

“KINDNESS”

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NKJV)

In 1964 there was a case before the Supreme Court in which a theatre owner in Cleveland, Ohio had been fined for showing a French film, *The Lovers*. The state of Ohio said the film was obscene and hard-core pornography. In his opinion, Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart wrote, “I shall not today attempt further to define the material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description [“hard-core pornography”]. And perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that.”

There are words that I could never succeed in intelligibly defining. One of these is “joy”, another is “glory”. Another one is “kindness.” But I know them when I see them. A sermon on kindness is a challenge.

I know kindness when I see it. I remember a scene from M*A*S*H. A soldier was dying. Nurse Kelly was holding his hand. He thought it was his girl friend in Iowa. Nurse Kelly pretended to be that girl talking to him about a picnic they would have. He died while she held his hand.

In a restaurant where there are children, notice how the parents interact with their children. Some will devote their attention to helping the children eat, enjoying the children. Those children are happy and contented. Other parents spend the time talking to each other or to other adult friends. Their children are the ones that are screaming, crying, spilling things, running around. They want attention and love.

Notice the ways different persons give help to someone in need. There are only some who give warmth and kindness along with help.

1.) God is the source of kindness; it comes from Him.

Throughout the Bible kindness is one of the characteristics of God.

But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (Genesis 39:21 ASV)

Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" (Ruth 2:20a NKJV)

Both of those passages in the Bible are from the times before Moses. Even then the kindness of the LORD was known and praised.

In the Psalms the people sang of God's kindness in worship.

Blessed be the LORD, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city! (Psalms 31:21 NKJV)

Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

(Psalms 117:1-2 NKJV)

Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, According to Your word to Your servant. (Psalms 119:76 NKJV)

In the years when Judah and Israel were increasingly unfaithful to the LORD and were being attacked and taken into captivity, the prophets reminded the people of God's mercy as reason for hope.

With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," Says the LORD, your Redeemer...For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you. (Isaiah 54:8,10)

So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. (Joel 2:13 NKJV)

So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. (Jonah 4:2 NKJV)

In the New Testament the kindness of God blossoms in fullness.

and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6-7 NKJV)

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:4-5 NKJV)

2. What are the ingredients of Kindness? Of what does it consist?

The main and necessary component of kindness is love. Love suffers long and is kind 1Co 13:4a You can't be kind to someone unless you love them. The word lovingkindness appears more than 25 times in the Bible. In every case it is used of God.

How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. (Psalms 36:7 NKJV)

Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies. (Psalms 69:16 NKJV)

Kindness also consists of forgiveness and mercy. Mercy is not giving someone the punishment they deserve. Lord, have mercy upon us.

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So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. (Joel 2:13 NKJV)

"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil." (Luke 6:35 NKJV)

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NKJV)

An important part of kindness is humility. It is being able to talk to someone in need, treating them with respect, giving them dignity

"Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:4 NKJV)

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (Colossians 3:12 NKJV)

When the submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5 NKJV)

Go to a homeless shelter or a food pantry or a church that feeds the poor at lunch time or on Thanksgiving. Watch the persons who are giving out the food. How many are looking at the persons being served, how many are engaging and greeting them? How many are kind?

3. Being kind is not an optional accessory for our Christian life. It is a command by Jesus, which He later expanded by His apostles.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John 13:34 NKJV)

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; (1 Corinthians 13:4 NKJV)

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Colossians 3:12-13 NKJV)

We learn to be kind, we practice being kind in our home, in our church. When we can be kind to those who are closest to us, then we move on to the people with whom we work. When we can be kind to those who know us the best, we will find that it is easy to show kindness to strangers.

When the world sees and receives kindness from us, they are seeing the light of Christ shining into a dark work. "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven.