

## March 31, 2021 | Wholly Living

Week 6 | Gal. 5:22-26 | Kindness

As we know, the 'Fruits of the Spirit' are virtues that correspond to the vices of the flesh Paul had indexed just a few verses prior in our passage. Paul's reasoning was that when the God of the universe takes up residence in a person's heart, some significant/obvious/undeniable changes will occur. And those specific changes are as follows:

### **READ: Galatians 5:22-26 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Now, as I've said each week in this study, we cannot cultivate nor can we produce these virtues on our own. Paul is insistent that each of these divine attributes *already* indwells the believer as they keep "in step" with the Spirit. They do not need to be worked on; instead, they need to be discovered.

In week 2, we tackled the first attribute of the Spirit: love. Love is that place from which all of the other graces flow. Without love, there are no fruits of the Spirit.

In week 3, we studied joy. Joy cannot exist without grace. The believer has joy and can rejoice precisely because they do not have to earn their way into God's good graces. God's graces are freely offered, and this truth, in turn, makes our hearts glad.

In week 4, Bob was kind enough to tackle peace. And as he eloquently pointed out, "No Jesus, no peace. Know Jesus, know peace."

Last week, dove into the concept of patience. Patience is simply the capacity to accept delay without losing one's temper; or, as one commentator put it, patience is "waiting with the *right* attitude."<sup>1</sup> In fact, James told us that to lack patience means to lack peace, and to an abundance of patience leads to an abundance of praise. And what sustains our patience is a known end. Since we know how it'll all end, we can patiently wait for God to fulfill his plans.

---

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie (2006), p. 266.

Today, we'll be looking at kindness. Aesop famously said, "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." And in this same vein, Mr. Rogers was once asked to define success, and he said, "There are three ways to ultimate success. The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. And third way is to be kind." Kindness was a rarity when Aesop lived 2,500 years ago. Kindness was a rarity when Mr. Rogers was on TV 50 years. And kindness is not only a rarity today, but it is a rarity in every age. Thus, the Christian, more than any other, ought to be kind because we, more than any other, have been shown the kindness of God.

The Greek word Paul employs here is **χρηστότης** (chrēstótēs). In almost every translation, the term is rendered "kindness," with the one exception being the KJV which renders it "gentleness." No matter how you translate it, chrēstótēs denotes the quality of one's character as tender, compassionate, and meek. Rather than one's default being that of rough or hostile, the kind person will be gracious and understanding. As with all the fruits of the Spirit, chrēstótēs is best exemplified by God Himself.

**READ:** Psalm 31:19-20 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> Oh, how abundant is your goodness [kindness], which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! <sup>20</sup> In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues.

**READ:** Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in **kindness** toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God was kind toward us even though we were undeserving. In fact, Paul will express in no uncertain terms that it was kindness that saved us.

**READ:** Romans 2:4 (ESV)

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness [kindness], forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness [kindness] of God leads you to repentance?

Thus, generosity and benevolence toward the undeserving is the best expression of kindness. Like love, when we are kind to those who do not deserve kindness, we embody divine ethics and function as God's representatives. As such, when we are kind—especially to those who have not earned our kindness—people take notice as if they've suddenly found a diamond in the mud.

**SO, WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?**

Kindness cares more about winning the person than winning the argument.

**READ:** Luke 6:35 (ESV)

<sup>35</sup> 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, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

It's not enough to simply love the unlovable we must also be kind to those who've been unkind to us. This would've been highly applicable to the church in Galatia as they were "biting" and "devouring" one another due to controversies and debates. Often when tempers begin to boil to the surface, kindness is first to evaporate. People rarely just want to win an argument; they also want to get even. And in their pursuit of getting even, kindness, like an engine's governor, has to be abandoned so they can go as fast and as hard as they want to.

## VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Wednesday Night Live | Wholly Living | Week 6

TITLE: Kindness

TEXT: Galatians 5:22-26

More than any other, the Christian ought to be kind because we, more than any other, have been shown the kindness of God. This would've been highly applicable to the church in Galatia as they were "biting" and "devouring" one another. Likewise, when tempers begin to boil to the surface, kindness is first to evaporate in our culture. People rarely just want to win an argument; they also want to get even. And in their pursuit of getting even, kindness, like an engine's governor, is abandoned so they can go as fast and as hard as they want to. But this not how the Christian should act. Because kindness, like Christ, cares more about winning the person than winning the argument.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: