

## Kindness Challenge

Reflect for just a minute on all of the people that you have in your life; your spouse, your children, brothers & sisters, your parents, your friends, your co-workers, your church family, etc. How are your relationships with these people? If they were asked about you, what would they say? Would they say you are a kind and compassionate person?

Kindness is an increasingly rare trait among people today. If you haven't met many unkind people, then you probably don't get out much! The next time you are waiting in the check out line at the grocery store, listen to all of the conversations going on around you. You probably won't have to listen long before you will hear some unkind people speaking some unkind words.

As Christians, we are to be different! What better way to make Christianity attractive to the world than to pursue kindness as a way of life? Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul from Ephesians,

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32*

Take a moment to answer the following questions about the above passage...

1. What is the difference between kindness and compassion?
2. Why do you think kindness is linked to forgiveness?
3. Who are we called to be kind to?
4. Where should our motivation for kindness come from as Christians?

Christ calls us to be people of kindness because He is a God of kindness. But this is not easy, in fact it is really unnatural for us and it requires a concentrated effort. How are we to begin? Here are four things to keep in mind as you pursue a life of kindness...

**First** – Remember who you are. Remember that you are forgiven and accepted solely because of the grace of God. You have done nothing to deserve His love and you can do nothing to keep or earn it. Your life and your salvation are the product of the kindness of God!

**Second** – Be an imitator. Follow the example of Christ from the gospels. Read through the accounts of Jesus in the four gospels and take note of how Jesus responded to the people He encountered – do likewise.

**Third** – Develop the discipline of noticing. Opportunities for kindness and compassion are all around us everyday, we just don't notice most of them. Ask God to help you see what He sees.

**Fourth** – Begin with one act of kindness at a time. The best way to learn about kindness is to do it! It is good to read about kindness. It is good to talk about kindness and to pray about kindness, but it is better to be kind.

Spend some time thanking God for his kindness and compassion to you. Resolve this week to perform at least one unusually (for you) kind act each day.

**Important Note:** Remember, as Christians, our acts of kindness are really not "random". They are intentional acts done to demonstrate the goodness of our God to the world. Below are some ideas to help get you started.

**Suggestions:**

1. Shovel the driveway of someone you don't know
2. Go through a drive-thru restaurant and pay for the person behind you
3. Offer to carry groceries to cars for people
4. Collect and bring in shopping carts for a local store
5. Buy someone a cup of coffee, a latte, cappuccino or whatever they drink.
6. Go through your closets and give away anything that you haven't worn or used in the last two years.
7. Give an anonymous gift to a family in need (this will require you to look for a need).
8. Take a trip downtown and distribute blankets to any homeless person you meet.
9. Take an hour to visit a nursing home just to talk with and listen to some of the residents.
10. Write 5 personal letters (regular old snail mail) to people who you know need to be encouraged.
11. Go out of your way to thank someone who has a thankless job; police officer, mail carrier, teacher, coach, garbage collector, the referee at your kids game, etc.
12. Volunteer at a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen.
13. Drop off balloons for the children's wing at a local hospital
14. Buy groceries for a single mom and her kids.
15. Give someone your seat, your turn or your place in line
16. Scrape the ice off of the cars parked next to yours.
17. Call your mother (guys) and tell her that you love her
18. Thank a veteran and/or a member of our armed forces.
19. Say only encouraging or positive things for one whole day!
20. Take a walk around your block and stop to greet every person and pick up every piece of trash you see.