

The Law of Kindness



by Gail Yost



She openeth her mouth
with wisdom; and in her tongue
is the law of kindness.

~Proverbs 31:26

I. What is kindness?

- A. "The quality of friendliness, generosity, warm-heartedness, sympathy, understanding, charity, humaneness, consideration, forbearance, tolerance, generosity, liberality." (*American Heritage Dictionary*)
- B. "Goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds . . . in grace and tenderness and compassion." (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)

II. What does the Bible say about kindness?

- A. Kindness (or goodness in the King James) is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
1. Fruit is evidence of what's inside.
 2. Fruit is the thing produced by the inherent energy of a living organism.
- B. Kindness is produced (or grown) within our lives as [or while] we live and walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

kindness

III. We understand that *it is God that worketh in [us] both to will and to do of His good pleasure.* (Philippians 2:13) So what are some of the continual actions and habits involved in our progress and growth in kindness?

A. Spending time in God's Word (Colossians 3:16)

1. Read, study, memorize.
2. Focus on how the Bible defines kindness:
 - ◆ The Greek word used in Galatians for kindness, *chrestotes*, comes from a root word meaning usefulness.
 - ◆ The definition of *chrestotes* includes moral goodness, integrity. It involves tenderness, concern for others, the virtue of a person whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own.
 - ◆ Kindness is a matter of the heart; it's linked to that first fruit of the Spirit, love. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - ◆ Paul and Timothy's ministry was characterized by kindness. (2 Corinthians 6:3-10)
 - ◆ Kindness eases burdens. (Matthew 11:28)
 - ◆ Christ was the embodiment of God's kindness and love for mankind. (Titus 3:1-7)

B. Obeying God's commands in Scripture (John 15:10)

1. *And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*
(Colossians 3:12)
2. *For He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*
(Luke 6:35)
3. *And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.* (Ephesians 4:32)

C. Spending time in prayer, the vital link between God and us

1. Acknowledge and ask forgiveness for reactive unkindness. (Matthew 5:44)
 - ◆ Snippy responses
 - ◆ Sarcastic comebacks
 - ◆ Harsh words
 - ◆ Eye-rolling



“The confession of evil works
is the first beginning of good works.”
~St. Augustine

2. Acknowledge and ask forgiveness for withholding proactive kindness.



Expressing gratitude
(from root word meaning grace)
acknowledges God's grace at
work in others' lives.

3. Pray for God's wisdom in showing kindness. Sometimes, the kindest thing we can do is to confront in love. (Ephesians 4:15)

D. Practicing Christian kindness (good words and works in action) through God's grace

1. Speak words of kindness.
 - ◆ "A gentle answer" (Proverbs 15:1)
 - ◆ "Pleasant words" (Proverbs 16:24)
 - ◆ "He who restrains his words" (Proverbs 17:27)
 - ◆ "Like apples of gold" (Proverbs 25:11)
 - ◆ "Let the words of my mouth" (Psalms 19:14)

*“Do all the good you can—by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can, in all the places you can,
at all the times you can, to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can!”*
~ *John Wesley*



2. Avoid gossip and slander.

- ◆ “Not malicious gossips” (1 Timothy 3:11)
- ◆ “Evil speaking . . .evil heart” (Luke 6:45)
- ◆ Hatred produces gossip. (Psalms 109:3)
- ◆ Fools spread slander. (Proverbs 10:18)
- ◆ Idleness promotes gossip. (1 Timothy 5:13)
- ◆ *Slanderer* is the word *diabolos*, one of the names of Satan.

- E. Noticing the needs of others and, with the Holy Spirit's empowering, responding with works of kindness. (Considerate = Consider it.)
1. Help others, even when it's not convenient, even when it hurts.
 2. Devote our energy to others' welfare rather than to our own.
 3. Absorb hurts from others without complaining or fighting back.
 4. Give counsel humbly and gently. (Galatians 6:1-3)
 5. Take additional direction from 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24.

IV. What should motivate kindness?

- A. Recognize that our exercise of the law of kindness must be motivated by the royal law of love. *If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,' you are doing well.* (James 2:8)
- B. "Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings; it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all (Romans 15:2) and works no ill to any (Romans 13:8-10); love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith' (Gal. 6:10)."

~W.E. Vine

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