



HOW TO BE KIND TO YOURSELF (PLUS SCRIPTURE CARDS!)

by Cathy Baker

We're often quick to offer kindness to others, but what about ourselves?

The fact that I winced when the idea for this post popped up is just one indicator that I have a lot of growing to do in this area. Maybe it's because I was raised not to talk about myself. Just try bragging about how groovy that blue eyeshadow looked (hey, it was the 70's!) and any southerner knew what was coming next—the ol' side glance with a “bless her heart, she knows better” expression.

The silent “rule” of never speaking about one's self in a positive light was engrained in my culture as deeply as cornbread and buttermilk. And that's doggone deep!

These days, I show myself a little kindness by swinging by Starbucks for a brown sugar espresso after a long day of writing. But when it comes to offering myself kindness after repenting from something I said, or not doing something “normal” women do, like keeping everything tidy, kindness often stops short.

Like a bully, I beat myself up and rattle off a string of names I'd never call anyone else.

Recently, when talking with a friend who had a few “bruises” of her own, I suggested she be kind to herself. Those words were not meant for her ears only. I needed them, and maybe you do too. Be kind to yourself.

So, how can we offer ourselves kindness?

I think it begins, as does every part of life, with remembering who we are in Christ.

Receive God's grace. "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) A high cost was paid for the privilege of receiving God's unmerited favor. I'm learning how to sit still until God's grace settles in the soul to the point of peace. Then, I thank God and move on!

Practice what we preach. How would we help another woman who continues to beat herself up even after she's repented and received God's forgiveness for a particular action?

Align our expectations with God's Word. Does God call us to be a perfect wife, mom, grandmother, or friend? Thankfully, no, but He does come alongside us, full of mercy and compassion, and shows us how to be who we can't be without Him. If God doesn't place the burden of perfection on us in these roles, why do we?

Discover the "why" behind the action that leaves us feeling less-than, and don't shy away from it. Does my upbringing play a part in why I'm so hard on myself? Have I set unrealistic expectations on myself based on the culture? Am I giving others the power to determine how I feel about myself? Some of these may require biblical counseling, or maybe just some time set apart for prayer, asking God for wisdom. (James 1:5)

Love your neighbor *as yourself*. Mark 12:31 (emphasis mine)

Being kind to ourselves paves the way for us to be even kinder to others.

And kindness never goes out of style.

A fun way to remember to be kind to ourselves is to carry or display a scripture card...so I'm giving you four. Enjoy your PDF download!

Another way to embed the message of kindness into our hearts is to pause for two minutes and soak in this song by Andrew Peterson. Oh, to know and receive the unconditional love of our Heavenly Father! (Available on YouTube or [return to my site for direct access.](#))

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