

## Life to the Fullest: I Choose Kindness

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Sunday, May 20, 2001

Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

Life is full of moments when we stumble, stutter, suffer, struggle, etc., and our world is not sympathetic to most of the challenges and crises we face. Most people would rather we get out of the way than to offer a sympathetic hand.

We all need a little dose of something I want to discuss today: kindness.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness . . .” Galatians 5:22

Everybody needs and wants to experience kindness in life.

“Kindness is a language which the deaf ear can hear and the blind can read.”

—Mark Twain

### THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS IS ROOTED IN THE NATURE OF GOD

What is God like? So often the picture is stern, harsh and judgmental.

The lobster is probably one of the least cute and cuddly creatures of God’s creations. They are classified as a exoskeletal creature, having an external supportive bone structure covering on the outside. People are classified as endoskeletal, having an internal supportive bone skeleton. Lobsters are hard on the outside and soft on the inside. In contrast, our skin makes us soft on the outside and our bone structure makes us hard on the inside.

Too many Christians are like lobsters in convictions, always showing a hard exterior in a harsh and unloving manner.

God became flesh—He put skin on—to reach us with His love and grace.

What does the Bible say about us?

“... There is none who does good, no, not one.” Romans 3:12b

Kindness is not a normal or natural trait to the human heart.

Galatians 5:19-21 does not exactly provide a flattering picture of us:

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons and daughters of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.” Luke 6:35

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness (kindness) of God leads to repentance?” Romans 2:4

“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 . . .” Titus 3:4-5

“ . . . that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 2:7

### THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS MUST BE SHARED WITH OTHERS

In Galatians 5:22:

**Virtues 1-3** (love, joy, peace) are toward **God**.

**Virtues 4-6** (longsuffering, kindness, goodness) are toward **others**.

**Virtues 7-9** (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) are toward **myself**.

“Be kind to one another . . .” (Eph. 4:32) is one of 26 reciprocal commandments.

Take time to be kind!

♦ **Show active concern for those who hurt.**

Send a card, share a meal, offer a word of encouragement and recognition.

One of the astounding and, at times, amazing things we witness in our world are the rude, crude, harsh, hateful and uncaring attitudes of people. To be kind is not to be without wisdom and discretion. There are times to get tough, but too many fail to be tender.

♦ **Speak constructive words to those who hear.**

So often the injury of unkindness comes through the passage of a sharp tongue.

“There is one who speaks like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.” Proverbs 12:18

So often we are critical and injurious to others. We need to find ways to articulate, express and encourage others. Choose words well.

“Kind words don’t wear the tongue out.”

♦ **Seek effective witness for those without hope.**

One of the greatest tools for evangelism is kindness.

“Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence and learning.”

—Fredrick W. Faber

What if we were known as the kindest church in this community?

“Nothing is more winsome nor effective than the loving kindness that reaches out in genuine sympathy to the spiritually forlorn . . .”

—Stuart Brisco, *Kindness Evangelism*

“We must not be a terror for sinners, but a haven for them.” —D.L. Moody

♦ **Share positive love with those who hate.**

“But love your enemies, do good . . .” Luke 6:35

Many live wrapped in a world of hatred. They are like a man with a winter coat on a blustery day. The more the wind blows, the tighter he wraps his coat around him. But when the sun comes out, the coat comes off!

In the Bible story of King David, the young David was viewed as an enemy of Saul, the present king of Israel. Jonathan was Saul's son and a much beloved friend of David. Once David was king and both Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle, David ask, "Is there anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" II Samuel 9:1. Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was found in Lo Debar.

Even though the practice in that day was to kill all remaining relatives of the previous king to secure authority and reign, David said, "He shall eat at my table like one the king's sons." II Samuel 9:11

The Greek word for kind is *chrestos*. The Greek word for Christ is *christos*. In the early days of Christianity, it was sometimes difficult for others to discern whether the religion was based on Christ (*christos*) or on people of kindness (*chrestos*).

This message was preached from the pulpit of Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, Florida, on Sunday, May 20, 2001, by Dr. David H. McKinley, Senior Pastor. The complete message is available on audio cassette tape through the media ministry of Boca Raton Community Church. To order this message, simply email us at [tapes@bocacommunity.org](mailto:tapes@bocacommunity.org) and specify the message title, date, and billing information. (\$4 per tape including shipping and handling).