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## **A Little Kindness Goes A Long Way**

### **EPHESIANS 4:32-5:2**

#### **Introduction**

1. No doubt, many of you have heard the words which I have utilized this morning, as the title of our lesson — “a little kindness goes a long way.”
2. Can you recall a time when someone was kind to you? Those things tend to stay with us.
3. Now, let me ask you to do something for me. Think of a time when you were kind to another person. What was their reaction to your kindness.
4. Did you know that this past Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, was “Random Acts of Kindness Day?”
5. Leo Buscaglia, an American author, motivational speaker, and a professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Southern California once said, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”
6. Mark Twain once said, “Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”
7. And it was the author Henry James, “Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; the third is to be kind.”
8. Is it any wonder that the apostle Paul listed “kindness” as one of the traits of the fruit which the Holy Spirit seeks to grow within our lives.
9. Let’s examine the kindness of which God’s Word speaks and challenge ourselves to let that kindness be seen more and more in our everyday lives.

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### **I. What Is Kindness?**

## **A. HOW DOES SCRIPTURE DEFINE IT**

1. Old Testament
  - a. *Hesed* (Hebrew) — mercy, kindness, loyalty, lovingkindness, steadfast love
  - b. When speaking of God’s kindness, we find words such as “mercy” (KJV, NKJV), “love” (NIV84), “lovingkindness” (NASB95), “steadfast love” (ESV).
2. New Testament
  - a. *Chrestotes* (Greek)
  - b. Goodness, kindness

## **B. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND IT TO MEAN?**

1. Kindness is composed of a number of attributes: loving affection, sympathy, friendliness, patience, pleasantness, gentleness and goodness.
2. It is a quality in our lives that is seen in the way we speak and act.
3. Kindness is not an emotion or a feeling. It is a choice.
4. We make a choice every day to be kind or unkind toward those around us.

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## **II. Our God Is Kind**

### **A. HIS KINDNESS IS SPOKEN OF THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT**

1. In the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, after the giving of the second commandment, that the people were not to make for themselves “a graven image” that they might “worship . . . or serve,” (Exodus 20:4), God then gave the reason:

“ . . . for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity fo the fathers on the children, on the third and the forth generations of those who hate

Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6).

2. In Psalm 145:8, David wrote, “The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.”
3. Nine verses later, in Psalm 145:17, David added, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds.”
4. Look with me for a moment at Psalm 136. Notice the number of times the psalmist writes, “His lovingkindness is everlasting,” “his mercy endureth for ever” (KJV), “His love endures forever” (NIV84) — (25 times).

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### **B. HIS KINDNESS IS THE BASIS OF OUR SALVATION**

1. It is the kindness of God which leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”  
(Romans 2:4)

2. In Titus 3:4-5, Paul reminds us that it was the appearance of God’s kindness which brought our salvation.

“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:4–5)

- a. The thing about kindness is that none of us deserve it, nor can we earn it.
- b. Kindness is free and merciful, this is why it is kindness.
- c. We must not think that the kindness God has shown us is easy or cheap.
- d. We are the recipients of the most costly act of kindness known to

mankind.

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2. Now, according to what Paul wrote in *Ephesians 2:7*, that kindness is the means by which God displays His grace in our lives.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (*Ephesians 2:4–7*)

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**C. HIS KINDNESS IS THE BASIS FOR OUR TREATMENT OF OTHERS**

1. In *Luke 6:35*, Jesus spoke of how we are to treat our enemies:

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High” (*Luke 6:35a*).

2. He then gives us the reason for such a response — “for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.” (*Luke 6:35*)
  - a. God is kind to the ungrateful — those who take God’s kindness for granted and don’t give it a second thought.
  - b. He is kind to the evil (wicked) — those who turn their back upon God and despise Him.

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**III. We Imitate God Through Our Kindness**

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an

offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” (*Ephesians 4:32–5:2*)

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**A. KINDNESS IS A PART OF THE “GARMENT” WE PUT ON AS CHRISTIANS**

“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*)

1. In *Proverbs 3:3*, Solomon said that we should bind “kindness and truth . . . around [our] neck” and “write them on the tablet of [our] heart.”
2. In *Proverbs 19:22*, he wrote “what is desirable in a man is his kindness.”
3. “The teaching of kindness is on [the] tongue” of the “excellent wife” (*Proverbs 31:10*).

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**B. KINDNESS IS TO CHARACTERIZE OUR TREATMENT OF OTHERS**

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor (shouting) and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (*Ephesians 4:31–32*)

1. We see enough bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor (shouting) and slander in our world today, not to mention the physical, mental and emotional injury which goes along with it.
2. We who are Christians are to have no part in such things.
3. Instead, we should be known as those who are kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other. Why?
4. This is what God has done for us through His Son.
5. Not only is love patient, it is also “kind” (*1 Corinthians 13:4*).
6. We must stop and ask ourselves a few questions:
  - a. Husbands, are you kind to your wives? Wives, are you kind to your

husbands?

b. Dads and Moms, are you kind to your children?

c. Children, are you kind to each other?

☐ If we aren't practicing kindness in our homes among the people we love the most, then where will we practice kindness?

7. Remember, Jesus said, "By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

## CONCLUSION

1. Do we act with kindness toward others?

a. So that others are "at ease" in our presence

b. So that they feel they can draw close to us?

2. Or do we treat others to a cold shoulder, do we respond toward them with arrogance and condescension in our tone of voice?

3. Fifty years ago this past month, a country music artist by the name of Glenn Campbell released a song which he titled, "Try A Little Kindness."

4. Listen to the lyrics:

**If you see your brother standing by the road  
With a heavy load from the seeds he sowed  
And if you see your sister falling by the way  
Just stop and say, "You're going the wrong way"**

**Don't walk around the down and out  
Lend a helping hand instead of doubt  
And the kindness that you show every day  
Will help someone along their way**

**You've got to try a little kindness  
Yes, show a little kindness  
Just shine your light for everyone to see**

**And if you try a little kindness  
Then you'll overlook the blindness  
Of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets**

5. Remember, what Mark Twain said, "Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."
6. God wants to use your kindness to lead others to Himself.
7. Are you a person here today who is not a Christian, but is tired of all the bitterness and harshness you see in the world.
8. Let me encourage you to come to Christ today, and experience the kindness of God in your life.
9. Won't you try a little kindness in your life?