

Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness

The quality of being **friendly, generous, and considerate**.

Kindness is associated with mercy, a deep and genuine compassion for people; we are moved to be kind because we care. Caring is the essence of God's selfless love (Agapao) expressed to us, which He also loves to see expressed through His people. God is looking for a people who care.

It is the kindness of Father expressed in Jesus, revealed to us by Holy Spirit that made our salvation possible. His kindness makes provision for forgiveness of sins at the cost of Jesus dying on the cross. This is the greatest act of kindness in history.

Eph. 2:7 *"in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his **kindness** to us in Christ Jesus."*

There may be times when our acts of kindness will be misunderstood, scorned or rejected. But a kind person is one who does not flinch at the cost. Kindness has become a unfashionable characteristic. We are considered weak and ineffective if we do not appear to be assertive and strong. Society has become more violent, people loose their temper more frequently, e.g. sports personalities, show 'biz' people, general public and maybe us! People are rude in their actions and their language, swearing openly about everything and everyone, think of 'road rage' and of assaults on staff, in hospitals, offices, teachers and all areas where people are serving the general public.

Some blaspheme, to offend others, this lacks kindness. People are generally cautious about offering help and speaking to strangers, many no longer demonstrate acts of kindness – it's considered too dangerous.

We must be careful that the attitudes of the world do not rub off onto us. It is so easy to just follow the crowd.

The crowd knew who Jesus was, but look how they turned on Him, within a few hours -

Firstly **Matt. 21:9** *"The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

Secondly **Mark 15: 11-15** *"But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted. "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder; "Crucify him!"* Jesus is our role model

Father held fast to his plan of kindness, so must we!

Read the story of the Good Samaritan in **Luke 10:25** onwards. An outstanding example of kindness and mercy, particularly bearing in mind that the Samaritan was the "lowest of the low" in the eyes of the Jew, but remember Jesus also *said*:

Read Matt 25:34-46 Acts of kindness can be small or large and even for a cup of cold water, Jesus said the giver will certainly not lose his reward.

Mat 5:39 *But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

It's not criticism that changes people's lives, but our demonstration of the Fruit of The Spirit in our lives: Love – Joy – Peace – Patience – **Kindness** – Goodness – Faithfulness - Gentleness and Self Control!

Prov 12:10 *A righteous man cares about his animal's health, but even the merciful acts of the wicked are cruel.*

Kindness is part of the nature, personality and character of Jesus, Father and Holy Spirit. The fruit of Holy Spirit, builds us into examples, which lets people see the "better way".

Mat 7:13-16 *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it. "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. **By their fruit you will recognize them.** Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?"*

The image of thorns and thistles is pain and this is what we'll get if we follow the wrong people. Know when it is time to avoid being kind - when it is wise to keep away.

Do we have evidence of kindness in our lives?

2 Peter 1:3-9 *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may **participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly **kindness**; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will **keep you from being ineffective and unproductive** in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is near-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."*

We have a tendency to lose the plot when we are tired and irritable, when things are going wrong and 'we have had enough' - then kindness seems to flee out of the window. These are times when we need to be mature and call on the Holy Spirit for the "divine power" to overcome our weakness.

The people who test our kindness tend to be the people that we are closest to, simply because we spend more time with them and experience more life with them.

Col 3:12 *Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, **put on** heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,*