

Galatians 5:22-26

Gal 5:22 (NKJV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.²⁴ And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

We begin to look at the next word “**kindness**” which is the Greek word “*chrestotes*”. It is only used 10 times in the New Testament and is translated as “**goodness, kindness**”, and “**gentleness**” in those 10 uses of the word. This is a word that deals specifically with a person’s behavior., i.e., how they behave towards other people, or in other terms, how they treat other people. It is a word that primarily involves a kind of personal mildness and gentleness that a person has in their dealings with other people. [Romans 2:4](#) translates the word as “**goodness**” and says the following,

Ro 2:4 (NKJV) **Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

Now, as we begin the study of this particular attribute of “**kindness**”, this is really a very serious verse with which to begin. It is the negative side of the word that we want to look at first so that it balances out the rest of the defining characteristics of “**kindness**”. As quickly seen in this verse in [Romans 2](#), this “**kindness**”, what Paul calls this “**goodness**” of God is not something that is cheap. It is not something that is just there for our convenience so that we can casually use it when we think we need it. To the contrary, it is there for when we are unwilling to obey God, unwilling to repent of sin in our life, and unwilling to acknowledge that God is holy and we are unholy. It really should shock that person who is unrepentant and stubborn in their life that God would even consider giving them His grace. I.e., the kindness that God demonstrates is by its very character and spiritual nature designed to lead a person to repentance.

Just notice how strong Paul’s language is when talking about this “**goodness**” – “**do you despise the riches of His goodness**”? The word “**despise**” is translated in many different ways: “**do you think lightly of**” (NASB), “**do you presume on**” (ESV), “**are you so blind to trifle with and presume upon**” (AMP), “**do you show contempt for**” (NIV), and “**do you think so little of**” (ISV). The word “**despise**” means that the person has no esteem, no reverence, and no regard for someone or something. It is the Greek word “*kataphroneo*”, or literally to think down (“*kata*” is down/against and is something that denotes a kind of evil in its character, “*phroneo*” is to think).¹ This is how so many people in the church think about God’s “**goodness**”, God’s “**kindness**” – they take it lightly. It is amazing how lightly people regard God, His Word, His truth, and His church. We criticize the world for how they behave, but at the same time we belittle the things of God by ignoring them, by treating them lightly, and by acting as if we have nothing of which to repent.

If we understand anything about the Laodicean church in [Revelation 3](#), it is that this church age in which we live needs to repent of its sins against God. Do you know what one of the main problems is? The problem is that many so-called Christians “**despise the riches of God’s goodness**”. They take His

¹ Zodhiates, 847.

kindness and His forgiveness and His patience and His longsuffering for granted. Many churches have nothing more than a circus atmosphere of entertainment, and the church is constantly distracted by things that have no eternal value whatsoever. We have all of these media charlatans that prey on people's ignorance, on the elderly, and on the gullible. The church treats sin lightly and just ignores the demands of the Word of God on its corporate life and on the personal life of the believer. Believers in churches are simply what Hebrews calls "**dull of hearing**" and have no intention of going beyond a Sunday morning Christianity in their life. That is it, that is far as they will ever take their Christian life. Come to church, go home. That is it. The church in America is so spiritually bankrupt that it defies explanation. We have churches that welcome adulterers and couples living in open fornication into their congregations, and they do so with no remorse. The truth and the church's commitment to biblical truth has all but been abandoned for personal and cultural preferences. The church has become as worldly as the world. It seems to be more than content to compromise spiritual convictions and biblical truth for the expediency of identifying with the culture. No wonder Jesus said that the Laodicean church was spiritually bankrupt and needed to repent. Once again, why does this church age not repent? It is because it has no idea of how patient and of how kind God is to it. It just presumes on that kindness.

Now if we really understand what God's "**kindness**" is and how it has been demonstrated to us both personally and corporately, then it should deeply impact our life and our relationship to other people. All of these fruits of the Holy Spirit are amazing, but the idea of "**kindness**" and its impact on people should overwhelm the Christian. Just think for a moment of how often self-righteous believers regard non-believer's with contempt and disdain for how they live, while all the time we treat God as lightly as possible and with a kind of spiritual neglect and disregard for everything sacred. We do not need to be casting stones at the lost sinner who we know is naturally going to sin against God when we ourselves treat the things of God with our own kind of subtle contempt and disregard. We use to be exactly like the very lost person that we criticize. This is not justifying sin in any manner whatsoever, but it really is hypocritical on our part if we personally cast stones at the world for how they live when we are just as guilty of treating God with disrespect and indifference.

[Ephesians 2:7](#) declares that the "**kindness**" of God towards us personally is solely an act of His grace.

Eph 2:7 (NKJV) that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

I.e., if we did not and do not deserve the kindness of God, then what does that say about how we are to treat others who do not necessarily deserve kindness either. Just take [Titus 3:3-6](#) for instance. It speaks of how the "**kindness**" of God is directly linked to our salvation, but what is more than remarkable about this is that this "**kindness**" and God's grace were demonstrated towards us when we were living in rebellion to Him and to His will for our life.

Tit 3:3 (NKJV) For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ 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, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

In [2 Corinthians 6:4-7](#) Paul speaks of how his life was marked as a believer with “**kindness**”.

2Co 6:4 (NKJV) **But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,**

In [Colossians 3:12-13](#) we as believers are encouraged to “**put on**” and clothe ourselves with “**kindness**”.

