

Gentleness

Int.

1. Aim: To explain the fruit of the spirit called Gentleness and help us make application.
2. Gal. 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
3. Gentleness is the fruit that we will study.
 - a. Chrestotes is the Greek word¹
 - i. It is from a word that means = usefulness, i.e. morally, excellence (in character or demeanor) :--gentleness, good(-ness), kindness.
 - ii. Another form of the word means employed, i.e. (by implication) useful (in manner or morals):--better, easy, good(-ness), gracious, kind.
 - b. The history of the word "kindness" (Greek, chrestotes) is interesting.²
 - i. Originally, it had to do with that which is "useful" or "effective," referring to either persons or things.
 - ii. In the Septuagint (Greek OT) it was used of "precious" stones (Ezek. 27:22), or "fine" gold (Dan. 2:32).
 - iii. But the word could also have a sense of the ethical, encompassing such traits as honesty, friendliness, lovingness, goodness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, etc.

¹ Greek Definition from Power Bible

² Wayne Jackson Christian Courier Oct. 13, 2004 "The Magic of Kindness"

- c. Gentleness is the opposite of brutal, harsh, hurtful, uncaring, rude, and such like.
 - i. The word is more difficult to briefly define than it is to recognize.
 - ii. There is the story of the mother who sought to chastise her quarreling children. She admonished them to be "kind" to one another. When her little girl inquired what "kind" meant, the mother carefully explained the term. Shockingly, the child then asked: "Mom, do we know anyone like that?"
4. Gentleness or kindness is one of the fruits of the spirit

Discussion

I. Descriptions of the word Gentleness

- A. Benignity, affability; a very rare grace, often wanting in many who have a considerable share of Christian excellence. A good education and polished manners, when brought under the influence of the grace of God, will bring out this grace with great effect. [Adam Clarkes Commentary]
 - 1. **Benignity** - [genial and kindly, favorable; not harmful] the word benign is a word that describes a cancer that is not life threatening
 - 2. **Affability** - [good natured and sociable] - being pleasant and at ease in talking to others.

- B. The same word which is translated kindness in 2 Cor. 6:6
 - 1. The word means goodness, kindness, benignity; and is opposed to a harsh, crabbed, crooked temper.
 - 2. It is a disposition to be pleased; it is mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, an unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with urbanity and politeness.

3. Kindness in 2 Cor. 6:6 - By gentleness of manner, of temper, and of spirit. By endeavoring to show this spirit to all, whatever may be their treatment of us, and whatever may be our provocations.
 4. Religion makes no one crabby, and ill-tempered, and sour. It sweetens the temper; corrects an irritable disposition; makes the heart kind; disposes us to make all around us as happy as possible.
 5. This is true politeness: a kind of politeness which can be learned by the study of the New Testament. [Barnes]
- C. Gentleness; sweetness and kindness of temper, by which we accommodate ourselves, and become mutually useful to each other: goodness; a disposition in us to hurt none, but to do all the good we can to all: [Matthew Poole]
- D. Gentleness, or affability and courtesy in conversation, a sweetness of temper, which renders us greatly useful, as well as exceedingly delightful to mankind: [William Burkitt]

II. VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS

- A. KJV - Gentleness
- B. NKJV, ASV, RSV, ESV = translates the word by Kindness
- C. BBE = kind acts

III. Thoughts about Kindness

A. Kindness [from Bible Study Textbook Series]

1. This, in the King James, is translated gentleness.
 2. The etymology of the word means "usableness" and seems to suggest sweetness of disposition, a willingness to comply, a willingness to be of service to others.
 3. This word in the Greek appears in I I Cor. 6:6; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4, and is translated as kindness.
 - a. I I Cor. 6:6 "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,"
 - b. Eph. 2:7 "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."
 - c. Tit. 3:4 "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,"
 4. Paul in I Cor. 13:4 speaks of love being kind; so if we will love, many good things will result.
 - a. Courtesy, sympathy, and understanding are in the word kind.
 - b. Consideration will be an attribute of one who is kind.
- B. Gentleness means fair, moderate; not harsh or violent, but mild; similar to meekness.
- C. This word Kindness or Gentleness means the desire to be helpful to others. It is a sweetness of temper which puts others at ease.
- a. Plummer says that this word means "the sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease, and shrinks from giving pain."

- b. The word is used many times in talking about God Ps. 106:1 "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."
 - c. Since God is kind we as His children are to also be kind. -
 - d. Col. 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"
 - e. Eph. 4:31 - 32 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - f. Kindness is the best sort of revenge and wins more victories than wrath.
 - g. Rom. 12:20-21 "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
- D. One who is kind will watch his speech, for words can cut deeply and wound severely the sensitive soul.

