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Kindness is Everything

Becky Combee

The plaque in my kitchen window says, "Kindness is everything." It has been there for many years and is a constant reminder of a godly attitude – an attitude which is always evident when God's love dominates our life. When we yield to God's Spirit and His Word, kindness and its many friends are obvious.

Kindness has many friends. It is regularly seen with patience, forgiveness, gentleness, and a number of other attributes. Each of these reflect the work of God in us. They are evidence of our choice to represent God in the earth and be His ambassadors. Boldly, they say, "Christ is in us."

All of us have moments when things don't go our way, and instead of these Christ-given attributes, we are harsh and defensive. The pressure is on and so is our ungodly disposition. Our mouth opens wide with one of our frequent excuses, and the peace of God dissipates like the sunshine on a dark stormy day. We yield to our flesh saying, "You know how I am," or we blame the other guy, justifying our actions by declaring, "Well, after what he did." The list of excuses goes on and on. Kindness is our best choice, but it is NOT always visible in us.

These moments of fleshly reaction often leave us with regret. I am glad they do! If we are not conscience-stricken by our godless behavior, I am concerned. Our dear friend always says, "I'm sorry. I was wrong. I will do better next time." I love that and have borrowed those words when my response did not exemplify our great God. Peace is easily

attained when we say the right thing at the right time, but if we fail, repentance is always right.

Kindness can be defined as benevolence (to be helpful). The closest friend of kindness is longsuffering. The great love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, says love is longsuffering and kind. These two characteristics of God's love are linked together by that small but powerful word "and." Love is longsuffering and kind. They work together.

I always say longsuffering is the opposite of short suffering. Everyone understands short suffering (to be impatient, to lack endurance and restraint). When we are short suffering, we are explosive and volatile. We fail to control our

Alleluia

Suzanne D. Williams

I feel Him in the garden, my hands in the soil, plucking weeds, rearranging this and that. He hovers over me, as delighted in my efforts to seed and grow things, as if it were that first moment of Creation.

He is mighty. I am not. But the life He poured into root and rhizome He has given to my care. At least, for these few square feet.

It isn't much, my garden. It may look helter-skelter to some, a hodgepodge of pots and planters filled with flowers and herbs and bulbs. But to me, it is my secret place, a rearrangement of growing things I share with my dogs, a handful of scampering brown lizards, and God.

He is pleased with my efforts, mostly because it brings me such joy. He delights to see me happy. That is the kind of Friend He is. The kind of Father.

tongue, and we abort opportunities to be kind.

Kindness is more than an attitude. It is more than gracious words. Kindness is constructive. It works diligently to be helpful and to be useful. The Amplified Bible writes that kindness is thoughtful. I am sure that rules out laziness and turning a blind eye to someone in need, especially when prompted by the Spirit to be useful. Of course, we always follow the Spirit! I believe the Spirit of God leads us and empowers us.

Many, many years ago, the high school students were tested to determine whether their vocational skills aligned them to work in a people-oriented profession or a more document-oriented job. I always excelled in creating and maintaining documents. I don't know about the accuracy of the test except in my own case. It was certainly correct. When God nudges me to do something for someone, I usually hope someone else will do it. Yet the scripture is clear. It says, "Be ye kind one to another." It cautions us to walk in love like Christ.¹ Certainly, that includes me. It includes all of us.

When God commands us to be kind and we obey, peace beyond understanding is the result.

We will enjoy perfect peace if we trust in Him. But we must follow His directive. There is no other way for a Christian. God speaks! We obey! The songwriter, John Henry Sammis, was correct. He said, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."²

When we have perfect peace, we are free from fear. We are not disturbed, agitated, or frustrated. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled."³ Then He declared, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."⁴ This means that in the middle of a storm, we can be calm. When trauma threatens us, we are still and quiet. We are motionless because God's peace dominates our heart.

When I was a teenager, Hurricane Donna came through, and I remember the stillness when the eye of the hurricane passed over us. In God, there is a marvelous and unique stillness of soul. A quiet heart when we face difficulties. So, trust God! Walk with Him!

"Peace, peace, wonderful peace, coming down from the Father above! Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray in fathomless billows of love!"⁵



Continued from "Alleluia"

And more, He is JAH.

This morning before I set to work, I looked up the word "alleluia." It appears only in Revelation 19.

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God." (Rev 19:1)

It is a Greek word taken from Hebrew and made up of two parts. "Halel" meaning "to shine, to make a show, to boast, to be clamorously foolish, to rave, to celebrate."

This is our behavior toward Him. He is so marvelous in our eyes we cannot stop ourselves from celebrating to the point of looking silly. One commentary even defines it as "to act like a madman."

The latter half of the word is "Jah," meaning "the Lord most vehement." I find this particularly pointed. To be "vehement" is to be "passionate,

intense, overly emotional" and "marked by great exertion."

Here is the God I serve, the one who walks with me in my garden. He is a passionate, ardent, zealous God. For justice. For truth. For mercy. For me. He rejoices over me as much as I celebrate Him.

"The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zep 3:17)

How marvelous that is. My Father, Friend sings over me. He's the Maker of the world, the just Judge, the Almighty, but He's also intensely personal, vehement, in His love for me.

If I ever doubted it, I stopped long ago. We've come through too much together. We've overcome my weaknesses, walking side-by-side, and now, we have an amazing union. I talk to him, and He talks to me. About many things, my ever-changing writing, our prayer time together, but especially these flowers. Delicate blossoms He created, each one specific to His taste. And to mine. Alleluia.