

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Loving Kindness

(Jerry Fite)

When you truly love something, you think about it often. You willingly gravitate toward it. It is a very important part of your conscious life. When was the last time you thought of kindness? More importantly, when was the last time you started your day thinking of how you could be kind, and then acted accordingly during the day?

One of the most comprehensive descriptions of the person God commends is found in Micah 6:8: *“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?”* The rhetorical question combines treating others with justice and kindness as we walk humbly with God. We cannot be good in God’s sight kind toward our fellow man. We will tend towards being consistently good if we first love kindness.

Kindness has been defined as *“... sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain”* (William Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit*, p.

97). This “kindness” or “spirit of gentleness” will be readily seen in the life of those guided by the Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:22, 6:1*). Such “*spiritual*” people come to the aid of those overtaken in a trespass and in need of restoring. Extending kindness to the fallen Christian, while at the same time acknowledging we too could be so ensnared, is a powerful combination of kindness and humility toward man and before God.

Simple words of kindness brighten cloudy days. Abraham Lincoln had nine newspaper clippings in his pocket when assassinated. They were predominately sources of encouragement. Among letters from disaffected Southern soldiers, and the arousing marching orders of Sherman as he led troops through the south to the Atlantic Ocean, there were two clippings praising Mr. Lincoln. One was a letter from the English Reformer John Bright to the American newspaper editor Horace Greely which praised Lincoln. Bright looked at Lincoln’s presidency as *“an honest endeavor faithfully to do the work of his great office, and in the doing of it, a brightness of personal honor on which no adversary has yet been*

able to fix a stain.” Such words of encouragement apparently helped Mr. Lincoln through dark days of discouragement and self-doubt. You never know when and how your words of kindness will sustain others in difficult times.

Forgiving others connects us with the character of God. His kindness has been manifested to us in forgiveness (*Titus 3:4, Ephesians 2:7*). Through the kindness of a tender heart, we should forgive others (*Ephesians 4:32*). But that person does not deserve such kindness; they were not kind to me! Neither were we deserving of God’s kindness. However, He forgave us when we penitently came to him. To graciously forgive others, is being like God.

Being a lover of kindness will keep us alert to deeds of kindness. A kind word restoring the sinner and encouraging the downtrodden will be on our tongue. Forgiving with kindness will be in our heart. But little deeds of kindness will not be insignificant in our busy lives. Opening the door for encumbered hands, and allowing entrance for pleading drivers are little deeds of kindness which do not take much time, but do much good.