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Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

Based on a message by Dr. Stanley Reeder

Westminster Church of the Nazarene, Westminster, Colorado

## KINDNESS

### *Extreme Makeover: Spirit Edition*

*Gal. 5:22 and Eph. 4:32*

*...but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness ...*

[Click here for notes in the bulletin](#)

#### INTRODUCTION:

“Warning! Too much kindness may be hazardous to your health!” That could have been the title of a humorous article in the Dallas Morning News (Bob St. John, “Slip of the Ears Can Leave you Embarrassed,” Dallas Morning News, March 5, 1989, A37). The writer described the almost disastrous efforts of a kind librarian to help a stranded motorist.

[PICTURE OF A BROKEN-DOWN CAR] *She was driving along and saw this man, standing beside his car, trying to flag somebody down. She stopped, and he said the battery was dead and asked if she'd mind giving him a shove to start his car.*

*“Why certainly,” she said, “but I’ve never done this before.”*

*“Well, just get your speed up to about thirty, shove me along for a short distance and that should start it.”*

*“Are you sure that’ll work?”*

*“Certainly, I’ve done it a hundred times.”*

*She backed up her car. Backed it up some more. And some more. The she gunned the motor, burned rubber and came barreling like a missile toward the back of the man’s car. He turned white as a ghost, screamed, prayed, jumped to the side of his car and started madly waving his arms.*

*“No! Nooooo! Stop! Stooooopppp!” She mashed hard on the brakes, skidded, and managed to avoid a total disaster. “He did not,” she said, “ever tell me I was supposed to put my bumper up against his first.”*

We laugh at this story because it reminds us of situations in our lives where a lack of understanding caused problems. But the story has one sad twist. Most of us cannot fully relate to the librarian because we would never stop along the highway to help a stranger. Our fear of being robbed - or worse! - keeps us in our cars with our windows up and our doors locked. Kindness has taken a back seat to fear.

But fear is not the fiercest foe of kindness. Selfishness is. The natural tendency is to look out for old number one--myself. [PICTURE OF MUSIC GROUP – PETER, PAUL AND MARY] During the 25th anniversary concert of the group “Peter, Paul, and Mary” on PBS, Noel Paul Stookey delivered a monologue on our growing obsession with ourselves, and he did so by observing the

ever diminishing focus of attention as represented in the titles of our most popular magazines.

*In the 1950s the magazine of choice was “Life”. The name represented the breadth of interest in our society. We focused on all of life. Then in the 1960s another new magazine appeared: “People”. While it’s true that people are a large part of life, they are not everything there is in life. In the 1970s another new magazine appeared, and the trend should have been obvious. The new magazine was “Us”. Now ‘us’ is still people, too. Only it’s not ‘them’, it’s only ‘us’. Then in the 1980s, “Self” hit the newsstands.*

This self-obsession led to the unthinkable in the 90’s. When Susan Smith let her car role into John D. Long Lake with her two children strapped in their car seats, “Newsweek” reported, “Once again the perversity of human nature has confounded our expectations (“Innocence Lost” 11/14/94, p. 27).

The BTK (Bind, Torture, Kill) killer longed for personal attention. At one point he wrote a note: How many do I have to kill before I get my name in the paper?”

With the focus on me, the love for others grows cold... Jesus warned us about this:

*Because of the increase in wickedness the love of most will grow cold  
-Matthew 24:12*

The opposite of the self-filled life is the Spirit-filled life. The antidote to love growing cold is the Spirit’s fruit of kindness...

Google search on “Kindness” – returned many links – one that intrigued me ...

**The Random Acts of Kindness foundation** – Website with many quotes... →

## **SCRITPURAL DEFINITION OF KINDNESS:**

1. Kindness in the Old Testament - translated from the Hebrew *chesed*:  
acts of kindness or mercy .

This is a term used to describe the actions of God and people. 90% of the time it is linked with the word “show”; kindness is seldom an attribute – always an action.

