgives us
- How did Jesus forgive us: He was beaten until His flesh and bones were exposed, crowned with a crown of thorns, carried a 130lb cross beam on that same back for over a third of a mile, then nailed to that cross through His hands and feet for 6 hours before He died - that's what the kindness of Christ looks like - there's nothing nice about that!

Kindness corrects
Niceness avoids

- Niceness can just be lip service to dismiss someone and maintain a false sense of peace

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
Micah 6:8 ESV

- Justice and humility are grouped with kindness
- Being nice can subvert justice from a place of not getting involved

Example: What happened in **Frisco, Texas**

- This is also the picture of what can happen to us individually
- It's time we start becoming aware of the wickedness around us - the wickedness we were made exclusively for and do something about it
- Jesus chose you before the foundation of the world but He held until now
- Because all the wickedness you see you were equipped for such a time as this to have victory over
- Greatest wickedness in human history but where lawlessness abounds the grace of God abounds

exponentially more!
- We are living under the greatest dispensation of grace then ever before in Christian history
- Don't let your life or your children's lives become a Frisco
- You better teach your kids about the kindness of God and how to stop playing nice because the world they will experience = may be the great falling away
- Teach them how to fight: Mass Gov just sign bill allowing abortion until birth - where was the church?!

God needs an army: Christianity is not a playground it's a battleground

"Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off."
Romans 11:22 ESV
- Here we see kindness connected to the severity of God
- And His demand of us to be kind - not nice - kind

The nature of God who is love
- Someone asked me about wrath and the judgement of God being poured out in His anger and does He change between His attributes
- No! God is love
- In His judgement He is perfectly just
- In His wrath He is being perfectly loving
- The nature of God's holiness is that He is all His attributes all at once and never stops being love.
- We walk in love!

"Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor."
Proverbs 21:21 ESV
- Romans 10:10: "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness - that's salvation righteousness
- Matt 6:33 seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. - that's kingdom righteousness that we should be pursuing that makes us look more like Him

Niceness can be about self preservation by not edifying or correcting for fear that others won't interact with you

Kindness is about putting someone's well-being ahead of yourself for their benefit:
"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."
Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV

Here's a good example of Jesus' kindness being confused with niceness.
"Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!""
John 13:7-9 NKJV

- If Jesus would have nice He would've said "ok Peter no problem"
- But Jesus said, if you don't let me do this you have no part in me
- That may not sound nice but it is kind
- Then He proceeded in an act of kindness to teach what it means to be a servant

Kindness teaches
Niceties can stunt growth through apathy

If Jesus wanted to be nice He would have calmed the storm before He told Peter to step out of the boat and walk in the water.

- But there was no lesson in that. Jesus was trying to develop Peter's faith
- A good and kind teacher/father wants you to learn how to have faith in times of trouble.

When Paul cried out to God to remove the thorn in his side - the messenger of satan sent to buffet him

- God said My Grace (favor) is sufficient for you
- Now learn how to use your authority over demons
- That's the kindness that teaches - not niceness

God will not always remove the storms in your life

- He will lead you through the valley
- He will be 3rd men in the fire

Jesus sent His disciples out and commanded them to take a money bag and a sword not a bag of candy and candles.

- EMIC MEN won't be known as nice men
- But men that are kind
- Who speak the truth in love because they know the truth - they know the Word
- EMIC men will stop tolerating the evil works of the devil and engage in spiritual warfare and the natural warfare within their jurisdiction
- EMIC men redeem the time by doing away with niceties and get about the Father's business of **KINDNESS**

Questions:

1. What are examples where we need to move away from "niceness" to "kindness" in order to take back ground that the enemy has stolen?
2. STOP DROP & PRAY for wisdom and boldness to stand and fight the good fight of faith while never forgetting to walk in love.