



Kindness





Core Truth: God gives KINDNESS!

Scripture: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32



Do you remember a time when someone was kind to you? When someone shared a toy, gave you a high-five, or invited you to play? How did that make you feel? Kindness makes us feel good. It is how God wants us to treat one another and He gives us kindness to be able to do that.

Our verse today talks about being kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. We should do these things because they are the exact things God showed to us through Christ: kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness. Kindness is what we are called to and God equips us to be kind through the Fruit of the Spirit.

God gives KINDNESS!

Let's Talk About It!

How has God shown us kindness?

- By sending us His Son to die on the cross.
- He comforts us.
- He provides for us.

Apply It!

How can we show God's kindness to other people?

- Invite a friend to play.
- Let your sibling borrow a toy.
- Say something kind to someone that will make them smile.

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank You for all the kindness You have shown to us and how You have shown us how to be kind to others. Help us to show people kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness, just like You called us to in Ephesians 4:32. We love You, God.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

~ Rebecca Robertson Holloway



Syllamo National Forest, Mountain View, Arkansas

Proverbs of Kindness

*A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings disaster on himself.*

Proverbs 11:17

*The one who despises his neighbor sins,
but whoever shows kindness to the poor
will be happy.*

Proverbs 14:21

*The one who oppresses the poor insults their Maker,
but one who is kind to the needy honors Him.*

Proverbs 14:31

*Kindness to the poor is a loan to the Lord,
and He will give a reward to the lender.*

Proverbs 19:17

The Power of Words

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted

I was meditating on the fruit of the Spirit, when the fruit of kindness came to mind. As I thought about the fruit of kindness I remembered an experience I had long ago, when God taught me the Power of Words.

There was an old saying I learned when I was a child ... “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words (names) will never hurt me.” I often recited this to myself in order to help overcome the sting of angry words spoken by playmates, or sometimes even my siblings. I thought this saying would ease the hurt I felt when others called me derogatory names or spoke harshly to me. The fact that this “rhyme” never actually eased the hurt didn’t stop me from repeating it as a comfort to myself. I still hoped it would bring solace from biting words directed at me.

As I grew older, I realized that words can hurt deeply, and I came to understand there was no truth to what this saying proclaimed! Critical and judgmental words were able to hurt when they were spoken to me. But I still didn’t realize the full power of words, or how they could affect the relationships I shared every day – relationships with family, friends, or co-workers! But God brought revelation in regard to how words have power – to bring blessing and joy to every situation in life, or to hurt or offend someone!

Many years ago I worked in a daycare/nursery school as a “teacher” for a class full of precious 3 year olds! I loved my job, and for me it was like having a room full of grandchildren! Every day was different, and I loved the children dearly!

When they came through the door each morning, I had a hug ready for them, and often a word or two of encouragement and a positive thought for each child! It was pure joy! However, my mother died in the spring of my last year there and I made the discovery that I needed to step back from work. I found it too difficult to meet the emotional needs of my 3 year olds and still handle my own emotions and grief from my mother’s death.

Once I made the decision to leave, I turned in my notice and sent a letter to the parents letting them know I would be leaving and that I needed them to prepare their children for my departure from the daycare!

When my last day arrived, so did all the parents, with refreshments, gifts, and many kinds words! I loved my time with all of them, and enjoyed sharing stories with the parents, but Hunter Lee's Mom shared a story with me that impacted me greatly that day!

Hunter was a beautiful, brown haired little girl that was impeccably dressed every day! She matched from head to toe - with her clothes, shoes, ribbons, barrettes, even socks - all of it beautifully coordinated! She was like a vision when she came through the door every morning, and she was a joy to behold! But what her Mom shared next surprised me!

She told me that Hunter would spend at least an hour every night (sometimes more) picking out her clothes and accessories (ribbons, bows, colors, etc.) before she went to bed! Hunter was determined everything had to be "just right!"

After watching this take place for several weeks, her Mom finally asked Hunter why she spent so much time picking out her clothing and accessories, and Hunter's answer was what amazed us both! I was overwhelmed by the answer!

Hunter told her Mom, "I know when I go to school tomorrow Miss Judy will notice my clothes, and I know she will tell me how beautiful I look!"

Even now, decades later, I realize the power kind words can have, no matter what age you are! In the years since that revelation from God, I have discovered more and more that kind words can also lead to kind actions - in the form of hugs, a freshly baked batch of cookies, or a refreshing cold drink of water!

