

Love is Kind
1 Corinthians 13:4b

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC October 10, 2021

Mention missionaries? PRAY

1 Cor 12:31 *But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient and kind ...

Last week we looked at “love is patient” – I decided not to do another week on that part to test your patience. But God’s Word should test our hearts and our attitudes and actions? Are we impatient or unkind? Love isn’t, are you?

Think of this love as a kaleidoscope you can turn to see various facets. Or a prism that you hold up to the light to expose as it rotates: *patient ... kind ...*

We need to reflect on how each of these reflect on us

Think of 1 Cor 13:4-7 as petals of a flower you can examine one at a time. Not a daisy where you love or not, think of a tulip of God’s sovereign love. He plants love in us and He grows us in each of these to live fragrant lives. Like a flower each part is interconnected, it shows God’s beauty and gives a sweet aroma. But be gentle not to tear it apart: “love is patient *and kind...*”

- Outline:
1. What kindness means
 2. Where we see kindness in scripture
 3. How to pursue this kind of love

First, what does kindness mean? A couple days ago USA Today got my attention with their headline award for “people who have showcased the **highest level of kindness**, compassion, and perseverance in **2021** ... [USA Today] received hundreds of inspirational stories from the public. The finalists are in and can be found at humankindawards.com. You can vote up to once a day through the month of October ... From a couple who want to make sure that senior dogs live out their last days in comfort, to an 18-year-old sophomore at Georgetown University who co-founded the philanthropic ... nonprofit platform [USA Today said award winners will profit \$1000]

... The Best of Earthkind will be awarded to the person who is not only kind to others, but kind to our planet by combating climate change, recycling, planting trees and more. One of those finalists was known “to teach youth about gardening, eating right and cooking great food out of the garden. He assisted during the beginning of COVID-19, supplying families with fresh produce and grapes right from the school garden.”

The other Earthkind finalist had a “nonprofit free pick garden ... to improve community health by increasing the accessibility to fruits and vegetables and promoting education on nutrition, food preparation, and sustainability ... the gardens provide food for anyone in need and bring diverse people and businesses together to grow, harvest, share, and eat healthy food.”

The 2 finalists for act of kindness caught on video were a HS student who was bullied by having his shoes put in the toilet and a fellow student bought him a new pair of shoes and showed kindness (the boy had special needs). Another was a stranger who saw a delivery driver broken down and loaned him his moped, no questions asked, so the stranger could finish his last 2 deliveries in the neighborhood. No question human kindness. But what Paul is talking about can't be just that. Notice in v. 3 you can do very charitable sacrificial things to give to others without love, the love that is kind in v. 4.

You can give money that you think will save the planet, but lose your soul. Giving to the poor or doing kind charity like Mother Theresa will gain you nothing spiritually and eternally, according to v. 3, without Christ's love. If we don't have gospel love – if not saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – we don't know and can't begin to show this kind of love.

The right kind of love is being kind because of Christ's love in your heart.

If I speak with a silver tongue, Convince a crowd but don't have love ...
If I sing but don't have love ... I bring an empty voice, a hollow noise
... If I give to a needy soul but don't have love then who is poor? ...
[Here's the prayer] So let my life be the proof, The proof of Your love
Let my love look like You and what You're made of
How You lived, how You died ... [that's it, the love of Christ in His sacrifice]¹

Jesus said the proof or mark of His disciples is that we love one another by His love. A Muslim imam told a mission trip “It's obvious you love each other and it's also obvious to us that you love us, and you love us more than we love us.” We heard 1 Jn 4:7 *let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.* ⁸ *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.* ⁹ *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him...* ¹⁹ *We love because he first loved us* (NIV).

So that's the framework and foundation of love, His love first and in Christ. Paul's not talking about the kindness of philanthropy or non-profit charity.

He's not talking about being kind to canines or combating climate change.

President George Bush years ago spoke of being a "kinder gentler nation." Do any of us think our nation is kinder or gentler now? Are conservatives today from Trump to talk show hosts known for kindness? Is the church? To a world that's politicized and polarized, God's Word says 'love is kind.'

