

Kindness – Virtue In Action

The Bible says a lot about kindness in the Old and New Testaments.

1. We are commanded to be kind.

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

Micah 6:8 *He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?*

2. It is an attribute of God.

Romans 2:4 *Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?*

3. It is a fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

4. Our salvation depends on it.

Titus 3:4 *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,
5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior*

What, then is kindness? How can we define it?

1. Kindness is not the same as being nice. We can be nice without being kind, and occasionally we can be kind without being nice.

Being nice is reactive:

a. Going through life and not hurting or harming someone or something.

- b. Letting others come to you and then responding.
- c. Waiting and then “not” responding in a certain way.

James warns against this in his letter: *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*

2. Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate towards others without expecting anything in return. It involves intentional, caring actions.

Being kind is proactive:

- a. Cares more for others than for self.
- b. Works for the welfare of the one loved.
- c. Means doing good with no expectation of a reward
- d. Not just about your friends, is even more so about your non-friends & enemies,
 - the people who hate you
 - the people who curse you
 - the people who talk about you behind your back and discredit you
 - the people who don’t apologize for the wrong they’ve done in your life
 - the people who mistreat you

Luke 6:35 *“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*

Mark Twain said, *“Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear, and the blind can see.”*

Kindness is always closely associated with other virtues like, love, generosity, forgiveness, compassion, etc. It is the active expression of those virtues to others.

1 Cor 13:4 *Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant*

The word translated “is kind” is a verb – love is expressed in kindness. So too with the other virtues.

Kindness is not just a Christian virtue. The Bible gives examples of non-believers who showed kindness. An Old Testament example would be the Shunammite women who provided a room for the Prophet Elisha in 2Kings 4. In the New Testament Jesus gives the example of the good Samaritan in Luke 10. It is possible because all mankind bears the image of God, though badly degraded and distorted by sin.

Because of the saving work of Christ and the empowering of the Holy Spirit we as Christians should always exhibit kindness as a reflection of God’s nature. In fact, we stand in danger of judgement if we fail to be kind.

Romans 11:22 *Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*

Kindness is one of the most powerful means of evangelism. People will resist and even reject it when we preach about the love of God, but they will seldom respond negatively when we demonstrate that love through kindness.

Kindness also multiplies itself. When we treat people kindly, they tend to treat other people kindly. One act of kindness leads to another as people “pay it forward”.

One of the things that drew us to this church was the kindness we saw in the lives of it’s membership. Kindness toward each other and toward those in our community. Let us be obedient to Paul’s exhortation in **Colossians 3:12-13**:

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Glen Campbell had a hit song about this very thing:

*If you see your brother standing by the road
With a heavy load from the seeds he sowed
And if you see your sister falling by the way
Just stop and say you're goin' the wrong way
You've got to try a little kindness yes show a little kindness
Yes shine your light for everyone to see
And if you'll try a little kindness and you'll overlook the
blindness
Of the narrow minded people on the narrow minded streets*

*Don't walk around the down and out lend a helping hand
instead of doubt
And the kindness that you show every day will help
someone along their way
You've got to try a little kindness...*

Let’s do everything we can to show the Lord’s kindness in everything we do, so that when people talk about us and our church they will say, “those are real Christians in that church, they not only say it, they live it.”