

We come this morning to kindness, which is the fifth fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. As I've mentioned on a number of occasions, this fruit is the product of the Spirit's work in our heart, and is thus, a distinctly Christian reality. This doesn't mean, that non-Christians are unable to bear something similar. We all know non-Christians who could be characterized or described as kind. But the kindness produced in the heart and life of a Christian by the Holy Spirit, is a distinctly Christian grace. Simply put—kindness is one of many ways a Christian can and should be distinguished from the world.

Now, there's one last thing I want to say by way of introduction before coming to this fifth fruit, and that is, these nine fruit mentioned, are not all the fruit of the Spirit. Eph.5:9—"for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." So just as Paul has given a mere sample of the works of the flesh (v21), so he's given a rather large and beautiful sample of the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit.

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Manifestations
- III. Its Recipients
- IV. Its Motives

I. Its Meaning

1. Without doubt the greatest difficulty in defining kindness, is distinguishing it from goodness and gentleness.
2. That these terms are closely related is evident, in that the Greek word rendered kindness (NKJV) is rendered gentleness (KJV).
3. Thus, while terms such as kindness, goodness, and gentleness (meekness) are closely related, the Spirit distinguishes them.
4. These are three different Greek words with meanings that overlap, and yet, they are three distinct words.
5. And so, in an attempt to keep things simple, I'm going to stick to the English translation as found in the NKJV.
6. This morning we have kindness, next week goodness, then faithfulness, gentleness (meekness), and self-control.
7. Fundamentally, this word means—"to show compassion and helpfulness to others"—as its core it has two parts: an inward and outward aspect—compassion (inward), and helpfulness (outward).
8. In other words, a person can "be kind" (compassionate), or else they can "show kindness" (helpfulness).
9. Thus, it's right to say that Christian kindness (the fruit of the Holy Spirit) is both an attitude and activity.
10. Marry Beeke—"Kindness consists of two parts: first, the feelings of compassion and motives of our hearts, and second, the resulting behavior that is intended for the improvement of another person's situation."
11. (1) Compassion—this has reference to the inner disposition of kindness—it's a gentle or mild sympathy.
12. Col.3:12—"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put-on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering."
13. The word rendered "tender mercies" is literally "bowels of mercy" and refers to pity and/or compassion.

14. Notice all five graces are primarily inward attitudes—compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
15. We sometimes speak of kindness in this way—when we describe someone as having a kind or gentle temper.
16. We mean they are gentle or mild—they have a sweet disposition—a calm or caring heart—a tender temperament.
17. Thus, kindness, we could say, begins within the heart—it originates from a heart of full of compassion.
18. Put another way, kindness begins in the heart as a disposition or attitude, before it shows itself in actions.
19. (2) Helpfulness—this refers more to the outer activity of kindness—to being useful or helpful to others.
20. Charles Hodge—"The root of the GK verb means useful, and hence its primary sense is disposed to be useful."
21. Thus, at the very heart of "kindness"—is the concept of usefulness; of being gracious and good to others.
22. A kind person is a helpful person—kindness could be defined as—"practical or helpful compassion."
23. Now, this helpfulness includes spiritual, financial, material, and practical help—doing good to others.
24. It includes big and small things—for example, counselling someone soul, is a form or act of kindness.
25. Paying someone's bills, buying them a car, or helping them to clean their house are also acts of kindness.
26. Or else, simply greeting someone politely, or helping them with the door, are also true acts of kindness.
27. Brethren. this is one of the great things about this fruit—it shows itself in a variety of different ways.
28. Thus—kindness is helpfulness to others, that flows out of a compassionate heart and/or gentle attitude.
29. And so, having briefly suggested what kindness is, let me, by way of inference, suggest two opposites of kindness.
30. (a) Insensitivity—if kindness stems from compassion, then the lack of sensitivity or concern for others is unkindness.
31. A callused, insensitive, unconcerned, and indifferent person, is without doubt, an unloving and unkind person.
32. Now, I think oftentimes when we think of unkindness, we think of people who are rude and impolite.
33. And, as we shall see, this is a form of unkindness, but a person can be unkind and never open his mouth.
34. If you can be unconcerned with the needs of others around you, regardless how you act, you are unkind.
35. (b) Harshness—a rough and harsh attitude (or tone), is the very opposite of a gentle and/or kind spirit.
36. Prov.15:1—"A tender answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"—tenderness and harness are opposites.
37. Perhaps I could paraphrase the verse—"a kind answer turns away wrath, but an unkind word stirs up anger."
38. Thus, to speak and act harshly is the opposite of kindness, and are in fact, works of the flesh, and not, fruit of the Spirit.