We need to see what loving kindness means in the original context. One way to see what Bible words mean is to look at the words around them. If you look again at v. 4 *love is patient and kind*. Kindness is often linked with patience and love from God. Gal 5:22 "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience, kindness**...*" – that's the source, and it's a singular fruit, not fruits. They go together. Paul tells this Corinthian church later that he served with "*patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love*" (2 Cor 6:6). So patience and kindness go together with the genuine love of God's Spirit

It's been said patience and kindness are twin sisters, 2 sides of same coin:

Patient – putting up with or suffering long without a negative response

Kind – further, positive response with kindness to those trying patience

2 Tim 2:24 says God's servant must be "patiently enduring evil" and "kind to everyone." Col 3:12 'put on compassionate hearts...patience, kindness... love.' It's not just a choice of the will, love starts in a heart of compassion. Being compassionate and considerate are part of what being 'kind' means.

Patience endures without complaint, kindness engages with compassion.

Patience helps us not react with sinfulness, kindness acts with sweetness.

This is not passive, this is an active present tense verb in the Greek. *Kind* isn't an adjective in the Greek, neither is patient or any of the other words in v. 4-7. A better translation: "love *waits* patiently and love *shows* kindness." Paul uses action words to show love is action – kindness is love in action.

Kind in v. 4 is a verb. In fact, v. 4-7 has 15 verbs to show what love *does*.

When he comes to kindness, there may not have even been a verb in Paul's language for this. There was a noun kindness used in the NT but this is the first time scholars can find it used as a verb, some think Paul coined this or turned this into a verb in this passage (only use in NT or in NT times). It's usually a noun or adjective but kindness as a verb had't yet made it into the culture so Paul apparently made up this verb for Christian loving kindness.

CORINTH CONTEXT – the chapters before show this church had strife, slander, self-promotion, sinful judging, snobbery, spiritual cliques – they were suing each other and not being sensitive to each other's consciences – there was sexual immorality and selfishness instead of serving each other with kindness – and those are just their

issues that start with the letter “s.” They were saying unkind things in ch 1-12, so Paul says here *love is kind*.

Paul says in 1 Cor 4:13 “*when we are slandered, we answer kindly*” (NIV). He spoke with kindness to this church even when they were unkind to him.

Look just back a page, **12:24**: “*that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same **care for one another**.*” Do we?

So when Paul says ‘*love is kind*’ a few verses later, it includes care, and kind words. What does kindness mean? It’s the opposite of being mean.

Strauch: “Kindness is a readiness to do good, to help, to relieve burdens, to be useful, to serve, to be tender, and to be sympathetic to others. It has been said, ‘Kindness is love in work clothes.’...caring...thoughtful...concern.”²

Phil. 4:14: “*it was kind of you to share my trouble*” (provided his needs).

1 Thess 3:6 mentions their love and “*you always think kindly of us, longing to see us*” (NASB). Kind thoughts are important as well as kind actions.

Paul described his own kind thoughts and affectionate love to that church “*as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you ... you had become very dear to us*” (2:7-8 NASB).

Paul would never say “I love him but I don’t like him...”

Love is kind, and that includes affection. Rom 12:10 ‘*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love*’ (NKJV, HCSB ‘show family affection).

While *agape* is not exclusively a feeling, this love in kindness shouldn’t exclude feelings, either (affection and compassion). In Phil 2 Paul connects “*love ... affection and compassion*” as part of “*having the same love*” (v. 1-2, NAS). Love has feelings: “*It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart ... I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ ... And it is my prayer that your love may abound more ...*” (1:7-9).

So kindness means compassion or loving actions with affections of Christ. Remember 1 Cor 13:3: kind actions without that love in the heart is nothing

That’s what kindness means, #2 where else do we see kindness in scripture?

Turn to Rom 3. Paul uses this same root word for *kind* several times. 1 Cor 13:4 isn’t a random acts of kindness bumper sticker for a 1st century chariot.

My argument is 1 Cor 13 is God’s way of love that only Christians can live.

