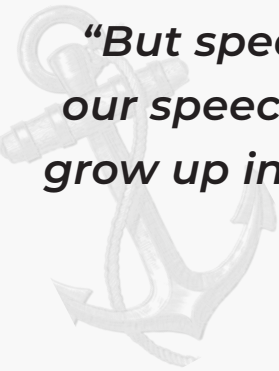


Nice or Kind?

When comfort and honesty pull in different directions

ANCHORED VERSE



“But speaking the truth in love [in all things—both our speech and our lives expressing His truth], let us grow up in all things into Him [following His example] who is the Head—Christ.”

— Ephesians 4:15 (AMP) —

We often use nice and kind as though they mean the same thing. Niceness tends to preserve comfort and manage how we are received. Kindness seeks the genuine good of another person, carrying truth and love together even when the moment becomes uncomfortable.

by Sean Brannan

Friday, 17 July, 2026

Hello my friend,

Welcome to this week's Anchored Update. Thank you for taking a few minutes to read, reflect, and continue walking through these conversations with me.

Quick Update:

[From Survival to Surrender](#) and its [Companion Journal](#) are still on track to officially publish on July 31, 2026. You can preorder your copy directly through [R3B Press](#) and save a few dollars before that official release. Thank you again for your support, encouragement, and patience throughout this process. Seeing this message move from conversations and scattered notes into a finished book has been humbling.

This week, I've also been working on a significant update to [SeanBrannan.com](#). It has caused more than a few headaches, but I believe the changes will eventually provide a stronger home for the message I've been given to share.

One addition is a new library called [What Is](#). It explores biblical concepts, spiritual formation language, emotional health, and psychological terms through clear definitions, biblical context, and practical application.

I've also reorganized the primary topics across the website into [seven Pillars](#). That reorganization has hidden many of my older articles and reflections. Frustrating as that has been, it's forcing me to revisit what I've written, reevaluate whether it still reflects where God is leading me, and rewrite much of it with greater clarity and purpose.

I would genuinely appreciate your input as these changes continue. Let me know what you think of the website, what topics you'd like to see explored, or what you may be walking through in this season. We are a community of believers, and part of that calling is helping, encouraging, and building one another up.

Nice or Kind?

I've had some version of this conversation with many people over the years. What's the difference between being nice and being kind?

I think we often use those two words as though they mean the same thing. Sometimes they do overlap. Kindness can be warm, generous, encouraging, thoughtful, and pleasant. It may make someone feel seen, supported, and loved. I don't think there's anything wrong

with making someone feel good, and we should not treat ordinary niceness as though it's somehow false or spiritually immature.

The difference becomes clearer when comfort and honesty begin pulling in different directions. Niceness often focuses on keeping an interaction pleasant. We want people to feel comfortable, avoid unnecessary tension, and walk away thinking well of us. Kindness also cares about the other person's experience, but its deeper concern is their genuine good. That may include comfort and encouragement, but it may also require honesty, a boundary, correction, or a conversation neither person particularly wants to have.

In previous relationships, I've experienced what happens when being nice becomes more important than being honest. Difficult conversations were avoided because no one wanted to upset the other person. Concerns remained unspoken, tension stayed beneath the surface, and everyone could pretend things were okay for a little longer. The immediate moment may have felt peaceful, but the underlying problem continued growing.

Maybe you've experienced something similar in the ways we sometimes try to manage another person's response:

- » We say yes because we don't want someone to feel disappointed.
- » We offer reassurance because the truth may be hard to hear.
- » We avoid asking a needed question because we're afraid of what the answer might require from us.

In those moments, niceness can become a way of managing someone else's reaction and protecting ourselves from discomfort.

The truth of the matter is that I've done both. I've been nice when I should've been kind. I've remained quiet because I didn't want to create tension, delayed conversations because I was unsure how someone would respond, and I've tried to preserve peace when the relationship actually needed honesty.

I've also been overly harsh in the pursuit of kindness. I value truth, and I believe honesty is an essential part of loving someone. There have been times, however, when I became so focused on saying what I believed needed to be said that I failed to carry it with enough patience, gentleness, or care. I may have been trying to pursue something good, but my delivery did not always reflect the character of Jesus.

Looking back, I can see how both approaches can leave someone wounded. Pleasantness without honesty allows real problems to remain untouched, while honesty carried without

gentleness can make the truth harder to receive. One may protect the comfort of the moment, while the other may become careless with the heart of the person standing in front of us.

Paul's words in Ephesians 4:15 bring those two responsibilities together. We're called to speak the truth, but we're called to speak it in love. Truth and love aren't opposing values that we must somehow balance depending on the situation. They belong together as part of our maturity in Christ.