2. Kindness in the New Testament - translated from the Greek *χρηστος* - *chrastos*  
kindness, utility, usefulness.

Again, this is a term that describes action. Unless you are doing something, you are not *χρηστος*. Some of you who know a little Greek will be thinking . . . “that word *χρηστος* sounds very much like another familiar Greek word: *Χριστος* - Christ”

*Being kind - *χρηστος* - chrastos – to someone  
is only one letter away from being Christ - *χριστος* - christos – to them.*

In looking at the kindness of the lives of Christians, they became known in many communities not as *Christianoi* but because of their kindness as *Chrastianoi*.



It wouldn't be all bad if people started making that mistake today... from looking at the kind works of our lives we were mistakenly called Kindians instead of Christians. How do we line-up as the church? How do you line-up as a Christian?

#### KINDNESS IN SCRIPTURE:

1. Show kindness to our ENEMY (Matthew 5.44; Luke 6.27-35; Romans 12.20).

*But love your ENEMIES, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. THEN your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*  
-Luke 6:35-36

We should speak kindly to our enemy:

*Always keep your words soft and sweet;  
they won't be as hard to swallow if you have to eat them.*

*If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.*

Television's Garry Moore once told an interesting story about two Chinese gentlemen. One was Ling Toy, owner of a marvelous restaurant where wonderful food was served, and a place everyone visited. Mr. Toy was a magnificent host and his business prospered. Besides, he had the field all to himself. That is, until a young Chinese by the name of Wang came along and started a new restaurant across the street.

"What right has he to come in here and challenge my business? I will ruin him," Ling Toy said.

So he told everyone that Wang served out of a dirty kitchen, that he kept customers waiting too long, that he didn't know the skillful art of blending Chinese foods. He just filled the community with criticisms of Wang.

Now, Wang was a Christian. He was a follower of the King and he lived by the wisdom of the King. When anyone told him what Ling Toy said, he replied, "Oh, no, Ling Toy would never have said that. He is a gentleman, a great and kindly Chinese gentleman, and one whom I honor as a genius. Besides, I'm only Wang, a young restaurateur, and not worthy of his notice."

When people told Ling Toy all the things that Wang had said, he was astonished. He went across the street into Wang's restaurant and told him that he would like to be friends.

Garry Moore later went in to compliment Wang on his victory. "Don't compliment Wang on his victory". He took Moore back where he had a sign over the door to the kitchen where he, Wang, saw it every time he went by. *That enemy is best defeated who is defeated by kindness.*

2. Show kindness to the NEEDY (Proverbs 14.21,31; 19.17).

*He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,  
but whoever is kind to the NEEDY honors God.  
-Proverbs 14.31*

What a difference true kindness can make on a life.

Eric Butterworth tells about a college professor who had his sociology class go into the Baltimore slums to get case histories of 200 young boys. Asked to write an evaluation of each boy's future, in every case the students wrote, "He hasn't got a chance."

Twenty-five years later, another sociology professor came across the earlier study. He had his student follow up on the project to see what had happened to those boys. With the exception of 20 boys who had moved away or died, the students were surprised to learn that 176 of the remaining 180 had achieved more than ordinary success as lawyers, doctors, businessmen, ministers and other professions.

Astonished at these findings, the professor decided to investigate for himself. Fortunately, most of the men were in the area, and he was able to ask each one, "How do you account for your success, especially in the light of your deprived childhood?" Without exception, the reply came with feeling, "There was a teacher."

The professor sought out the teacher who was still alive. He asked the now retired but vibrant lady what magic formula she had used to lift these boys out of their depressing surroundings into such remarkable achievement. Her eyes sparkled and her face broke into a gentle smile. "It's really very simple," she said. "I really loved those boys."

Mother Teresa counsels: "Spread love everywhere you go - first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbor . . . Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting . . . and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other."

3. Show kindness to EVERYONE (1 Thessalonians 5.15; Ephesians 4.32; 2 Timothy 2.24-26).

*Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong,  
but always try to be kind to each other and to EVERYONE else.  
-1 Thessalonians 5.15*

Sometimes, our kindness to others doesn't work out like we hoped it might... PJ told this story before.

Three sons left home, went out on their own and prospered. They wanted to express kindness to their elderly mother so they sent her gifts. The first son built her a stately home. The second sent her a luxurious Mercedes with a driver. The third, knowing that she loved God's word but could not see well enough to read it any longer, sent her a remarkably trained parrot that could recite hundreds of verses of Scripture. The unique bird cost \$25,000.

