

Jesus and the Fruit of the Spirit (5)

Ponder: Kindness toward people who don't deserve it

Scripture: "If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:3, NKJV).

Way back in 1965, Glen Campbell exhorted us to "Try A Little Kindness." Actually, we ought to try a whole lot of kindness! From children being bullied, to spouses being abused, to innocents being tortured and murdered, our world is not characterized by kindness.

Jesus produced the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), including kindness, not because someone coerced Him into acting that way, but because that was His nature. As we learn of Jesus and adopt His way of thinking, we will be kind by nature.

To be kind means to be gracious. The same New Testament word is rendered "gracious" in today's Scripture from 1 Peter 2:3. Most often, this word is used to describe one's attitude and behavior toward those who are obviously undeserving.

For example, all of us are loaded with sin. We deserve condemnation, not kindness! Yet Jesus invites us to come to Him for rest, and to take His yoke upon us. An ox would wear a yoke in order to pull a plow; thus the yoke is a symbol of service. Jesus said His yoke is "easy" (same word as "kind"). A yoke that didn't fit properly would gall and chafe, causing sores on the ox's shoulders. But Jesus' yoke is kind; serving Him is not miserable (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus showed kindness to the woman taken in adultery (John 8). By strict justice, she deserved only condemnation; but Jesus did not condemn her! "Go your way, and sin no more" (v. 11).

The repentant robber, crucified alongside Jesus, had only recently joined his fellow-robber in mocking Jesus. He deserved no favor whatever. Yet, when he pleaded with the Lord to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus responded with kindness: "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

As disciples of Jesus, let us "be kind to one another" (Ephesians 4:32). In fact, to be like God, we must be "kind to the unthankful and evil" who clearly don't deserve it (Luke 6:35).

Light shines most clearly in dark places. Our world is dark. Be like Jesus! Shine the light of kindness!

Song: "His Yoke Is Easy, His Burden Is Light"