

Fanatics for Christ

Colossians 3:12 Put on, as those who are chosen of God, holy and beloved, ... a heart of compassion, kindness

Define kindness! Not so easy is it? We all think we know what it means...but define it? Right there with 'love' how do you define love? Not so easy is it?

As we examine kindness, biblically, remember this is what you and I are to 'put on' in our Christian lives. This is what we are to be daily in our lives, at home, at church, at work, in the world.

Kindness is so important to God, that He declares it to be one of the effects of Spiritual Love. **1 Cor. 13:4 ...love. Spiritual Love is kind.** The Greek word in Col. 3:12 is the noun **chrestotes**, while in 1 Cor. 13:4 in describing the impact of Spiritual Love the verb is **chresteuomai**. Both the noun and the verb come from the root **chretos** which simply means to furnish what is needed. And there, my friends, is the simple understanding of kindness: First, Spiritual Love sees a need. Then, the kindness of Spiritual Love meets that need in the best way to fulfill or satisfy that observed need.

So, we have a fundamental understanding of what **put on** in Col. 3:12 demands. To 'put on' demands that we be filled with the Holy Spirit, and this by grace through faith.

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One of the interesting things about ‘kindness’ is that most people do not think much about it, or even of it, until they are in need of kindness.

Let’s begin with the biblical fact that kindness is a characteristic of God.

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Think about this, what brought you to saving faith in Jesus Christ? Was it His kindness that brought you to fear – and then His kindness that fear relieved with the kind words of the gospel? First, note the thinking that man has toward the riches of His kindness: *think lightly* — the King James is closer to the heart of the Greek: ‘**despisest.**’ The word comes from a compound word made up of the prefix meaning ‘against’ plus the word ‘to think’: To think against — to hold in contempt; to despise, or to think lightly of. This is how the unbelieving world thinks of God’s kindness expressed in His Grace offer of Salvation. Not only does God offer kindness but is rich in His kindness **and tolerance and patience.**

Romans 11:22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

Here we see the opposite of kindness — His severity—that is His cutting off.

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And then the beautiful verse in Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

What is eternity going to be like? What is heaven going to be like? Here is part of your answer — receiving the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness because we are in Christ.

First, this is a characteristic of God.

Second, it is required by God of believers:

In 2 Corinthians 6, kindness is demanded by God so that we do not offend in the offering of the Gospel:

2 Corinthians 6:3 giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

It is not enough that we present the gospel in truth. But, God cares very much *how* we as servants of God live our lives so as not to discredit our message.

Verse 6 ...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in (or by means of) the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

Spiritual Love: Here we should remember that it is the kindness of God that leads to repentance. Therefore, that same kindness coming from us by the power of the Holy Spirit just may be the very impulse that the

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unbeliever we are speaking with needs to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.

And then, it is commanded of us in our study of Colossians chapter 3 as part of the clothing we are to 'put on' or 'be clothed in' kindness.

Third, God, knowing that we cannot produce this kindness in the energy of the flesh, by our own self will, has graciously provided the power and means for us to fulfill the command of the kindness He requires, by making kindness part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

**Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such
things there is no law.**

Be sure and grasp this last phrase: **against such things there is no law**
This is how a spirit-filled believer can live in an anti-God society.

Fourth, kindness is one of the designated impacts of Spiritual Love.

1 Cor. 13:4 ...Love is longsuffering... then the second impact of Spiritual Love is kindness. **love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant...** The first thing to note here is that we are not kind! Kindness is what Spiritual Love is, how Spiritual Love effects us. Kindness here, does not describe the believer, but it describes Spiritual Love. Where Spiritual Love is found you will find the kindness of love. Right now, in our early Sunday morning service, we are studying

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Spiritual Love. Therefore, we will cover this in much greater detail in that study.

But, the first impact of Spiritual Love is longsuffering. As we will discover, longsuffering of Spiritual Love protects you. Spiritual Love, being longsuffering, means that Spiritual Love will not attack when rejected or ignored. But this creates a vacuum between you and another believer.

If you do not strike out...then what?

If you do not seek revenge...then what?

If you do not start attacking them with your tongue...then what?

