



**SWEET!**

## **A Few Of God's Favorite Things**

August 15, 2021 Message Notes  
JAMES 2-3

As followers of Jesus, we have a responsibility to encourage and build each other up, especially those who are fresh in the faith! God is busy leading us into intersections with other people, and many times all we have to do is notice. The Kingdom moves when we love our neighbor. Would you stop and think about the everyday ways you could bring God's sweetness to your world?



## NOTES

As Christ's Body, we have a responsibility to encourage and build each other up, especially those who are fresh in the faith!

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

*EPHESIANS 4:2-6*

God is busy leading us into intersections with other people with whom He's also busy leading into your intersection. Many times all we have to do is notice.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good."

*PSALM 34:8*

God pours His sweetness on us in the everyday moments – wherever we are, whatever we're doing.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do and He will establish your plans."

*PROVERBS 16:3*

God is more concerned with our commitment to move with Him as we make our way through each day's details.

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."

*ISAIAH 40:28*

"Why would you ever complain...saying, 'God has lost track of me. He doesn't care what happens to me?' Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening? God doesn't come and go. God lasts. He's the Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath. And he knows everything, inside and out."

*ISAIAH 40:27-28, The Message Version*

God is leading us in a custom-made relationship with Him. It's His story. And He wrote us into it.

We can align our desires with God's desires or align them with something else.

**The difference between being constructive or constrictive to the kingdom is whether there's a "u" or an "I" in it.**



Human kingdoms are set up on frameworks of power, money, control, education, authority – or...I.

God's kingdom is established on a framework of love, faith, mercy and compassion – or...U.

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

*JAMES 2:1-4*

“If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.”

*JAMES 2:8-9*

“A new command I give you: Love one another...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

*JOHN 13:34-35*

That's being **conSTRUCTive** and not **conSTRICtive**. That's putting the you, not the I, as a priority.

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law...any other commandment, [is] summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor.”

*ROMANS 13:8-10, English Standard Version*

### **The Kingdom moves when you love your neighbor.**

“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

*JAMES 2:12-13*

### **Put the “you’s” in your life ahead of the “I.”**

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical



needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

*JAMES 2:14-17*

If our faith isn't producing fruit in our lives... if the mercy we've been given isn't yielding acts of mercy from us to others - what kind of faith is that?

### **The Kingdom moves when you love by actually doing something.**

We could start by asking God to show us the ones that really need us each day – to meet a need, pay attention, speak a word.

“When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.... With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.”

*JAMES 3:3-6; 9-10*

Jesus doesn't harm, embarrass, put down or tease. The source of that behavior is evil.

### **YOU ARE:**

- God's handiwork... (Ephesians 2:10)
- More than a conqueror...(Romans 8:37)
- Fearfully and wonderfully made...(Psalm 139:14)
- A new creation...(2 Corinthians 5:17)
- A child of God! (1 John 3:1)

**The Kingdom moves when you love by speaking heaven on earth** – words of life, of hope, of healing, of salvation.

Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. He doesn't harm the sheep. Sheep are His favorite. You are His favorite.

“Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need! He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most. Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way. You provide delicious food for me in the



presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest; blessings overflow! Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.”

*PSALM 23, The Living Bible*

Because Jesus laid his life down on the cross as our sacrifice, we have the hope of eternity.

**What does/would it look like if I were a shepherd?** Think about the everyday ways you could bring God’s sweetness to your world.

How might you help someone rest, or find strength... or show up for them on a dark day, or provide a meal, have them as a guest, show goodness and kindness. These actions are constructive, not constrictive, movements of God’s Kingdom.

**God’s kingdom moves when I think about you, like a good shepherd would.  
Are you up for some sweet shepherd work? Sheep are God’s favorite.**

