



The tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do

Issachar Ministries UK seeks to be a people who understand the times, listen to the Lord and know what should be done

**Resourcing for Prayer Network**  
**Spiritual Guidelines**  
**The Fruit of the Spirit (vi)**

*'love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.'* Galatians 5:22)

# Be kind to each other - be understanding

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3.12)*

*"With everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer (Isaiah 54:8)*

*"This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier" (Ruth 3:10)*

Monica Hill

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**Kindness seems such a simple word and it may seem strange that it is considered a fruit of the Spirit rather than a gift or a natural attribute. It is not just the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate but it is allowing the Holy Spirit to develop maturity in your life - so that God's love and kindness to us can flow through you to others.**

A kind word or action to another person can work wonders in relationships. Strong's Concordance describes kindness as 'goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, kindness, affability'. The Holy Spirit removes abrasive qualities from the character of anyone under his control which shows in the graciousness of their dealings with others. The King James version uses the term "gentleness".

## Empathising - Thinking of Others

Kindness is based on the mind-set described in Philippians 2:3-4: *'Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others'*. In other words it is thinking of and valuing others; respecting and helping others without waiting for someone to respond. It even describes the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience! It is a community word: we cannot be kind on our own, or even just with God - we need other people to whom we relate!

Although kindness can sometimes be viewed by others as weakness; an easy touch or even frivolity, as Christians we need to withstand the taunts and hold fast (1 Corinthians 4:13).

## What does the Bible say?

There seem to be more examples of kindness in the Old Testament than in the New - the kindness shown by Ruth to Naomi and also to Boaz is a striking example; God showed kindness when he provided for Elijah and the widow of Zarephath during a drought - and he showed more kindness later when he raised the widow's only son from the dead (1 Kings 17:8-24). Kindness motivated Jesus to stop what he was doing and help others in need (Mark 6:34; Mark 7:29; Mark 10:46-52). Jesus modelled kindness for us to show even to those we see as our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). Peter wrote of adding love to "brotherly kindness" (2 Peter 1:7). There are more biblical and other quotes on the value of kindness in the box overleaf.

## Greek and Hebrew Origins

*'Chrestotes'* in Greek and *'Hesed'* in Hebrew are most frequently translated into the English word "kindness."

The Greek word is often used in philanthropy or about forbearance and the humaneness of rulers. It is the grace which pervades the whole nature, mellowing all which would be harsh and austere - it describes one's disposition. It is used for

wine being mellow and smooth. The apostle Paul uses this word to depict God's incomprehensible kindness for people who are unsaved (Romans 11:22; Ephesians 2:7; Titus 3:4).

*Hesed* is more complex, and often denotes that the help given by the person showing mercy or kindness is done freely - for example in the unbreakable or unfailing love of God

## How Mature is Your Kindness?

Meditate on the following and give examples from your own experience?

1. Does the kindness I show to others reflect God's kindness to me?
2. Is my kindness pure - or do I seek to gain in any way?
3. Do mercy, love and compassion play a large part in my kind acts?
4. How much do I sacrifice for others instead of showing selfishness?

## In What Ways Can You Show Kindness?

Sometimes it's the little things that count. Pay someone an unexpected visit; say a word of encouragement or comfort; show friendliness by warmly and sincerely greeting people; smile rather than frown; let others go ahead in a queue; compliment those around you; open doors for people; sympathize with others' misfortune. Give true compliments (not flattery) to others to help brighten their day; interact with strangers instead of just walking by them; sit and talk with people who clearly appear to not want to be by themselves ..... The list is endless - add more yourselves.

Be aware of the numerous opportunities for kindness which can come around several times a day. Make the most of each opportunity and if you miss one, strive to show kindness the next time that situation arises.

Paul encouraged all levels of the early church to be kind - from leaders (2 Timothy 2:24) to housewives (Titus 2:5)

## God's Kindness to Us

The Lord promised *'Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love (kindness in the AV) for you will not be shaken, nor my covenant of peace be removed'* (Isaiah 54:10), *'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness'* (Jeremiah 31:3). Romans 2:4 reminds us of

the reason we should not despise the Lord's kindness to us as it is intended to lead us to repentance which means a change of our mindset. Though God's tender mercies and loving kindnesses are often taken for granted, his people will recognize his hand. If we follow his example and are merciful and kind as he is to us we will do the same toward others.

## Going the Extra Mile

Kindness is humbly giving of ourselves in love and mercy to others who may not be able to give anything back, who sometimes don't deserve it, and who frequently don't thank us for it. Rebecca went the extra mile when Isaac asked for a drink by watering the camels too (Genesis 24:14). The giver is nearly always blessed as well as the receiver - but this should never be the motive.

## Anomalies and a Final Word

Kindness should never be taken for granted. In our world today more people are becoming impatient and in a hurry and many people have lost the ability to treat others with kindness and respect. Many people like to receive a kindness and we need to pray that they are then kinder to others. Every action, every word should have the flavour of grace in it. To maintain this attitude toward those we love is hard enough. To express kindness toward those who are against us requires the work of God (2 Corinthians 6:4-6).

## Worthwhile Quotes

A kind-hearted woman gains honour, but ruthless men gain only wealth (Proverbs 11:16).

Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up (Proverbs 12:25).

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God (Proverbs 14:31)

Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor (Proverbs 28:8).

The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold (Acts 28:2).

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Deeds of kindness are equal in weight to all the commandments. TALMUD

Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless. MOTHER TERESA

Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind. ERIC HOFFER

Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning. FREDERICK W. FABER

Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom. THEODORE RUBIN

Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together. JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver. BARBARA DE ANGELIS

Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end. SCOTT ADAMS

The little unremembered acts of kindness and love are the best parts of a person's life. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The only way to tell the truth is to speak with kindness. Only the words of a loving man can be heard. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

When you carry out acts of kindness you get a wonderful feeling inside. It is as though something inside your body responds and says, yes, this is how I ought to feel. HAROLD KUSHNER

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