

The Power of Kindness!

Steve Sjogren, author of Conspiracy of Kindness, started a church in Cincinnati, Ohio, that grew to an average attendance of 7,500. Their motto is, "Small things done with great love are changing the world." They've discovered the power of showing 'God's love in practical ways' by carrying out random acts of kindness; such as paying for a stranger's coffee.

As people begin to become more generous with others, they discover, for themselves, the power of kindness. When kindness is expressed, healthy relationships are created, community connections are nourished, and people are inspired to follow suit.

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Kind – mild; gentle; clement; of a good or benevolent nature or disposition, as a person.

Let's look at an act of kindness in the Old Testament:

2 Samuel 9 (KJV)

1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake? 2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. 3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. 4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. 5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. 6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! 7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. 8 And

he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? **9** Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. **10** Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. **11** Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. **12** And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. **13** So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

Defining Kindness:

We are currently living in an era where kindness is not usually recognized or appreciated. Some people even regard kindness as demeaning and lowly. As Christians, it's easy to go with the flow of society, because most people don't like to be singled out. True kindness is a rare trait to come by these days!

Often, people decide to become a follower of Christ, but mistreat their 'un-saved' friends and relatives, because they view their behavior as 'un-spiritual.' Others concentrate on preaching the Gospel to their loved ones, but fail to exemplify the change that's occurred within themselves by showing them kindness. What these people fail to recognize is that kindness is a fruit of the spirit and it sweetens every legitimate relationship.

Jeremiah 9:24 (KJV)

24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Psalm 86:5 (KJV)

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

God's kindness to sinners is designed to lead them to repentance!

Romans 2:4 (KJV)

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

This kindness should encourage us to continue in His kindness.

Romans 11:22-23 (KJV)

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

The Fruit of the Spirit is more than an attitude or trait that we desire; it is evidence that the Holy Spirit lives in us. Some people have the idea that the Holy Spirit is mystical and unapproachable, but that is a misleading perception.

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The Holy Spirit illustrates God's personality to others. There is no place in the Bible where it tells us that the Holy Spirit is mystical and unapproachable.

Kind – mild; gentle; clement; of a good or benevolent nature or disposition, as a person.

Therefore, kindness is the action of goodwill and benevolence to others!

Our story: David delivered Mephibosheth through kindness when he asked, "Is there any of the house of Saul that I may show kindness?"

Kindness Is Revealed:

Kindness shows compassion.

Titus 3:4-7 (KJV)

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The believer is to put on 'kindness.'

Colossians 3:12-13 (KJV)

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

A biblical illustration of showing kindness is seen from the life of David.

The former king, Saul, had despised David and sought to kill him several times, but David never took advantage of Saul. In fact, Saul's son Jonathan became his closest friend.

After the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, David asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" It was then brought to David's attention that Jonathan had a crippled son, Mephibosheth. David sent for Mephibosheth, "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."

In addition to providing for Mephibosheth continually, David also restored to him the land that had been confiscated from Saul.

This was true kindness in action.

Ephesians 4:32 (KJV)

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

Kindness takes action.

Ephesians 2:4-7 (KJV)

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The fascinating thing is that this affection God has towards mankind is all-encompassed in the Hebrew word 'chesed.' 'Chesed' is translated as "loving-kindness."

Being made in the image of God, we are the objects of His "loving-kindness," His 'chesed!' Even though we all have our own shortcomings, He never gives up on us. In His 'chesed,' God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. He paid the penalty we deserve and extended mercy and grace to us.

There was nothing about Mephibosheth that deserved the 'chesed' that David gave to him, in the same way that there is nothing in us that deserves God's kindness either.

'Chesed' is unmerited favor and love towards someone. It's doing something for someone who doesn't deserve it, because it's who you are; it's a lifestyle.

Notice what David says in this text:

He asks, "Is there no one left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"

Because David had experienced God's 'chesed,' he, in turn, could express that same kindness to someone else.

