

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT “Kindness”

### Introduction – A Clarification of Terms

*In our day and age, it is hard to believe that men were ever killed for translating the Bible! It is both a benefit and problem to have as many versions of the Bible as we do. In our last study, we had to differentiate the general term patience into longsuffering and endurance. Today, we are going to study kindness, which in the KJV is called “gentleness.” Later on, we are going to study meekness, which both the NIV and NKJ call “gentleness.”*

*Why kindness and not gentleness? The Greek word translated “gentleness” in Gal 5:22 in the KJV is **chrestotes**. In the KJV, it is translated goodness 4 times, good once, gentleness once and kindness 4 times. In the NIV it is translated good once and kindness 9 times. Now, the fact that gentleness can be kindness and kindness can be goodness and meekness can be gentleness should tell us something about the nature of the fruit of the Spirit! When you look at the Old Testament word for kindness (**chesed**), you find that it is alternately translated mercy, favor, good, and lovingkindness. It tells us that in nature, all the fruit are related!*

*I chose kindness because I feel it is the best word to describe this fruit. There is already a fruit of goodness and what we think of as gentleness is more related to meekness than kindness. Are we confused yet?*

*What does it mean to be kind?*

*What are some of the kind acts God has done for us? --- Salvation is top of the list!*

### Salvation-

Gen 19:19

Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy **mercy**, which **thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life**; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: KJV

*Here Lot is speaking with the angel and says that mercy (kindness) was magnified to him in that his life was saved. This is the first use of the Hebrew word **chesed** and shows immediately the connection between kindness and salvation.*

Eph 2:4-8

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved.

6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his **kindness** to us in Christ Jesus.

8 **For it is by grace you have been saved**, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- NIV

Titus 3:3-6

3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

4 But when the **kindness** and love of God our Savior appeared,

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, NIV

*It was through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit that God saved us and this was the appearance of His kindness and love toward us. It is through His Spirit that He pours kindness out on us. He speaks to us comforting words, enables us for ministry, guides us in this life, and gives us gifts all by His Spirit!*

Ex 15:13

"In Your **lovingkindness** You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation. NASU

*God has saved us and in His lovingkindness, He leads us by His Spirit.*

**Covenant-**

*God's salvation of us is a matter of covenant. We live in the New Covenant that was sealed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ who offered Himself to God through the eternal Spirit.*

*Kindness is not just a matter of God's character, it is a matter of covenant.*

Isa 54:8-10

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting **kindness** I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer.

9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again.

10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, **yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,**" says the LORD, who has compassion on you. NIV

Deut 7:9

"Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, **who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness** to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; NASU

Ps 25:10

All the paths of the LORD are **lovingkindness** and truth **To those who keep His covenant** and His testimonies. NASU

*The above verses are just a few of the many places in Scripture where kindness and covenant are mentioned together. God is not only kind because it is His character. He is kind because of His covenant, which also tells us that the covenant itself is kind in nature.*

Matt 11:29-30

29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For my yoke is **easy** and my burden is light." NIV

*The word translated easy in Matthew 11:30 is the root word from which kindness comes. The yoke of the Lord, His covenant relationship with us, is kind and His burden is light! This is a far cry from the religious leaders of His day who placed heavy burdens on men's backs that could not be born and would not lift a finger to help them!*

*As people of God, we have two means of relating to covenant. We either walk in covenant or walk outside of covenant.*

Rom 11:20-22

20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. NIV

*Here, sternness is contrasted with kindness. In sternness, God cut off the natural branches. Why? Because of unbelief. Anything that is not of faith is sin. Walking out of faith is walking outside of covenant relationship and denying ourselves the benefits of the kindness of God.*

Hos 4:1-3

1 God's Controversy with Israel

Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land.

2 There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.

3 Therefore the land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear.

NASU

Titus 1:10-16

10 For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.

11 They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

12 Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."

13 This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them **sharply** [severely] , **so that they will be sound in the faith**

- 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.  
15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.  
16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. NIV

*Harshness is reserved for those who are supposed to be following God (“they profess that they know God”) and yet act as though they don’t (“in works they deny him . . . unto every good work reprobate”).*

*God was severe with the Israelites that did not continue in His goodness through faith. This brings us all the way back to covenant kindness. The Lord’s lovingkindness is forever. But we can shut ourselves out from it by walking away from it (i.e. not walking or keeping covenant).*

*But because God is faithful and kind, when we are unfaithful and break covenant, He still forgives.*

### **Forgiveness-**

Num 14:18-19

- 18 "The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in **lovingkindness**, **forgiving iniquity and transgression**; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.'  
19 "Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your **lovingkindness**, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."  
NASU

