

PUTTING ON A LITTLE KINDNESS

(from Rick Warren “God’s power to change your life”)

Singapore government initiated Kindness Movement campaign to encourage people to be kind and care towards others.

In the Bible we find that God also wants us to put on kindness in our Christian living. In Colossians 3:12-13 : *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

Kindness is “love in action”, a practical expression of love, it is visible and active, not just emotional.

What does it mean to be a kind person and how we can become kinder? There are 5 characteristics of a kind person.

1. Be Sensitive

Kind persons are sensitive to others. They are aware of the needs of people around them. Philippians 2:4 : *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Kindness always starts with noticing the needs and hurts of others. Everyone you meet this week needs kindness because everyone is hurting somewhere. Often we are totally unaware of what other’s needs are. We become calloused, we stop listening, we are oblivious to the pressure other is under. Kindness always starts with sensitivity.

2. Be Supportive

Supportiveness is talking about building other up rather than tearing them down. Watch what you say to people. Be supportive in your speech. Speak kindly.

Proverbs 15:4 *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.*

Nobody likes to be put down. You can destroy others with what you say to them. Give people you meet an emotional lift, encourage them, be supportive

Proverbs 10:32 *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.*

How supportive are you in speaking to others? Let’s put it this way, if God gave you a dollar for every kind word you said and took away a dollar for every unkind word you said, would you be rich or poor? Be supportive in your speech.

3. Be Sympathetic

Lean to be sympathetic, people appreciate it when you sympathize with them, when you grieve with them and hurt with them. Many times when someone is experiencing a crisis, other people say, “We just don’t know what to say at times like this”. Actually you don’t have to say anything. Just being there is an expression of kindness.

Romans 12:15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*

Jesus is the supreme example of a sympathetic person. Jesus is the embodiment of kindness. Often we read in the Bible that Jesus “was moved with compassion” . If you want to know what kindness is like, just look at Jesus. To be like Christ, we must be kind.

4. Be Straightforward

Sometimes kindness means being candid. It means laying it on the line, telling the truth, leveling with people. Be frank with a friend and tell that person exactly where he or she is wrong.

Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful

There is a time we have to hurt people in order to help them heal. Kindness means being straightforward. Sometimes we don't realize that kindness means telling painful truth.

How do you know when to be tough rather than tender with others? Ask yourself two questions: First, am I really committed to this person's best interest? Second, am I making a "hit-and-run" comment or do I plan to stick around and help my friend work out the change?

We should care enough to confront and say "I am not going to let you destroy yourself, I am not going to sit quietly and watch you mess up your life".

5. Be Spontaneous

Be spontaneous, do not wait to show a kindness. Do it while you have the opportunity. Do it now.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

When it comes to kindness, good intentions don't count. The opportunity may not last until you "get around to it". Just be kind whenever you have the opportunity.

When Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, He wants us to remind us to do spontaneous kindness to all the people around us who are hurting. They may be hurting in their marriages, or their work & study. Or they are hurting physically, emotionally and spiritually. We should ask question "What is our excuse for not helping them?"

Our world is filled with people who need our kindness. There are many ways to show kindness as there are people who need it. And remember, the more unkind a person is, the more he/ she needs doses of kindness.

Let challenge ourselves. Make a list of seven people to whom you can be kind and write down how you can show kindness to each one this week. Ask God to give us opportunity to show kindness to at least one of these people. We may be surprised how good this will make us feel.