

Kindness: Goodness in action



We usually think of kindness as *being nice to someone*, but when we really look into it, there is much more to kindness than we initially think. Biblical kindness is not some small act, but an attitude and even a character trait. Kindness is listed as a *Fruit of the Spirit*, but the Greek word translated as kindness is not easily defined in English and often is translated gentleness or goodness. It is trait of who God is and should be a trait evident in every Christian's life - not once in a while, but all day - every day!

One author suggests that kindness is the basis of a lasting relationship - it is *very* important in marriage! But it is *not* a matter of *doing* - none of us can be kind to our spouse all day, every day on our own strength. It begins with the right attitude; thinking the best of our spouse - incorporating Philippians 4:8 into our lives and considering the good things, rather than entertaining the negative. Yet, kindness not just having a positive attitude; it requires action. It especially is demonstrated in goodness toward the undeserving just as God has been kind to us even when we did not deserve it.

Kindness is one of the attributes we are to clothe ourselves with in Colossians 3:12. Because our spouse deserves it? No, because we are *God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved*. Do we consider our spouse before ourselves? Do we seek to meet their needs, even when our needs are not being met? Do we answer softly, even when they are harsh? Unfortunately, for me, the answers to those questions are too often, "no." One author wrote, "Kindness makes each partner feel cared for, understood, and validated—feel loved." It is intrinsic to who God is and a trait of the Godly men and women of the Bible and should be a trait we also exhibit.

Kindness is more a challenge for some of us than for others, but it a requirement for everyone who calls themselves a Christian. What can you do to demonstrate goodness in action—to be *kind* to your spouse. Begin with the right attitude, and with God's help, clothe yourself daily with kindness.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Book to check out: *Love Kindness: Discover the Power of a Forgotten Christian Virtue* by Barry Corey

Articles to check out:

4 ways kindness makes a difference in your marriage by Amy Van Veen - www.focusonthefamily.ca

Masters of Love: Science says lasting relationships come down to—you guessed it—kindness and generosity by Emily Esfahani Smith - www.theatlantic.com