

ALLEY Rundown – February 10 - 11, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Family Ties (Ruth and Naomi) • *Ruth 1–2*

Today's Key Question: When is it hard to be kind?

Today's Bottom Line: Be kind to the people closest to you.

Monthly Memory Verse: *You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if there were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient.* Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

PRE-SERVICE: *Dude Perfect*

SLIDE: *Theme*

SLIDE: *Theme Background*

Hey, everybody! Welcome to my favorite time of the week! Our theme this month is about gearing up, and I have a question...has anyone ever slept in a tent before? (Allow responses) Sometimes it can be super fun, right? And sometimes . . . depending on the weather, or the company . . . not so much.

Take a moment to tell a personal story about camping or something similar with family and/or siblings. The story could sound something like the following.

When I think about sleeping in a tent, I am reminded of a time I went camping with my family. We lived near a pond, and we'd often go and hang out there, sleep overnight in a tent—it was so cool!

We'd spend the day fishing, playing games, and eating food cooked over a fire. Sounds like a ton of fun, but sometimes it wouldn't be—because of my little brother. Man, he could be annoying. He always found a way to ruin a good day. I remember one time he and I had to put the tent together by ourselves, which was a big deal because dad had never let us put up the tent without his help.

Right away, my brother started complaining. Didn't want to help. Too hot. Too tired. I told him to quit it and help, but he ignored me and ran away in the woods. When I tracked him down, I made sure to tell him *exactly* how I felt, which was nothing nice! I dragged him back to where we were putting it together, and when I pulled out the instructions, he ignored me and started putting the tent together totally wrong!

I yelled at him and called him a name, and he started crying and pushed me, so I pushed him, and he ran off and tattled on me, saying I was mean. My parents, of course, took his side, and because of him I had a horrible time. Although my opinion of him has changed over the years, I remember thinking that day my little brother was the worst!

Chances are, if you have friends, classmates, or siblings, you know what I'm talking about. Sometimes you don't get along with the people around you. Sometimes it's the worst with the people who know you the best!

We argue. We get in fights. We're all fully aware of how we *should* treat people—patience and kindness and all that—but for some reason I don't always think of those things. And family . . . family can be the hardest to get along with sometimes.

Your parents don't get why you're so frustrated, so you snap at them. Your friend posted something that made you look stupid, so you let them have it. And don't get me started about your brother or sister borrowing your stuff without asking!

Why can it be so difficult to be kind to the people we love the most? Why does familiarity make it easier to find the perfect insult to hurt someone's feelings?

All good questions. And we get to look for some answers by discovering truth from a book of the Bible that has a whole lot to do with family. I'm really excited you're here to learn all about it.

Today we're heading to the book of Ruth. It's a smaller book in the Old Testament in the Bible that talks all about a person named . . . you guessed it, Ruth! Let's check it out...

VIDEO: The So and So Show (13:43)

When Naomi's husband passed away while living in Moab, she would have felt alone and lost. However, Ruth stood by her side. Despite it being a completely foreign land, not knowing anyone, and leaving her family, Ruth showed Naomi that she cared—and that she still mattered—by going with her back to Bethlehem.

Once in Bethlehem, Ruth worked hard to feed not only herself but also Naomi by gathering barley. Nobody asked Ruth to do that, and no one even asked her to come back to Bethlehem with Naomi. In fact, Naomi insisted Ruth stay in Moab to start her life over, but she refused! Ruth opted to show extraordinary kindness to her mother-in-law. Because of her kindness, Ruth got to be part of the family line of Jesus! How cool is that?

Not only that, Boaz showed incredible kindness to both Naomi and Ruth—buying the land and saving their family name. I wonder . . . if Ruth never showed kindness to Naomi in the first place, would Boaz even have done what he did?

Maybe not. Kindness is infectious.

So many times, it is easier to show kindness to strangers instead of those who are closest to us. No matter how much we love our family and close friends, it can be hard to show them kindness when they get on our nerves! But you can still choose to be kind, just like Ruth, even when someone you love is pushing your buttons.

I'm not saying this is easy. In fact, showing kindness is really difficult, even for me! I can forget to show kindness, and at times, I don't want to display any kindness. But what if God could help us change that about us? What if we could show kindness to those closest to us?

Remember what our verse says this month.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if there were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient. Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

And before we leave today, I want each of you to consider this question.

SLIDE: Key Question

When is it hard to be kind?

Is it around specific people? Maybe it is at a certain time of day—like when you're tired? Could it be when you are trying to get your homework done? Think of an answer to share with your Small Groups. Let's pray to thank God for Ruth's example and to help us show kindness to those around us!

SLIDE: Theme Background

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

OFFERING

There is a brand-new ministry that we are supporting with our offering until the summer. It's called Morning Star Mission and it's located right near here, in Joliet, IL.

SLIDES: Morningstar pictures (scroll through as the leader talks about the mission)

Since its beginning in 1909, Morning Star Mission has had one main goal — to help people in need. Morning Star Mission helps people who are struggling to have enough money to live. They have a shelter that gives them a place to live if they don't have a home. People in the community can go to the mission to get clothes and food if they need it too. AND they tell people about Jesus and his love for them while they are helping them, how cool is that?

Morning Star doesn't just stop there. They have many programs that they offer people to help them get in a better financial place, so that they don't need the help anymore. Morning Star is a mission that is changing lives in our area!

SLIDE: SuperStart!

Wait! There's one more thing I have to tell you about, it's called Super Start! It's coming up in March and you won't want to miss this yearly event. It's an overnight event just for you - where you'll get to play games, eat, make new friends, and hear an awesome message about how much Jesus loves you. Check out this video...

VIDEO: SuperStart!

You'll receive a card with all the details on your way out today. Sign up today!