II. Its Manifestations

1. Here I want to answer the question—What are some ways Christians can manifest or show kindness to others?
2. (1) With our thoughts—this is probably not where most people would start in describing how to be kind.
3. But brethren, we must remember, true kindness originates in the heart, with a sense of compassion for others.
4. You can speak and act kindly, but if you don't feel kindly or compassionately, it's nothing more than acting.
5. I think we've all met people before, who attempt to speak politely or kindly to us, but don't seem sincere.
6. Thus, the first way true kindness reveals itself, is with genuine thoughts of compassion and sympathy.
7. (2) With our words—this is without doubt, one of the most obvious ways we can show kindness to others.
8. Eph.4:31-32—"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
9. The first thing I want to do is point out the word "tender-hearted"—this goes back to my previous point.
10. To be tender-hearted toward someone, is merely another way of showing them kindness with our thoughts.
11. But notice, Paul doesn't end with thoughts but also addresses our words—"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."
12. (3) With our deeds—that is, we can show kindness by helping others, out of a heart full of compassion.
13. Zech.7:8-10—"Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Execute true justice, show mercy (kindness) and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother."
14. Gal.6:9-10—"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith (Josh.2:12-14; Ruth 1:8)."

III. Its Recipients

1. In short, we should show kindness to everyone without exception—we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.
2. Thus, let me make very clear—the Scriptures command us to be kind to all people—family and friends alike.
3. Micah 6:8—"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."
4. And so, I want to focus on three groups of people—to whom kindness is due—enemies, brethren, and families.
5. (1) Our enemies—that is—those who mistreat us and even abuse us—wicked and unthankful people.
6. Lk.6:35—"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil."

7. (a) What we are to do—"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return"
(b) Why we are to do it—"and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil."
8. There are two reasons—First, "your reward will be great"—that is—in the day of judgment you will give much glory to God, and receive from Him the "well done, good and faithful servant."
9. Secondly, "you will be the sons of the Most High"—that is—you will evidence yourself to be godly—"for He is kind to the unthankful and evil."
10. Showing yourself kind to others doesn't make you a son of God—but it shows the family resemblance.
11. Thus—loving your enemies by doing them good and lending or assisting them, is showing kindness.
12. (2) Our brethren—that is—with those within the household of God, and esp. within the same church.
13. 2Pet.1:5-7—"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love."
14. Notice the phrase "brotherly kindness"—which refers to that special kindness shown to the people of God.
15. (3) Our families—that is—we must show kindness to our immediate families, our spouses, children, parents, and siblings.
16. Prov.31:26—"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness"—she teaches about kindness, but also with or in kindness.
17. The virtuous woman is described as speaking wisely (or with wisdom), and with kindness (or in a kind way)."
18. Though this kindness is especially needed by wives and mothers, it's also necessary for husbands, fathers, and children.
19. Brethren, surely that home characterized by Christian kindness is a very joyful and blessed place indeed.
20. And conversely, any home that is characterized by indifference and harshness, is home without the Spirit of God.

IV. Its Motives

1. Here in closing, I want to suggest three simple motives for us to be kind and to show kindness to others.
2. (1) God's general kindness to the world—that is—the generic kindness He shows to all men every day.
3. I want to begin this first point by saying something that I haven't said enough in our study of the Spirit's fruit.
4. And that is, these nine fruit are within Scripture ascribed to God as perfections—He is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, and kind.
5. Ex.34:6—"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in kindness, and faithfulness.'"
6. And so, the work of the Spirit in producing this fruit in us, is just another way of saying, He's restoring the image of God in us.
7. Lk.6:35—"For He is kind to the unthankful and evil"—that is, God is kind to unthankful and evil people.
8. By this I understand, people who will never repent, but will remain unthankful and evil all their lives.