If you do not just walk away, live and leave alone...then what?

What is it by God's design that will fill in this vacuum that Longsuffering has created? If we stop with Longsuffering in our analysis of Spiritual Love we are only half through. Longsuffering protects us. But this is not all there is to love, any love but especially Spiritual Love.

What about our purpose for being here?

What about our witness of Jesus Christ?

What about our purpose: light of the world, salt of the earth, sweet fragrance in the midst of turmoil?

What about the object of love?

What about the impact that the world can see, that angels can see?

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Many believers would like to stop right here with Longsuffering of love. They do not want to go on to the next impact of Spiritual Love, and that is Kindness.

Spiritual Love is kind! Kindness is the other side of Longsuffering.

Longsuffering protects us...but Spiritual Love being longsuffering creates a vacuum between two people.

No action, No reaction, No interaction, therefore No Impact!!!

Spiritual Love is Longsuffering and that protects you, stabilizes you. But, what about the interaction between the two persons? Interaction between you and the other person who has hurt you or you think they have wronged you. OK, there may be occasions where, in your mind, the best thing for you to do is to walk away and just avoid that person. Alright that may be fine in a few cases but what about between husband and wife? Parent and children? Siblings? Family members? Other believers at the local church? Or at work? Relationships that you simply cannot just walk away from! What about these relationships? Remember the New Commandment of Spiritual Love by Jesus Christ just prior to His departure is that you love one another as I have loved you.

This is exactly why I am not rushing through these characteristics that are to characterize us as Elect, Holy and beloved in Christ, towards one another. This starts at home, then extended to the family to the local church; to work etc. So, repeat the question: Longsuffering of Spiritual Love protects you, stabilizes you, but what about the interaction of two believers? in the same house? Same family? Same local church? etc. So,

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we now come to the impact of Spiritual Love that motivates constructive interaction – the vacuum is now filled with **kindness!**

If you have Spiritual Love from the Holy Spirit, then your love will be kind!

If your love does not have kindness, then you do not love as Christ loved. If you are not kind in your dealings with others then you are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

But if you are wise you will make kindness part of your human love!

It is not by accident or by an arbitrary decision that God the Holy Spirit guided Paul in focusing first on Longsuffering then followed by kindness. They are related in a dramatic way. There is a complementary dynamics between Longsuffering and kindness! Together they create an environment of love that the world can see. And this is very important to Jesus Christ, remember why He gave the New Commandment.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (Now look at the impact of Spiritual Love) 35“By this (loving one another as Jesus Christ loves us) **all (humans and angels) will know **that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”****

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Again, the Longsuffering of Spiritual Love and the kindness of Spiritual Love creates an environment that the world can see and know something important about you — that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Summary Points:

1. Longsuffering of Spiritual Love protects you, protects all you are in Christ and all you possess in Christ. Longsuffering allows you to maintain all you have in Christ, allows you to maintain being filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. Kindness allows the other person to hold on to what they have in Christ. People, I pray that I can convey to you all the wonders God has made in Spiritual Love. Spiritual Love is not just about you. Spiritual Love is not just about the other person. Spiritual Love is not just about God, or Jesus Christ. Spiritual Love is so dynamic that it effects all these and more. It effects angels watching, other members of the human race watching. Kindness is so powerful in any relationship. Remember that Spiritual Love is thoughtful of the object of love, beneficial to them, sacrificial on your part for the spiritual benefit of the other person.
3. Longsuffering protects you by preventing you from fleshly reactions or seeking revenge or bursting out in anger or wrath or in any way to desert the spirit-filled life. But what are you going to do? If no anger, if not revenge, if not leaving the spirit-filled life by sins of the tongue or mental attitude sins or even overt sins, what are you going to do to them? What is the world going to see coming from you? What is there if not reaction, if not a sarcastic tongue? Spiritual Love has impact, effect! It is the property of Spiritual

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Love, as a force to have impact, effect — no impact, no Spiritual Love.

