

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Emerson Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns, Mrs. LeeAnn Wiser.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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The Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness

By Derek Long

Kindness is a virtue we all can appreciate. Everyone wants others to treat them with kindness. If we are going to heed Jesus' instruction in Matthew 7:12 to do unto others as we want them to do unto us, we should develop the quality of kindness in our lives. Galatians 5:22-23 lists kindness as a part of the fruit of the Spirit. It says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." People who are walking in the Spirit, being led by the Spirit and living in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 18, 25) will possess kindness.

Kindness is a part of the fruit of the Spirit because it is part of the character of God. The people in Nehemiah's day remember God's dealings with the nation and say, "They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them" (Nehemiah 9:17). Joel reminds the people of God's kindness as an incentive to repent. He tells the people, "So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm" (Joel 2:13). The Psalmist on occasion will contemplate the kindness of God. Psalm 31:21 says, "Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!" Psalm 117:2 says, "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!" The New Testament speaks of how God displays kindness to the unthankful and evil by giving temporal blessings (Luke 6:35).

The New Testament also reminds us of God's kindness toward us in sending Jesus to die for our sins. Titus 3:4-7 says, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." See also Ephesians 2:4-7 for a similar description of God's kindness. God displays His kindness by being willing to do good and forgive others, even those who have wronged Him. God's kindness allows Him to be slow to anger. God's example helps us see what is involved in showing kindness to others in our own lives. If we are going to, "be imitators of God as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1), we must learn to show kindness in our lives (Colossians 3:12).

Kindness needs to be displayed when we are teaching others the truth. Paul spoke of the way he acted as an apostle so "that our ministry may not be blamed" (2 Corinthians 6:3). While we are not apostles entrusted with the same sort of ministry, we should seek to imitate his example lest we bring reproach to the cause of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 6:6 he commended himself as a minister of God by the kindness he displayed. As we teach others, do we use gentleness and kindness (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galatians 6:1)? People need to know we have their best interest at heart when we teach them the gospel. People need to know we do not have any ulterior motives behind teaching them the gospel. Let us be people who are "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Kindness needs to be displayed in our relationships with our brethren. 2 Peter 1:7 mentions qualities we are to be adding to our lives as Christians and among the list it mentions "brotherly kindness." Kindness should be expected among brethren but we need to make sure we conduct ourselves in this manner. "If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Galatians 5:15).

Kindness needs to be displayed in our relationships with our enemies. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and by doing so we are imitating the example of God (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:34-36). It is typically easy to be kind to someone who is kind toward you but more difficult to be kind when someone is being mean toward you.

Romans 12:20-21 reminds us of the power kindness toward our enemies can have. It says, "Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." When others mistreat us, do we respond with kindness and mercy? Are we willing to forgive as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32)?

Kindness needs to be displayed in the home. It is said of the virtuous wife, "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). The relationship between husbands and wives as well as the relationship between parents and children would be improved by having kindness. Love is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4). If we love our spouse, children, and parents, we will show them kindness.

Remember the proverb, "What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar" (Proverbs 19:22)! Are we kind people? If not, let's make the necessary changes in our lives so we can be filled with the fruit of the Spirit.