Col 3:12 (NKJV) **Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ 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*.**

Stated in a very practical way, what “**kindness**” does in a believer’s life is that it mellows out the harshness, the times that we end up being callous with people and completely insensitive to the struggles that they may be going through in their life. In some ways, it is that quality that keeps us from being cruel, mean, spiteful, and heartless with people. [Proverbs 19:22](#) says,

Pr 19:22 (NKJV) **What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar.**

It is a word that means that we have a genuine and gentle concern and care for other people. Some people seem to think of “**kindness**” as a very weak quality in a person’s life, but for the believer, it is simply a reflection of how our heavenly Father has treated us. If He rendered to us what we deserved, no one would survive. Have you ever met someone who has a kind of sharp edge to their life, a kind of abrasive, harsh, and argumentative spirit about them? No one rarely even wants to be with that type of person, but in reality they are exactly the kind of people that need our kindness. To become angry with them, to have a disgruntled spirit around them, or to treat them with disrespect is exactly what God does not want. Why would they ever even want to come to Christ if Christians treated them that way? The goal is to bring a high level of grace into their life, to show them a way of life to which they are not inclined.

It seems that most people think of “**kindness**” as someone simply having a sweet disposition about them, but it is a much stronger word than just having a nice disposition and temperament. It is much more of a consideration for other people, for the needs that they genuinely have in their life. It is that willingness to help them and to alleviate and relieve some of the conflicts and struggles that they are facing in their life. It is that attitude that simply wants to help someone anyway that they can be helped. In fact, part of the meaning of the word “**kindness**” is that of being useful, of helping, of doing something for someone else.

The believer has to choose “**kindness**” as a way of life, and it is always reflected in the way that they talk and act towards others. Choosing this as a way of life is something that has to become incredibly intentional for the believer. We must assume complete responsibility for our attitude and our actions towards other people. “**Kindness**” is a deeply spiritual attribute that has to be intentionally cultivated in a person’s life. One of the most dangerous positions that a believer can take in regards to their life and some of its shortcomings is to always be making excuses and justifying why they never change. “*Oh, I’ve been this way all my life*” or “*It’s not my fault*” or “*That’s just the way God made me*”. None of that makes any spiritual sense whatsoever. It is like we think it is okay to be impatient, to have a short fuse,

and to always be annoyed by other people. The more that someone defaults to complaining about everything, the less “**kindness**” they will be inclined to demonstrate to others. The business of God in the Christian life is that of constantly transforming us into the image of Christ, into Christlikeness.

A believer’s life will never change until he wants it to change, and he will never change until his life becomes serious about what God wants for his life and how He wants him to change. People who never change the negative qualities in their life actually like the way that they have become. They are a certain way because that is simply how they personally have chosen to live – and almost with virtually no regards for how God wants them to live. People who constantly exhibit negative attributes and qualities in their life only do so because that is how they really want to live. They enjoy being stubborn or argumentative or unkind to people. They almost relish the opportunities to be disgruntled or annoyed with someone. Sometimes as a pastor I just want to tell someone who never seems to get what the Christian life is really about is “*Why don’t you just tell God that you really don’t want to change and ask Him to just stop bothering you? Just tell Him that you don’t care at all about growing spiritually.*” Listen very carefully. Kindness begins with truly caring about people and being compassionate and gracious towards them – even if you do not like them and even if they do not deserve it. [Ephesians 4:31-32](#) says,

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

That is it right there – “**be kind to one another**”. We rarely know all the struggles that people are going through in their lives. Then to make it worse, so many people work under high levels of stress and their schedules are very overloaded. They may be struggling in their marriages or in the work place with someone. We have to ask the question “*Why shouldn’t I be kind to someone?*” Is it because I was wronged by someone, or maybe I was just in a bad mood that day (which I personally do not understand at all), or because I personally am struggling and do not want to take the time or make the effort to be kind? Often times we do not feel that people even deserve kindness. Have you ever had a waiter in a restaurant that was just lousy and never got you any more drink or was short with you when getting the order? So, you treat them like they treated you. Is that right, is that what kindness is? I doubt it. Listen very carefully. Each of us are here and we are alive because God gave to us the greatest act of kindness ever demonstrated in our salvation when we deserved absolutely nothing but His judgment. We are the epitome of someone not deserving anything, yet having received God’s “**kindness**” in overabundance. Whether someone actually deserves kindness is not actually my decision to make.²

It is so important to understand how very powerful kindness actually is – not only for someone else, but also for us when we demonstrate it to others who are undeserving. Each of these nine attributes are contagious when they are operating in our life. On a negative side, just think of how powerful and unhealthy anger or bitterness is when someone exercises it towards someone else. If these things change us for the worse, we can be assured that attributes like “**kindness**” change us for the better. I am personally convinced that showing kindness to others generates joy and grace in my personal life. When I can do something for someone who does not deserve me doing something for them, it does something in me. Here is the simple principle that we have to understand regarding all of these nine qualities – the

² Cherry, ep.

more we allow the Holy Spirit to bear His fruit in our life, the more we become like Christ in our life.³ In [Matthew 9:35-36](#), it says this about Christ,

Mt 9:35 (NKJV) Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

When Christ looked at people, He saw them as always having tremendous needs, and His desire was to minister to them. Listen to [Philippians 2:3-4](#),

Php 2:3 (NKJV) *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.* ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

As a Christian, we have to understand that God works through our life. We are the vessels through which He pours out His lovingkindness, mercy, and compassion to those who simply do not deserve it at all. Listen. Just make room for kindness in your life. Rearrange your schedule if you have to so that you can show kindness to people. Do not squander all of the various opportunities that God gives to you to demonstrate His kindness to others. Just do the little things that people will appreciate. Hold the door open for them at the store. Help them load up their truck or their car when things are too heavy for them to lift by themselves. Interact with strangers. Talk to them, help them when you can. Just be kind to people, and you will reap the benefits of this great attribute that God is desiring to grow in your life.

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³ Cherry, ep.