The unsaved are unkind. **3:10**: *as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does **good**, not even one.’*

That word 'good' is the same root word the same author uses in 1 Cor 13:4. Love is kind, but no one does that kindness or goodness, not even one. The Bible commands us to do good and be kind, but no one does that naturally with a right heart and for the right motivation, God's glory. Rom 2:4: *Or do you presume on the riches of his **kindness** and forbearance and **patience**, not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?***

Love is patient and kind, we're not. But God is patient and kind, He's rich in kindness. Don't presume on it. His kindness is to lead you to repentance. Rom 11:22 *"Behold then the kindness and severity of God ... to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness..."* (NASB). Now turn to Eph 2.

Behold the kindness of God when we were dead in our sins, not responding spiritually, unloving and unkind, objects of wrath like the rest of mankind.

⁴ *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the **great love with which he loved us**,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show **the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus** [HIS LOVE TO US IS KIND]⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

BRING GOSPEL HOME HERE

4:32 ***Be kind to one another, tenderhearted**, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us ...*

Note there it's linked to being tender-hearted and opposite of all in 4:31. If you've been unkind, God's kindness should lead you to repent and to love.

Drummond points out that the apostle who wrote this didn't start out loving by nature. Paul was a fundamentalist Pharisee legalist separatist from fellow Jews, a racist toward Gentiles, and vicious toward Christians he killed; 'the hand that wrote [1 Cor 13]...when we meet it first, is stained with blood.'³ The context of the original writer shows this love is from God, not natural to man, it's a supernatural love that transformed Paul, so it can transform us

Shai Linne says God's love is kind: we would run from You
[But] You activated our faith so that we would come to You ...
We were foolish and clueless, just as ruthless as Judas

Who knew that You would choose to pursue us and move to woo us ...
Through all our stumbles and falls and our idolatry
Through all our grumbling and all of our hypocrisy
Our self-righteousness, with brothers and sisters we're hostile
Our unforgiveness- all because we're just missing the gospel ...
You take the blasphemous- pridefully stuck in our blindness
Instead of smashing us, decided to love us with kindness⁴

If we know God's kindness we can and we must show God's kindness.

TALK ABOUT MEPHIBOSHETH STORY IN SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 6:35 "*love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for **he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.***" Smedes: "Kindness is the power to move someone self-centered toward the weak, the ugly, the hurt and to invest in personal care with no expectation of reward."⁵

C. S. Lewis called this "Divine Gift-love—Love Himself working in a man [that] enables him to love what is not naturally lovable; lepers, criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering."⁶

What did God's kindness look like to Israel, His often rebellious child?

Hosea 11: "I led them with *cords of kindness, with the bands of love*, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them ... my compassion grows warm and tender" (v. 2-8).

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness" (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV84). "Loving" and "kindness" are used of God with the phrase "lovingkindness" over 180x in the OT.

1 Peter 2:3 says the way we grow is "if we have tasted the Lord is kind."

The Lord Jesus Himself said: "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle... my yoke is easy* [same root word for kind in 1 Cor 13:4]

Learn from Jesus who was gentle and kind to all kinds of people:

- the blind men who begged Him "deal kindly with us"
- dad of a suicidal tormented son pleading 'deal kindly with my son'
- the lepers who cried "master, deal kindly with us"
- to the man healed of legion demons who Jesus told to tell his friends "how great things the Lord did to thee and dealt kindly with thee" (Matthew 9:27, 17:15; Luke 17:13; Mark 5:19 YLT).
- On several occasions, the gospel narrative highlights love or compassion moving Jesus to perform acts of kindness (Mark 1:41, 6:34, 8:2, Luke 7:13, Matthew 20:34, etc.).