*I have chosen to quote from the New American Standard on many of these verses because it consistently translates **chesed** “lovingkindness.” The KJV often translates it mercy and the NIV translates it as love. Both Unger’s Bible Dictionary and the ISBE give the Hebrew word **chesed** as the Old Testament word for the New Testament kindness and mercy. Mercy and kindness are strongly connected. Suffice it to say that forgiveness of sins is merciful and kind and an expression of God’s boundless love!*

Ps 51:1-3

- 1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your **lovingkindness**; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.  
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.  
3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. NASU

Eph 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. NIV

*Walking in kindness demands that we walk in forgiveness even as in Christ God forgave us.*

*There is a relationship in Scripture that exemplifies very well the covenant principle of kindness (among other things).*

### **David, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth-**

*This account is a great demonstration that one reaps what is sown, both in one's own life and generationally.*

1 Sam 18:1-4

- 1 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.
- 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house.
- 3 **And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.**
- 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. NIV

*Just as Jesus entered into covenant with us and clothed us with the Holy Spirit and gave us spiritual weapons, Jonathan the prince clothed the lowly shepherd boy in his own clothes and gave him his own weapons. The major difference is that Christ put on our humble attire to be able to later dress us as priests and kings in the kingdom of our God.*

*Because Jonathan and David had entered into a covenant relationship, David could ask for kind dealing from Jonathan when his relationship with Saul deteriorated.*

1 Sam 20:8, 12-17

- 8 As for you, show **kindness** to your servant, **for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself!** Why hand me over to your father?"
- 12 Then Jonathan said to David: "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know?"
- 13 But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father.
- 14 But show me unfailing **kindness** like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed,
- 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family-not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."
- 16 **So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David**, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account."
- 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself. NIV

*It wasn't simply the existence of the covenant which gave David claim to Jonathan's kindness. He also relied on his having kept the covenant, which is why he said, "if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself."*

2 Sam 9:1-3, 6-7

1 David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul **to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?**"

2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied.

3 The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet."

6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied.

7 "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you **kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan**. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." NIV

*1 Kings 2 records Solomon's establishment of his kingdom. He had his brother Adonijah killed, Joab the general killed, Shimei the Benjamite killed, and Abiathar the priest removed from office. This was the general order of the day. When you became king, you removed all political rivals and enemies as fast as you could. But here, David takes the grandson of King Saul, restores Saul's lands to him and places him at his table as a prince!*

*All Mephibosheth could expect from David was death. Yet David secures Mephibosheth's position in his court, granting him kindness for the sake of Jonathan. Just as Jonathan's act of clothing David was a Christ-like action, David shows us what we as Christians, who have received kindness from Him, may search for someone to show kindness to because of Him.*

*This record shows us the true essence of kindness. Kindness is an action.*

### **Action-**

*Vine's definition-*

NT:5544 – **chrestotes**<sup>1</sup>, akin to A, No. 3, denotes "goodness" (a) in the sense of what is upright, righteous, Rom 3:12 (translated "good"); (b) in the sense of kindness of heart or act, said of God, Rom 2:4; 11:22 (thrice); Eph 2:7 ("kindness"); Titus 3:4 ("kindness"); said of believers and rendered "kindness," 2 Cor 6:6; Col 3:12; Gal 5:22 (RV; KJV, "gentleness"). **It signifies "not merely goodness as a quality, rather it is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds; yet not goodness expressing itself in indignation against sin, for it is contrasted with severity in Rom 11:22, but in grace and tenderness and compassion."**

2 Chron 32:32

Now the rest of **the acts of Hezekiah**, and his **goodness**, indeed they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. NKJV

2 Chron 35:26

Now the rest of **the acts of Josiah** and his **goodness**, according to what was written in the Law of the LORD, NKJV

Neh 13:14

Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out **my good deeds** that **I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!** NKJV

Ps 107:15

Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His **goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!** NKJV

*As gentleness is an attitude, kindness is an action. We are commanded to be kind one to another.*

### **Command-**

Prov 3:3-4

3 Do not let **kindness** and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man. NASU

Zech 7:9-10

9 "Thus has the LORD of hosts said, "Dispense true justice and practice **kindness** and compassion each to his brother;

10 and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.' NASU

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. NIV

*In His kindness, while we were yet sinners, God saved us through the covenant sacrifice of His Son and the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Because He forgave us in Christ Jesus, He expects us to be kind to one another and forgive one another. Our kindness should not be just empty words but acts of benevolence to each other and those in need. As we walk in the kindness of the Holy Spirit, He will pour out His water on us more abundantly.*

Ps 36:5-10

5 Your **lovingkindness**, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast.

7 How precious is Your **lovingkindness**, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

8 **They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.**

9 **For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.**

10 O continue Your **lovingkindness** to those who know You, And Your righteousness to the upright in heart. NASU

*Amen? Amen!*