

You're Too Kind

'The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.'



Kindness

“Fruit of the Spirit and more. . .”

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32

We don't often think of Mark Twain with the Bible. According to research on him, he was often very argumentative. But he has one wonderful quote on kindness. *“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”*

We are told in Scripture that the Fruit of the Spirit is exactly that, fruits that come to us through the Holy Spirit. We can't earn them by ourselves. Christ had already told His followers that He is the vine and we are the branches.

A kind word, a kind action to another person can really do wonders for them.

Kindness does not mean just being nice or tolerant of someone. We can be tolerant of people without being kind. According to Billy Graham, tolerance is not a virtue. On tolerance Billy Graham said:

“One of the pet words of this age is tolerance. It is a good word, but we have tried to stretch it over too great an area. We have applied it, too often, where it does not belong. The word tolerant means liberal and broad-minded. In one sense, it implies the compromise of one's convictions, a yielding of ground upon important issues. However, in the realm of Christian experience there is a need for intolerance. In some things Christ was the most tolerant, broad-minded Man who ever lived, but in other things He was one of the most intolerant.” Billy Graham, “The Sin of Tolerance” 2/22/2013

But on kindness Graham said:

“Kindness is an essential part of God's work and ours here on earth.”

I think Paul calls kindness one of the fruits of the Spirit because it cannot be a part of our lives without God's growth in us. We just can't get up one morning and say “I'm going to be kind to everyone today.” Kindness opens us to service to others. It is a slippery road once we choose to accept God's Spirit and let it into our lives. Kindness is goodness in action. Kindness can be compassionate, considerate, sympathetic, humane, or gentle.

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

I have the privilege of knowing some people who are genuinely kind. They never seem to have a harsh word to say and they are fair in evaluating a situation. We all seek to do God's will and that includes being kind, but we are human and need help sometimes. Kindness is doing something and not expecting anything in return. Kindness is respect and helping others without waiting for someone to help us back. Our emphasis on kindness may sound good in theory, but does it really happen in practice? Often it depends on the day and our mood, or the way something is presented to us. But through our acceptance of the Holy Spirit into our lives, we can have more kindness.

The other day it was raining, but I needed gas in my car. As I began to pump it a young man came over and offered to help me. I don't know his name and I don't think he wanted any thanks, but I thanked him. I have had the guy picking up grocery carts help me unload mine into the back of the car. I hope I am remembered for kind acts that I do because I want to, not because I feel I have to.

When I was a teenager I worked at Christmas time in a store that sold toys. I had so much fun watching

grown men try out trucks on the floor and talking with each other. They were so happy about the truck they were getting for their son, and the women would pick up the dolls and hold them like they were holding a baby, not like the young girl was going to do as she combed the doll's hair or the young man as he pretended banging a truck into a wall to pretend he was knocking a building down!

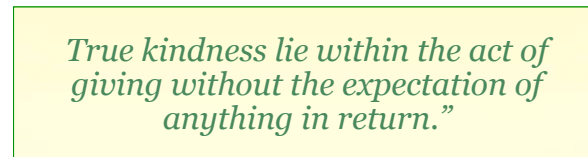


As a result of this, I find joy in shopping on Christmas Eve and especially in the grocery store and being able to help men who are walking around with the grocery list and looking for a particular brand that they were told to get. I really feel the Christmas spirit in the people shopping that day. It may seem strange, but everyone seems happy and helping each other. It is a time of kindness and joy.

It is impossible to produce genuine Christ-like kindness by ourselves as written in Galatians 5:22. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”* A loving heart is required.



I remember the older lady in the neighborhood who used to invite us in once in a while to her kitchen table for a piece of toast with a little bit of coffee and milk and sugar. We thought we were really something special having coffee. Our parents knew it and would just smile when we told them, but we loved those neighbors. I remember the neighbor who helped us build our carts out of orange crates. I want to be remembered as that type of neighbor. Do you?



Prayer: Father God, help us to cultivate the fruit of kindness, to seek the inexhaustible resources of the gentle, yet dynamic Holy Spirit which You have so graciously poured out on us to manifest kindness. May we learn that kindness is *“not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit”* (Zechariah 4:6.)Amen

1. Why is it that children and animals seem to be so instinctively kind.
2. Do some people just seem to be “naturally” kind?
3. Does the Holy Spirit actually help us to develop kindness?
4. What does it take for us to be kind to all people in our lives, whether we feel love for them or not at that time? Can we truly love people and not be kind to them?
5. Do you have fond memories of people being kind to you in many small ways, but making you feel their kindness in a positive way

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