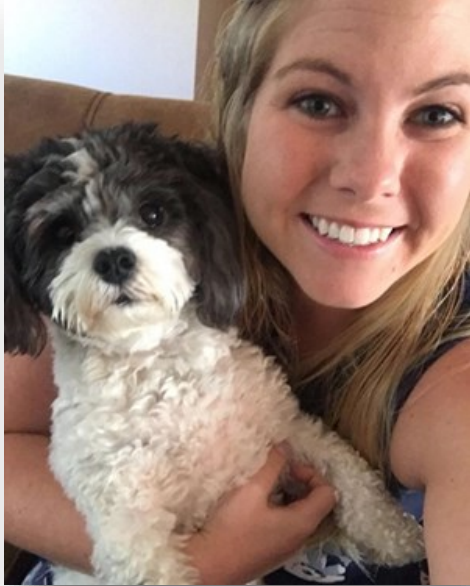
"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted" Ephesians 4:32

~ Judy Harrison



Kind Like Kenna

On April 14, 2019, a young middle school teacher from Clarksville, Tennessee lost her life in a tragic automobile accident. Her name was Kenna Gupton Robards.



In the days that followed, her co-workers, students, friends and family began to use a hashtag, a slogan if you will, to remind us all of how special she was.

#KINDLIKEKENNA

To try to describe Kenna, I feel like I need color words. She was just vibrant to those who knew her and she had an impact on everyone she met. She was funny and supportive but could also be real with you when it was necessary. She made the most of each day and crammed more into 24 hours than many of us can into a week. She taught middle school, and 7th grade at that, which in and of itself takes an angelic quality in my opinion. Her students adored her. Her co-workers loved her. The administration hoped for a school full of faculty just like her.

As students and teachers continue to talk about her, the words “beautiful” and “kind” are most common. One of my favorite descriptions is that she was “the perfect combination of sass and class”. I think that fit her so well. Kenna loved sports and cheered on her favorite teams with intense enthusiasm. She was competitive and loved to win. To know her was

to love her. Kenna was just special for a lot of reasons, but mostly because of the way she cared about people. And she cared about lots and lots of people.

Often we have no idea of the impact we might be making on someone. Kenna lived and loved intentionally because she knew that Christ loved her first. She showed up when it mattered. She stayed present and she listened. She made everyone feel special by being her authentic self. She let people know they were important to her. She was selfless. In a world full of anger, impatience, harshness, entitlement, jealousy, bitterness and hate....kindness matters. Love matters. People matter.

Forevermore when I think of kindness, I pray I'm reminded to be #kindlikekenna.

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you...”

Matthew 7:12

~ Stephani Cook

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

Colossians 3:12



Who Is My Neighbor
 R. Lyndel Littleton
 Acrylic on canvas

*"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man
 who fell into the hands of the robbers?"*

"The one who showed mercy to him," he said.

Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

*Luke 10:36-37**

*Read the entire parable—Luke 10:25-37

What "other" fruits of the Spirit do you see in this parable?

Choosing Kindness and Goodness over Vindication

I was making copies at the hospital where I worked in social services when I heard the nurses talking around the corner, out of sight. One of the nurses said my name, then went on to claim something about me that wasn't nice at all. In fact, it was a lie. My heart sank. Then my anger stirred. What right did she have spreading lies about me?

Suddenly, she turned the corner and we were face-to-face. Her surprised countenance told me that she realized I'd heard what she said.

I had a nanosecond to decide what to do. Stand up for myself? Call her a liar in front of everyone and defend my reputation?

Instead, I smiled a sincere smile at her, collected my papers from the copier, and walked away.

At first I wasn't sure why I made that decision. But in the moments and days that followed, I realized the Holy Spirit had silently and gently prompted me toward acting in a way that would bring glory to God. Jesus did not fight for his "rights" or reputation when He was on trial for his life (Mark 14:60-62). Instead, He behaved in a humble way that brought glory to His Father, letting the truth speak for itself, *to those who would listen*.

Not long after the incident, there was a debate in the office over the best popcorn in the world. The nurse ("Holly") said she'd never tried my favorite kind of popcorn before, so the next day I brought in a bag and laid it on her desk. When she arrived at work she laughed and said she'd try it.

The next day she raved about how delicious that popcorn was. A few days later, a bag of it arrived on my desk, compliments of Holly. For weeks we took turns giving each other bags of that popcorn.

We ended up chatting about more than popcorn; sometimes we talked about work, life, and my faith. Though she didn't share my faith, she would listen as I talked about it. But what was even more important than what I said about my faith was how I lived my life. She remarked more than once that I was exceptionally kind and good (two fruits of the Spirit), and I said it was only by the grace of God that there was anything good in my life.

Several months after the incident, I noticed that the bag of popcorn

I'd left on her desk was still sitting there. It turned out she'd not been feeling well, went to the ER, and discovered that she had a brain tumor. Two weeks after her diagnosis, she was dead.

I don't know if Holly ever thought about our conversations of faith. I won't know until I get to heaven if she ever took my Savior as her own Savior. What I do know is that while I had every right to stand up for myself when she slandered me, it would not have led to the relationship we developed in the end.

I often regret standing up for my so-called rights, because I nearly always do so with an attitude of self-righteousness that is not godly. What I have never regretted is emulating Christ's examples of kindness and goodness.

~ Kelly O'Sullivan



*Be kind, always showing gentleness
to all people.*

Titus 3:2