That challenges me because saying something accurate isn't the same as saying it kindly. We can speak the truth because we genuinely care about someone, or we can use the truth to release frustration, prove a point, defend ourselves, or force a response. The words may be technically correct in either situation, but the [heart](#) behind them and the way we carry them may be very different.

Kindness requires us to examine more than what we're saying. We also need to consider *why* we're saying it, whether the timing serves the other person, and whether we're willing to remain present after the difficult words have been spoken.

That last part has become increasingly important to me. It's easy to say we were only being honest after dropping a difficult truth into someone's life. Kindness doesn't simply deliver information and walk away from the emotional consequences:

- » It stays engaged.
- » It listens.
- » It allows the other person time to process.
- » It remains willing to clarify, apologize for poor delivery, and continue working toward understanding.

At the same time, kindness can't be controlled by the requirement that everyone remain comfortable or approve of us. There are moments when loving someone well *will* disappoint them. A healthy boundary may feel unkind to the person who benefited from our lack of one. An honest answer may create tension. A needed correction may hurt before it helps.

This doesn't mean every uncomfortable statement is kind. Harshness doesn't become love simply because we believe the other person needed to hear it. We can use truth as a weapon and then blame them for being wounded. Kindness considers the person, the timing, the tone, and the condition of our own heart.

Romans 2:4 tells us that God's kindness leads us toward repentance by drawing us toward truth and transformation without manipulating, humiliating, or crushing us in the process. His kindness shows us that love can be honest without becoming cruel.

Galatians 5:22 also identifies kindness as fruit produced by the Holy Spirit. That means kindness is deeper than being naturally agreeable or having good manners. It's the character of Christ being formed within us. As we remain close to Him, He teaches us when to speak, when to listen, when to offer comfort, when to establish a boundary, and how to carry truth without losing love.

Fear of conflict can keep me silent, while frustration can begin shaping my words before I realize it. In one moment, kindness may require saying the difficult thing. In another, it may mean listening long enough to recognize that it doesn't need to be said... yet.

Because of that, I'm learning to ask myself better questions:

- » ***“Did I make them feel good?”*** can be a helpful question because their experience should concern me. Still, it only tells me how the moment may have felt. It doesn't necessarily tell me whether my response was truly for their good.
- » ***“Did I love them well?”*** takes me deeper. It asks me to consider my motives, my words, my timing, and the way I carried myself toward them.

Sometimes the answer to both questions will be yes. Kindness can encourage, comfort, reassure, celebrate, and bring joy. At other times, loving someone well may require us to walk through an uncomfortable moment together. When my attention shifts toward controlling how the moment feels, I begin managing the interaction instead of loving the person in front of me. I want the faithful love of Jesus to shape the way I speak, listen, respond, and remain present.

Niceness often wants to be received well. Kindness wants to love well. As I continue learning the difference, I'm asking the Holy Spirit to help me speak with greater honesty without becoming harsh and to grow in gentleness without allowing fear to keep me from the truth.

This Week's Articles:

This week, I published the first entry in the new [What Is library](#). *Discernment* is often described as recognizing whether something is good or bad, wise or foolish, or consistent with God's character. Yet seeing clearly also requires us to examine the fears, assumptions, wounds, and personal biases that may be influencing what we think we are seeing.



[What Is: Discernment?](#)

Anchored Prayer

Abba,

Thank You for the kindness You continually show me. Your love is patient and gentle, but You also care too deeply to leave me unchanged.

Help me recognize when fear is keeping me silent and when frustration is making me harsh. Give me courage to speak honestly, wisdom to know when to listen, and humility to examine my own heart before addressing someone else.

Lead me by Your Spirit so that my words, boundaries, encouragement, and correction increasingly reflect the character of Jesus. Teach me to love people well, even when that requires an uncomfortable conversation.

Hallelujah. Amen.

My Prayer:



***Niceness wants to be received well.
Kindness wants to love well.***



Anchored Reflection

As we sit with the difference between niceness and kindness, these questions can help us examine how well we're loving the people in front of us.

Where have I been preserving comfort instead of addressing something honestly?

When I speak difficult truths, do my timing, tone, and posture reflect the kindness of Jesus?

Am I trying to love someone well, or am I trying to control how they see me?

You're Important

Every newsletter, article, and Anchored Reflection begins with a real question or burden.

If something is pressing on your heart, send it my way. Each week I choose a focus for the newsletter, an article, or a reflection. What you share could be the catalyst for someone else's breakthrough. I would also love your feedback on recent articles.

 [Share What's on Your Heart](#)



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