9. This is why our Savior told us to be kind toward our enemies, because, our Father is kind toward His enemies.
10. This is another way of saying, that God's kindness stretches over the whole of creation, without exception.
11. Now remember how we've defined kindness, as being helpful to others, as the result (consequence) of compassion.
12. This means, the kindness that God shows to unthankful and evil men, is the result or expression of compassion.
13. Lk.6:36—"Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful"—compassion and mercy are closely related.
14. Mercy can be defined as God's kindness toward the miserable—God's companionate aid to the miserable.
15. That is, as God allows His rain and sunshine to fall upon the world, it's an expression of His compassion.
16. That fact that God gives to unthankful and evil men, loving parents, faithful spouses, children, and grand-children, is an expression of His kindness.
17. As He gives them strength and health, food and clothing, these too are expressions of His general kindness.
18. But even more than this, the fact that He sends the gospel to many of them, this too, is an act of kindness.
19. And here's the point that I want to make—these are all expressions of genuine compassionate on the part of God.
20. Why does God give such things to unthankful and evil people—why does He give these gracious gifts?
21. Well, here's the only answer we can give—because God is kind, and thus He's companionate and helpful.
22. You see, there are some Christians, thankfully they are very small minority, who believe God isn't truly kind toward the non-elect.
23. They can hardly deny that God bestows temporal gifts upon them, but they maintain He does so in hatred and not compassion.
24. They believe that God's disposition toward the non-elect is only hatred, and so He gives them such gifts in order to punish them further.
25. But does such a view harmonize with our Savior's words—"be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."
26. Treat your enemies in the same way God treats His—as He's kind to evil men, you too, be kind to evil men.
27. Now, let clarify—it is true, God isn't only kind, but He's also just, and He's always angry with evil men.
28. These things are inconsistent with each other—God can be compassionate and just at the same time.
29. Remember, God is equally and always all of His attributes—He's infinitely kind and just simultaneously.
30. Thus, God can be both compassionate to unthankful and evil men, while remaining just at the same time.
31. And thus, we are to imitate God, in that we are to be kind toward evil men, all the while knowing they are evil.
32. The difference of course, between us and God is this, we know that by nature, we were unthankful and evil too.
33. But another thing I need to clarify is this—unthankful and evil men will be doubly guilty for having been shown mercy.

34. Rom.2:4—"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness (kindness), forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness (kindness) of God leads you to repentance."
35. (2) God's special kindness to His people—that is, God's covenant kindness shown to His beloved people.
36. In fact, this exact word that's rendered kindness by the NKJV, is only used five times in the NT and four of these times it's applied to God's kindness (1x to kindness shown to sinners and 3x to kindness shown to His people).
37. There's a sense in which, Christians, God's elect, are trophies or monuments of God's special kindness.
38. Thus, while God is kind to all men, without exception, He is uniquely kind to His beloved elect people.
39. He not only bestows upon them temporal things (as He does all of the non-elect), and He doesn't merely send the gospel to them (as He does many of the non-elect), He also gives His Spirit to convert them.
40. Eph.2:4-7—"that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
41. Tit.3:3-5—"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Rom.11:22)."
42. Here's a wonderful reason to show kindness to the brethren—because God has shown kindness to them in Christ.
43. (3) Christ's perfect example of kindness—as I've said before, this fruit was found in Christ in perfection.
44. Thus, if we desire to know what kindness is, we must look no further than our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.
45. (a) Compassion—throughout the gospels, our Savior is described as having compassion for the multitudes.
46. Matt.9:36—"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd."
47. (b) Helpfulness, Acts 10:38—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth...[who] went about doing good"—showing kindness.
48. Matt.4:23—"and Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people (cp.Matt.9:36; Lk.9:6)."
49. But—dear brethren, we must ever remember, Christ is more than our example, but our righteousness.
50. That is—yes, His kindness is to be imitated, but it is also to be trusted, for it forms our righteousness.
51. Dear saint, are you at times unkind? Are you at times indifferent to the needs of others, and do you at times speak and act harshly?
52. Well, look back to Christ, who was punished on the cross for your unkindness, and also look to His perfect kindness as your righteousness.
53. Poor sinner, is it true that you are not truly kind? You know nothing of true compassion or true kindness.
54. Well, let me exhort you also to look away from yourself, and look to Christ, the kindness of God for sinners.