IV. GENTLENESS IN SPEECH

- A. Prov. 31:26 "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."
 - 1. Kindness - Hebrew "from 2616; kindness; by implication (towards God) piety: rarely (by opposition) reproof, or (subject.) beauty:--favour, good deed(-liness, -ness), kindly, (loving-)kindness, merciful (kindness), mercy, pity, reproach, wicked thing. "

2. This is the most distinguishing excellence of this woman. [Adam Clarke's Commentary]
3. Her tongue is a book by which one might learn many good things: for she delights to talk of the word of God. [Geneva Bible Notes]
4. Openeth her mouth with Wisdom
 - a. She is neither sullenly silent, nor full of improper talk, but speaks discreetly and piously, as occasion offers.
 - b. In her tongue - Her speeches are guided by wisdom and grace, and not by inordinate passions.
 - c. And this practice is called a law in her tongue, because it is constant and customary, and proceeds from an inward and powerful principle of true wisdom. [John Wesley's Notes]
5. In her tongue is the law of kindness; her speeches are not forward and provoking, as those of foolish women frequently are, but most obliging and friendly, as being guided by wisdom and grace, and not by inordinate lusts and passions. [Matthew Poole's commentary]
6. The words that come from my mouth should be full of wisdom, and not careless. On top of what I say, the words should be saturated with kindness. It's SO easy to be careless with what we say. I want to speak with power and taken seriously, not written off because my words hold no authority or influence because of carelessness.

7. She does not indulge in gossip, slander, or falsehoods. Even if a thought is true, if it isn't kind, she holds her tongue. She tries to say a compassionate or kind word for everyone. And being right in what she says makes her as nearly perfect as one can be in a sinful world. [Exploring Proverbs by John Phillips]

B. James 3:1-12

1. Our tongue is a little member, but it can cause big damage. It must be controlled.
2. The way to control it is with Gentleness or kindness.
3. The law of kindness means that the mode of operation of our speech is consistently kind.
4. Ephesians 4:32a says to "...be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another..."
5. Words of kindness are not optional to the Christian; neither are they contingent upon deservedness.
6. Matthew 5:44 & 45 explain we are to "...bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"
7. Our words are to be kind, blessing words; words of prayer, even when we are being rewarded with treachery and mischief.
8. Kindness of speech is not equal to weakness. Kindness and firmness can easily flow from the same lips and must when truth is at stake.
9. Kindness begets kindness; it is an investment which reaps great dividends.
10. More kindness of speech would do much to heal church problems or avoid them completely.

11. Adhering to the law of kindness would do much to eliminate the spread of gossip which disrupts both friendship and church peace.

a. A disgruntled member broadcasts his grievance to all rather than going directly to the ones involved. Soon the gossip mill has cast a shadow on someone's good name.

b. Inspiration condemns such. "They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13)

C. Verses - with Lovingkindness

1. Ps. 17:7 "Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them"

2. Ps.107:43 "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."

3. Ps. 119:88 NKJV "Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth."

4. Lovingkindness - Hebrew word defined - kindness; by implication (towards God) piety: rarely (by opposition) reproof, or (subject.) beauty:--favour, good deed(-liness, -ness), kindly, (loving-)kindness, merciful (kindness), mercy, pity, reproach, wicked thing.

V. Illustration of the Power of Kindness

- A. Kindness . BY: MIKE JOHNSON
- B. One night in Philadelphia, an elderly couple came into a little hotel. They approached the night clerk and the man spoke. "Please, don't tell us that you have no more rooms. We did not know about the conventions in town this week and all of the rooms are taken. We have walked all over the city and are very tired. Please don't tell us that you have no rooms!"
- C. The clerk told them that all of the rooms were taken, but he offered them an alternative. "My room is not as nice as the other rooms in the hotel, but it is clean. I work at night and sleep during the day. I would be pleased to have you use my room for the evening." The couple thanked him and went off to bed.
- D. The next morning they went downstairs to eat some breakfast. The night clerk was just finishing his duty and paper work when he was summoned to the dining room. There he found the elderly couple waiting to speak to him about some urgent business. He hoped that there was no problem with his room. He sat down at their table and the man spoke, "I think that this city could use a new hotel. It needs to be a beautiful place for the guests. I am going to build it and I would like for you to manage it for me."
- E. Now the clerk thought that this man must be a little bit crazy to make such an offer. He weakly stammered that he thought it would be a fine idea. In his mind he simply wanted to get away and get to bed.
- F. Just then the man introduced himself. "My name is John Jacob Astor. I am going to build that hotel and I am glad you have agreed to run it." So, the Waldorf-Astoria hotel was built. This clerk became one of the most famous hotel managers in the world. Today, the Waldorf-Astoria is one of the most extravagant in the country. It was built because of the kindness of one man.
- G. Kindness is a powerful character trait.

CONCLUSION

1. When you pick up a piece of expensive glass crystal you handle it with gentleness.
 - a. You do not just grab it and throw it around
 - b. It can be broken or cracked very easily.
 - c. So you use caution and care to make sure you do not damage it.
2. When you hold a new born baby you do it with gentleness
3. This is the way we should treat our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - a. We do not always know how fragile they may be.
 - b. They could be damaged or hurt by something we say.
4. Our purpose on earth is to prepare for heaven and make this world a better place for others. Gentleness is a way to make this life better. Following the law of kindness in our speech would do much to accomplish both goals.
5. "This Christian kindness is a lovely thing, and its loveliness comes from the fact that Christian kindness means treating others in the way in which God has treated us."
(Barclay)
6. Since our speech reflects what is in our hearts (Matt. 12:34), watchfulness of our speech should improve our conduct.
7. Let each do our part to eliminate backbiting, gossip, and hurtful words from our speech.

Let us practice the law of kindness or gentleness.