4. Let's examine 'effect' and "affect' of Spiritual Love. Spiritual Love affects the other person. How it affects them is the effect of Spiritual Love. Stated simply: Spiritual Love from you affects others. How it affects them is the effect of Spiritual Love. Example: You respond with kindness to someone who has done something in anger toward you. That kindness may have the effect of disarming that anger.

God's Kindness has the effect of drawing people to repentance. A parent at home, a teacher in school, a pastor-teacher in a local church desires a certain effect on those they are teaching, So, the teacher thinks of the best affective way to get the desired effect. Example: Downed power lines affect the city of Dallas. The effects are loss of refrigeration, loss of flow of traffic. For God, Spiritual Love affects, goes from one in Spiritual Love to another, and effects the object, the other, to draw out from that person what you desire. From God to the unbeliever, the desired effect is repentance (a change of mind). Every young girl should be taught to be careful of her desired effect on young men and of his affection towards her. So, I hope you are beginning to grasp the impact, the effect of Spiritual Love.

5. What does Kindness add to Spiritual Love? Why did God make Spiritual Love to be Kind? Why does God command believers in Jesus Christ who are Elect, holy and beloved to be kind to others? In Col. 3:12 and Gal. 5:22 the word for kindness is a qualifying

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noun. But, in 1 Cor. 13:4 is a *verb*, the *present indicative* of the verbal form for kindness. Why is the *verb* used here? This is the action of Spiritual Love.

This is what the world sees; this is what angels see. They see the action of Spiritual Love when they see kindness. This is the inherent action of love. If you love as Jesus Christ loves, then your love will be kind. If your love is not kind, then do not deceive yourself that you are loving as Jesus Christ loves or that you are fulfilling the New Commandment because you are not! Your love is from the flesh and is therefore self-centered. Your love is for the benefit of yourself at the sacrifice of others and has no impact in the Angelic Conflict. Your love is not sacrificial on your part for the benefit of others which is the way Jesus Christ loves.

6. It is time to attempt at defining Kindness.

- (1) It is from the root of the Greek word that we gain a basic understanding of Kindness and of Spiritual Love itself. It is used to describe someone or something that is useful, serviceable, edifying, suitable for a specific purpose. This is one of the qualities Kindness adds to Spiritual Love. It causes Spiritual Love to be useful, serviceable to others.
- (2) The Greek word for kindness is a *relational word*. That is, kindness adds to the understanding of Love. Kindness refers to that which is directed toward others. The inherent action of Love toward others is kindness. Here is the action that is needed in love...Kindness.

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- (3) Kindness seeks the good for others. Kindness is not negative: ‘I was kind to him by not hitting him.’ This is not the kindness of Spiritual Love. In fact, this is not love at all, impersonal or personal. This is simply loving by law. It is against the law to hit that person and you could get into real trouble by hitting them. Kindness of Spiritual Love, kindness that God demands of every believer is doing good to others, even when they do not deserve your being good to them. No one ‘deserves’ kindness! This is one of the reasons kindness is so dynamic and has the effect of letting the world know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is because of kindness that others should ask, “How can you love that way? How can you be so kind to that person?” To which we humbly reply, “This is not my love, this is how my Savior-friend loves. His love is kind, and His Spirit pours that kind of love through me.” This is characteristic of the love of Christ.

This is characteristic of the love from the Holy Spirit.

- (4) And this is too important to be sub-point 4. This kindness is not something you decide to do or express. This is what Spiritual Love does. Kindness is not a quality that finds value in its expression but in its very makeup, its essence. This is the point that Jesus Christ is making in Luke 5:39 where our Lord uses this same word to describe wine.

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Luke 5:39 “And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, ‘The old is good *enough.*’ ” (where the English ‘good’ is our word for Kind!)

The point is that wine can only convey what it is. If sour, then sour taste; if kind, then kindness. Our Lord is speaking here and says **no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new** The principle here is that usually wine, good wine, gets better with age **for he says, The old is good enough** as you can see in the NASV that *enough* is not part of the original manuscript. **The old** is the wine that with age has become better, finer, richer, than any new wine **The old wine is good** and the word our Lord uses for “good” is the root of our word for kindness. The old wine is good, kind, gentle, meaning this old wine is pleasant to the taste in contrast with new wine that is rather harsh, and not smooth to the taste.

