

The Virtues of Christian Character – The Importance of Being Kind

Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see. (Mark Twain)

Acts 17:28 reads, **“For in Him we live and move and have our being.”** Literally, *“In Christ we live and move and are.”* In Christ you can’t hide behind a religious mask - you must be totally transparent! And in this context, it’s a call to Christ like character. Note, true character is not revealed through what you “do” (which is human effort), but rather by what you become (who you are).

Proverbs 3:3, 4 says, **“Never let loyalty and kindness get away from you! Wear them like a necklace; write them deep within your heart. And then you’ll find favour and be respected in the sight of God and man.”** Loyalty and kindness need to be held on to and thus valued greatly!

Kindness is a very precious attribute. Kindness reflects the intrinsic nature of God Himself. Kindness is goodness in action! It clearly demonstrates God’s loyal love and favour toward His people. In the Old Testament, the word translated **“kindness”** or **“loving-kindness”** refers to God’s longsuffering - His enduring determination to keep His promises to His chosen people in spite of their sin and rebellion (*Deuteronomy 7:12* and *Hosea 2:14-23*). In **Isaiah 54:8** the Lord declares, **“With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you.”**

Observe, this wonderful characteristic of God is directly related to His divine *mercy* toward believers. Even today, if God’s *loving-kindness* was not available, we would all suffer.

Isaiah 54:10, **“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you.”** **Ephesians 2:7**, **“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”**

Grace best represents the idea of God’s *kindness* or *loving-kindness*, and because God has been gracious toward you, you must learn to treat all people kindly. And you do this by being considerate and respectful to everyone. In fact, you have to love the unlovable, and *be kind to the unthankful and spiteful* (**Luke 6:35**).

Ephesians 4:32 says, **“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”** **Romans 12:10** takes it even further, **“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.”** In your relationships with those around you, you should be demonstrating your love by tender (*kindly*) affection, not by cool indifference or routine acceptance. You should prefer to see others honoured rather than yourself. *Kindness involves loving people more than they deserve.* If you want to lift yourself up, simply lift up someone else! You’ll become conspicuous through your acts of kindness.

Remember this, you can always judge a person’s character by the way they treat someone who can be of no possible use to them! A person who is kind to you but rude to the waiter lacks character. Kindness is always in your power, even when enthusiasm is not. The Greek word *“chrestos”* describes *the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience.* It also means, *gentleness in dealing with others, sweetness of disposition or considerate in conduct.* It denotes, *“goodness of heart,”* and literally means, *“to be useful to others.”*

Proverbs 19:22 states, **“What is truly desired in a man is kindness.”** The world out there is looking for people who are intrinsically kind. Kindness makes a person very attractive and a pleasure to be around. If you want to win someone over, melt them, don’t hammer them! This reminds me of a story I heard.

A tourist ordered breakfast in a restaurant. The waitress was rather grumpy and rude, and when his breakfast arrived, he looked up at the waitress and asked, "How about a kind word?" She leaned over to him and said, "Don't eat the eggs!"

But seriously, don't expect to enjoy the cream of life if you keep the milk of kindness bottled up! I like the saying *"If you're unkind, you're the wrong kind!"* especially if you're a Christian. As a follower of Christ you should be noted for your kindness. That is (a) Your gentleness in dealing with others; (b) your sweetness of disposition; (c) your kind, considerate and unselfish conduct; (d) your goodness and generosity of heart; (e) your usefulness to others.

1 Corinthians 13:4 tells us that, ***"Love suffers long and is kind."*** Love is kind! ***"It does not envy; it does not parade itself, is not puffed up."*** Notice, kindness has nothing to do with pride or selfishness. It's a proper and true extension of love. William Wordsworth said, *"The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."* Mother Teresa said, *"We can do no great things, only small things with great love."*

So remember, no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. It will keep coming back to you. Wherever there's another person present there is an opportunity to share kindness. Therefore, with regards to *being kind* - you must be opportunistic! Seek out situations and circumstances where you can be kind to someone. This is wise and shows maturity.

James 3:13, ***"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good [kind] conduct that his deeds are done in unpretentious wisdom."*** Kind conduct is a by-product of wisdom. And, wisdom is a good source of prosperity. Therefore, being kind will prosper you in all matters of life.

In this study, I've given you many quotes from many famous people but I'd like to add something William Shakespeare said, *"How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world."* Modern Christian theology has either placed too much emphasis on good deeds, or too little. Yes, our good deeds shouldn't make us feel self-righteous or pious, or feed our humanistic desires, but they can be a direct expression of our faith. They are how we let our light shine into a weary world!

"Faith without works is dead" [James 2:20]. Good deeds that stem from the goodness of your heart are an accurate measure of your faith. He looked after the downtrodden, the poor and the destitute. He showed them loving-kindness by meeting their every need, and by going to the cross. Jesus never left anyone the way He found them!

James makes this argument in **chapter 2 verses 15, 16 and 17..** ***"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled', but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."*** Your acts of loving-kindness will show the genuineness of what you profess. Faith creates good works, and good works perfect faith. These go hand in hand! Good deeds make you both useful to others and to society. And this verse tells us that without them no one profits [benefits]!