

Fruit Of The Spirit #5
Gods Version of Kindness
Galatians 5:22-23

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She talked about how the man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama being played out. Then she asked the class: If you saw a man lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do? A little girl broke the silence by saying, "I think I would throw up."

The Good Samaritan is a feel good story. And we'd like to think we would behave just like the Samaritan did in Jesus' story.

As I was preparing for this message, I found the Bible teaches us that Gods concept of kindness does not come easily for us. We do not naturally exhibit God's type of kindness.

Romans 3:12 says, "All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

That's harsh but the Bible does teach that there is no one who naturally does kind things. In fact, Christians are urged to constantly seek to be kinder in their lives. Colossians 3:12 says, "Therefore, as Gods chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

Now, this is not to say that many people in this world don't do kind things. It's just that the world doesn't think of kindness the way God does.

For Example: Jesus gave us a rule of thumb on how to be kind to others. Its called the Golden Rule. Luke 6:31 "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Here is a shocker for you, Jesus wasn't the first to say something like this.

500 years before Jesus, Confucius said, "Do not unto others what you would not wish done to yourself." The Buddhist (which predates Jesus) also said "Putting oneself in the place of others, kill not, nor cause to kill." Rabbi Hillel (20B.C.) said

“What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. This is the whole law; all the rest is only commentary.”

All of these guys predate Jesus. And if we didn't look real close at them, most people would think they said what Jesus did... but that's where most people would be wrong!

Look again; Confucius said “DO NOT unto others.” The Buddhist said: “Kill not.” And the Rabbi said, “What is hateful to you don't do that.”

Notice how Jesus differs from all of these philosophers and religious teachers. They said “Don't” but Jesus said “DO.” “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

This is the significant difference between Gods concept of kindness and the worlds. Let me illustrate it for you.

There was a guy that told a story about his mother who happened upon this homeless man and invited him home for a warm meal. During supper the homeless man said, “I wish there were more people like you in the world.” The lady said, “Oh, there are, but you must look for them.” The old man shook his head and said, “Ma'am, I didn't need to look for you, you looked for me.”

See, the world figures kindness is just going about your own business and not hurting anybody. Gods type of kindness is the type that comes looking for you.

If you thought about it you could find example after example of God decent people doing wonderful things for people in need. But even then there is a difference. Look at Luke 6:27-36

Notice when Jesus was talking about the Golden Rule He was not telling His followers just how to treat other people. He was telling them how to treat their enemies. The ones who hate them. The ones who curse them. The ones who mistreat them. That doesn't come naturally to most of us. We can be nice to just about anybody except that jerk down the street!!

Gods type of kindness is reaching out to the mean-spirited of this world.

Kindness is probably the most effective tool that we as Christians have. It has a significant impact on the people around us because it isn't a natural response to

mistreatment. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ forgave you.”

Now you would think that being a church-goer would inoculate you against being unkind. But in the story of the Good Samaritan, it’s the religious people who ignore the man in the ditch.

Luke 10:31-32 “A Priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.”

These were religious people. They were in the synagogue every Sabbath day. They faithfully gave a tithe of all they earned. They studied the bible religiously. In fact, they probably had more of the scriptures memorized than most of us ever hoped to. And yet they passed by a man who was truly in need.

Being religious doesn’t guarantee that you will be a nicer person. It can help, but by itself will not necessarily change the way you or I behave.

In Galatians 5 we are told the Fruit of the Spirit is “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness.” What does that mean? It means that the more of God’s Spirit we have in our lives, the more we will exhibit His joy. The more His peace will rule our lives. The more patient we will be with each other. And the kinder we will be to our enemies and to those who mistreat us.

This is our gas gauge. This is how we know if we are walking in the Spirit. It also tells us when we are running low on God Spirit.

James Hudson Taylor said, “If your father and mother, your sister and brother, if the very cat and dog in the house, are not happier for you being a Christian, then I question whether you really are.”

The kinder we are the more like Christ we become.

Jesus loved the sinner who wanted to change. He touched the sick and deformed that no one else wanted to touch. Jesus showed compassion even for His enemies at the cross when He said, “Father forgive them.”

In the Greek the word for Christ is “Christos” and the word for Kind is “Chrestos” there’s just one letter difference.

In the first century, the believers were so kind that many people did not know whether their title was Follower of Christ or Follower of kindness.

Again, being religious will not make you kind people but when we walk in the Spirit, when we try to treat others the way Jesus treated us, then people will know who we belong to.