The point is that ‘kindness’ penetrates the whole bottle, penetrates the whole nature of the wine. It is not kind at the top or at the bottom but part of the constitution of that wine. It is kind throughout. Secondly, wine cannot express what it is not; a sour wine cannot be kind, etc.

Thirdly, and very important, is that wine expresses that kindness to anyone who tastes it. It gives that same kindness to a person who knows nothing about wine as well as to the connoisseur of wine. We might say wine is kind to the person who deserves the kindness of wine as well as to the person who does not. The wine does not choose how it is going to reveal itself to different drinkers. The point here should be obvious. Spiritual Love is kind to everyone, some may even reject it, ignore it, be

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angered by it, but kindness will be extended. The believer is kind to everyone, some may respond and are favorably affected while others may ignore or reject your kindness. This is not up to you, and this does not...should not...will not if from the Holy Spirit, change your kindness. Finally, the more excellent something is, the more excellent the character, the more excellently it will reveal itself. The richer your Spiritual Love is, the kinder it will reveal itself. Spiritual Love is kind, therefore it always conveys kindness. Like kindness in wine, it penetrates the entire essence of the wine, so Spiritual Love is penetrated by kindness and kindness is what it conveys to others...from you.

7. Kindness is that property of Spiritual Love that causes you to be kind to everyone, fulfilling the command in Col 3:12, **put on Kindness**. The Kindness of Spiritual Love imparts benefit to others. There is no Spiritual Love where there is no spiritual benefit to others. Of course, this does not mean that everyone will reach out and be so effected by your kindness, so don't expect this every time and certainly do not react by taking kindness out of your interaction with other believers. Go into prayer for that person, but do not resent them, continue to be kind toward them. It may be your 25th act of kindness that penetrates their souls.

Remember this is what God expects out from you, out from the fruit of the Holy Spirit from you, out from Spiritual Love. **“by this all will know that you are my disciples when you love as I have loved you”**
Question: Can you see love? Can you see gravity? No more than you can see the wind.. But:

You know wind is there because you can see the effect of wind.

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You know wind is there because you can feel the wind.

You know wind is there because you are affected by wind.

You know gravity is there because you can see the effect of gravity.

You know gravity is there because you are affected by gravity.

You know kindness is there because you are affected by kindness.

You know kindness is there because you are drawn to and by kindness.

8. Compare heart of compassion and Kindness: likeness in each.
Contrast heart of compassion and Kindness: differences.

First, let's see what we can learn from the basic Greek words used for each of these virtues. The Greek word for **compassion** means to have compassion on or pity but not as strong as mercy. In classical Greek, it was used to denote the lamenting that occurred at the death or misfortune of another. "It expresses the sympathy and pity that one felt towards another that often manifested itself in some form of assistance." This word is used when referring to what one feels or shows for the suffering of another.

The Greek word for **kindness** comes from the Greek word 'to furnish what is needed' useful or profitable. It comes from the root word meaning 'need.' In classical Greek it means 'kindness, goodness, honesty, especially in a behavioral sense. In classical Greek this word was not always used in a positive way. "Too much 'kindness' in the face of evil might be considered as 'soft-hearted.'"

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To get to a practical comparison of these two virtues let's examine them as characteristics of God. In showing Compassion, God seeks to help in our afflictions. In showing Kindness, God seeks to draw us to Himself, to draw us to repentance.

In His showing compassion in 2 Cor. 1:3, God seeks to show us how to show compassion to others who are suffering. In Rom. 12:1, God shows compassion to motivate believers to present their bodies as living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God.

God shows His Kindness when we were His enemies by sending His son to the cross in our place. And in Rom. 3:12 and Titus 3:4 Paul points out that in our human nature, no one can be as kind as God. Therefore, to be kind to one another before God, demands the filling of the Holy Spirit.

To express the virtue of compassion, is nearly always with the offering of help so that the person can advance in their spiritual lives.

To express the virtue of kindness is often used to appeal to reconciliation — a peace between the two people.



Sourced from "Peanuts" comic strip 12-25-65.

Yes Lucy, we are fanatics for Christ.