

Kindness And Love

Joe Slater

Over half a century ago Glen Campbell released his hit song, “Try A Little Kindness.” I agree with that exhortation, except I’d amend it to, “Try Abundant Kindness.” We need more than just a little!

Are you a kind person? We all would like to think we are, but who among us has no room to improve?

Kind is defined by those who know New Testament language as gracious, gentle, mild, friendly, merciful, generous, and magnanimous. Do those qualities describe you?

Paul’s matchless treatise on love says, among other things, that love is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4). The Holy Spirit puts kindness and love together in other Scriptures too. For example, Luke records Jesus’ exhortation to His disciples: “*But **love** your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is **kind** to the unthankful and evil*” (Luke 6:35). Note how Jesus describes God’s love for His enemies as kindness.

Again, the inspired Paul pairs the two terms in Titus 3:4 – “*But when the **kindness and love** of God our Savior toward man appeared . . .*” It appears that you just can’t have love without kindness!

Since God is love (1 John 4:7, 16), and since love is kind, we shouldn’t be surprised that God is kind! Peter wrote, “*if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious*” (1 Peter 2:3). Gracious is the same word as kind. To taste the Lord’s kindness is to experience it. Christians have tasted His kindness in saving us from our sins and in countless other ways.

God is kind. Love is kind. Christians ought to be kind! “*And be kind to one another . . .*” (Ephesians 4:32).

Strange Words

In carrying out the Great Commission of Jesus, we are to teach the gospel to the people around us. Over the past 50 years, many methods of teaching the Good News have been developed and used with success. From film strips to internet bible schools, there is no shortage of tools to help get the job of evangelism done. However, in my experience of sharing Christ with others there is one reoccurring problem: People who are not well-read in the Bible find much of the language and words found within the Scriptures to be unfamiliar and strange. On more than one occasion, I have seen that far-away look in the listener’s (or reader’s) eyes after reviewing a passage of scripture that to us “church people” makes perfect sense. Here is a small sample of words found in the Bible that many people (even Christians) don’t understand or know their meaning:

- Admonish or Admonition – To warn or caution (Colossian 3:16; Eph. 6:4)
- Baptism or Baptize – To immerse or dip (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
- Iniquity – sin, immorality (Luke 13:27; 2 Timothy 2:19)
- Manifest – To make known or to reveal (John 14:21; Ephesians 5:13)
- Repent or Repentance – To change one’s mind (Luke 13:3,5; 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Righteousness – Living in a right manner, sinless (Matthew 6:33; Romans 5:17)
- Sanctify or Sanctification – To separate or set apart (Hebrews 10:10).

As we prepare ourselves to study the Bible with others, not only do we need to learn book, chapter, and verse, but we need to be able to assist the seeker with understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17) by helping them to understand these strange words.

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

What Are You Putting In?

A man hurried from the assembly complaining to the preacher that he had gotten nothing out of worship. The preacher remarked that the man would have gotten more **out** of worship if he had put more **in**!

The preacher was right. We get out of worship about what we put in. If we attend for no reason other than habit or grudging duty; if we refuse to participate in singing and praying from the heart; if we choose a short nap over spiritual instruction – yes, if we merely “show up” to “warm a pew,” we should expect to leave with nothing by way of Christian enrichment. After all, we put nothing in! It is possible to attend the service and entirely misds worship!

But one thing more: What is the primary purpose of worship? Isn’t it the praise and adoration of Almighty God? Isn’t “worship” inherently “worth-ship” in which we, as creatures, declare the worth and glory of the Creator? Since this is true, our emphasis should not be directed toward self, but toward God. We assemble not to worship ourselves, nor the preacher, nor the song leader, but the God of Heaven.

Jesus taught, “*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve*” (Matthew 4:10). And again, “*God is a Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

The question is not, “What am I getting out of worship?” but “What am I putting into worship?” But it is true nevertheless: We get out about what we put in.

--Dalton Key (Tulsa, OK) via Old Paths