David took action to show kindness to Saul's family even though Saul had devised and pursued to kill him.

When you have truly experienced the loving kindness of God in your life, it's hard to keep it to yourself.

Luke 7:47 (KJV)

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

In those times when someone wrongs you, you can be a channel of God's "loving-kindness."

It is very difficult to do, and we can't do it on our own, but with God's help we can find the grace to do it.

The fact of the matter is that we are all crippled in one way or another. We might not be physically crippled like Mephibosheth, but we are crippled nonetheless.

We are crippled in our hearts and minds, because of past wounds that never healed quite right. The pain of life has left us broken.

We all need the kindness of God, because it's rare to find it in the world around us.

However, when you see God's loving-kindness working through others, it causes you to stop and take notice, because it provides a glimpse into heaven; it makes the Gospel all the more believable.

When God saw that we would be unable to save ourselves through any earthly means, in His kindness and compassion, He sent Christ!

During World War II, a young paratrooper, David Webster of E Company, 101st Airborne wrote his mother, "Stop worrying about me. I joined the parachutists to fight. I intend to fight. If necessary, I shall die fighting, but don't worry about this because no war can be won without young men dying. Those things which are precious are saved only by sacrifice."

What a profound statement! How much more true that is when it comes to our salvation. If we are going to experience eternal joy and peace with God, then somebody has to sacrifice.

That someone is Jesus. Jesus didn't ignore our sin, brush it off, or hide in a cosmic footlocker.

God never would have settled for that. Instead, Jesus assumed your sin and let God crush him. It was on His cross that the kindness and justice of God came together.

Kindness is powerful.

Colossians 3:12-14 (KJV)

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Every last one of us has manifold opportunities every single week to reject the temptations of power and bitterness, to instead express God's "loving-kindness" to a person who doesn't deserve it.

Every time we don't return evil for evil, but rather return evil with good, we reveal a little bit more of God's "loving-kindness" to someone.

This doesn't mean we should be co-dependent and enable bad behavior. Sometimes the most loving thing we can do for somebody is hold them accountable for the things they say and do, within proper context that is.

To be a channel of God's kindness to others is to reject the desire to be bitter or to get even.

We can leave justice in the hands of God.

When we are channels of God's kindness in the world, we reveal the hope we have in Christ, and the rippling effect can be dramatic.

When David brought Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, to live with him, he exhibited that his compassion and kindness were above the hatred of Saul.

Kindness is more powerful than anyone can imagine.

Our acts of kindness can radically impact people who may never change, but these acts may break them to transform.

You can't imagine what impact you are leaving in their hearts when you show acts of kindness to people around you.

That is the power of kindness, which happens to be one of the virtues of the 'Fruit of the Spirit.'

Empowerment:

David delivered Mephibosheth through kindness when he asked, "Is there any of the house of Saul that I may show kindness.

Let me ask you today, **"Who will you deliver tomorrow through a random act of kindness today?"**

One writer said, "Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse. God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way. Look for God in others."

On an ordinary winter day in 1961, an MIT meteorologist named Edward Lorenz ran some routine experiments and found some unusual results. Lorenz discovered that seemingly tiny and insignificant changes in his data could produce huge differences in the final result. At first, Lorenz and other scientists in the field of chaos theory called this "the sensitive dependence on initial data." Fortunately, later on, Lorenz used a simpler term: "the butterfly effect." In 1972, Lorenz presented a scientific paper entitled "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set off a Tornado in Texas?" According to Lorenz's theory, the butterfly's wing-flapping doesn't actually cause a tornado, but it can start a chain reaction leading to giant changes in world-wide weather patterns.

In others words, even tiny, insignificant movements or action can produce huge changes that affect millions of people.

Kindness has a similar "butterfly effect." The spiritual butterfly effect occurs when we do small things for "insignificant" people, which makes a huge difference in God's eyes.

Why not show the delivering power of kindness to someone today?