Receiving the gifts she sent notes to the boys. George, thank you for the big house, but I only live in one room. William, thank you for the fancy car, but I'm too old to go out on the town. But David, the chicken was delicious."

A SS teacher taught about the parable of the Good Samaritan. There is a very good example of showing kindness in this parable. As she told the story about the Samaritan man being beaten and left all bloody on the street, she asked the class, "What would you do if you came across this situation on the street?" One little girl stood up and said, "I think I would throw up!"

Other times, we have no idea the difference our kindness makes.

A beauty product company asked the people in a large city to send pictures along with brief letters about the most beautiful women they knew. Within a few weeks thousands of letters were delivered to the company.

One letter in particular caught the attention of the employees and soon it was handed to the company president. The letter was written by a young boy who was obviously from a broken home, living in a run-down neighborhood. With spelling corrections, an excerpt from his letter read: "A beautiful woman lives down the street from me. I visit her every day. She makes me feel like the most important kid in the world. We play checkers and she listens to my problems. She understands me and when I leave she always yells out the door "I'm proud of you son."

The boy ended his letter saying, "This picture shows you that she is the most beautiful woman. I hope I have a wife as pretty as her."

Intrigued by the letter, the president asked to see this woman's picture. His secretary handed him a photograph of a smiling, toothless woman, well-advanced in years, sitting in a wheelchair. Sparse gray hair was pulled back in a bun and wrinkles that formed deep furrows on her face were somehow diminished by the twinkle in her eyes.

"We can't use this woman," explained the president, smiling. "She would show the world that our products aren't necessary to be beautiful."

## APPLICATION:

Pastor Jerry and I just attended a Leadership Summit this past Thurs., Fri., and Sat. It was great and I would recommend it to all in leadership of any kind – here at church or on your jobs. So there was an illustration given in one of the talks that I would like to adapt for today's message.

We think kindness is a cool thing and that God has others out there all prepared to show kindness to the needy of the world, but not me!

But – God is not a respecter of persons the Bible says. Kindness is not a gift. It is a fruit of the Spirit. That means that we all are called to bear that fruit in our lives. We may have to cultivate it a bit, but it is for all of us, not just a select few. God calls all of us to acts of kindness and compassion for Him.

We think, Oh, let the pastors do it; let the evangelists do it; let the big name Christians do it. That's their job. Not so. We are all equal in the eyes of God. We are all on the same playing field and all called equally to show kindness and compassion to those in need.

I can guarantee that God is not a respecter of persons – by the laws He instituted. Let's take the law of gravity for example. If Billy Graham, Bill Hybells, Rick Warren, and you went to the top of the tallest building in the world and jump off. I guarantee that along the decent you all would realize that you were equal in the sight of God. No supernatural power will suddenly scoop up Billy and lift him back to safety – well maybe he would do that for Billy (I have to leave room in this example for God to do the impossible). But – as you all got closer to the ground, no supernatural power will suddenly lift up Rick Warren instead of you. The result would be the same for all of you. Yep – there would be Purpose Driven guts all over the street, along with everyone else's.

So – we are all called to bear the fruit of the Spirit including showing kindness to everyone – like it or not. Here's the good news... If you are a child of God, with God's Holy Spirit residing within you, you will be properly equipped to show kindness to everyone you meet. It will become more and more natural as you grow in the Lord and in the power of His might. The Holy Spirit will continue to develop in you this fruit along with the other fruit that we are learning about in this series.

The question is – do you have the Spirit of God within you to depend on so you can do the will of God in this world. If you're not sure, then assume not. Don't let this opportunity go by to say to God, I need you in my life Lord. I understand now that I need Jesus and His Spirit in me to do the will of God including show true kindness to people around me. I want to overcome the fear and the complacency that I now live in and experience true liberation through Jesus Christ.

Whether you have just realized your need for Jesus, or if you have been a veteran Christian for years, you now have the opportunity to practice kindness to everyone you meet in the name of the Lord.

Take a few moments to complete the “Kindness Certificate”

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us*

*and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*  
*-Ephesians 4.3*