- “When Jesus encountered a deformed woman bent over by disease and a demonic agent, “he laid his hands upon her” (Luke 13:13). He touched the eyes of the blind and fed the multitudes. He made time to stop and bless little children. Jesus ate and talked with the most hated people of his day, the tax collectors. A notoriously immoral woman found kindness and mercy at his feet (Luke 7:37–39).”⁷

Ryken in *Loving the Way Jesus Loved*, says in the days of the early church, pagans sometimes called Christians “chrestiani” rather than “christiani.” The two words sound similar, of course, but there was another reason for the confusion. Christiani means “Christians,” but chrestiani comes from the Greek word for “kindness.” According to Tertullian, even when believers were not known as the Christ people, they were still known as the kindness people, and this kindness pointed others to Christ. What about us?⁸

We are kind toward others because we want to be like Jesus, not because our spouse necessarily deserves our kindness. We are a representative of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Therefore, our desire is to treat others with kindness and mercy because we are [the King’s] ambassadors ... Extending kindness and mercy doesn’t depend upon whether the other person has been good or bad, wrong or right. Kindness is a gift of love, not a reward for good behavior.⁹

How to pursue this kind of love (13:4 *Love is kind* ... 14:1 *Pursue love*...)

In our families. In Proverbs, “kindness” is to be pursued (Proverbs 21:21), the father tells his son to have kindness bound around his neck (3:3 NASB95), and a godly mother has kindness on her tongue (31:26).

In Titus 2 older women teach younger women to love family and be kind.

In Col 3 kindness is put on, including husband putting off harshness to wife

In how we interact. Kindness can start with friendliness today in church.

Being antisocial is unkind. Others are on social media and unkind there.

We get caught up in the societal changes, talk in unedifying ways (guilty).

I’m convicted I talk too much about the news or views on shots or thoughts on social justice or socialism – need to talk much more of the Savior’s love.

I’m concerned about what I see in the world but this text is concerned with what God sees in the church. A lack of love in how we discuss controversial topics among God’s people, or what we post online. We need to think about how we come across to others who differ or who make different decisions.

Would I say to this friend’s face what I say on Facebook? If not, then don’t.

Asking forgiveness when you’re unkind. Who have you been unkind to?

That’s a sin (Eph 4:32). Talk to them, call them, ask forgiveness. You may kill them with kindness. You can also cure with kindness. Amy Carmichael: “If I can write an

unkind letter, speak an unkind word, think an unkind thought without grief and shame, then I know nothing of Calvary love.”

Talk to others about love and kindness (discussion guide in bulletin)

Blessed to have senior saints and young people serving, stirring us to love.

A couple times recently we've had all people in their 20s and under leading us in song (including young brother last week, it was such a blessing to us)

Co-op kids asking how they would define love (must be in WHW class:)

Some other kids here at Providence Christian School also helped me.

Are you smarter than a 6th grader? I can't improve on some of these

Several kids wrote the same one: “inviting / including others in” activities

Brooke: “To be Kind include others like new kids or any kids”

One wrote (I can't read the name): “you can share food with people who have no food.

Do not make fun of people and say kind words”

Waylon: “Do not laugh at other people”

Skye: “encourage others and say kind words”

Avila: “Spend time with friends and say nice things”

Arianna: “Say kind words to each other like ‘hi, thank you, and please”

Ryleigh: “When we argue, we don't need to start a fight, we can talk it out”

Nathan: “I would say, if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, crawl; but by all means keep going.”

Brycen: “Help people if they need it before you help yourself”

Bradley: “By being nice to them and helping them with work”

Samantha: “be kind to others by including them in things, respecting them and befriending them”

Alli: “little things make a big difference. So if you have a chance, share a smile”

Kadence: “I can be helpful and slow to anger and pray for those who are sad. I can also watch my words.”

Melanie: “Do not look to your own interests, but to the interest of others”

Riley: “I can tell them about God.”

Austin: “Ask questions when friends look sad. Cheer up people by complimenting”

Trace: “say something funny like a joke to cheer them up if they are sad”

Prov 12:25 “An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (NIV). Strauch gives examples of kind words: “a card sent to one who is sick, a concerned phone call, an invitation to dinner, a readiness to help relieve a burden, a caring voice, a gentle touch, a thoughtful gesture, a simple expression of interest in another's concerns, a visit ...”¹⁰

Who do you struggle to be kind to? How can you show kindness today?

Love is kind. Be kind, and love one another as God in Christ has to you.

¹ For God and Country.

² Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2006), 44–46.

³ Drummond, *Greatest Thing in the World*, p. 3.

⁴ [Lord of Patience, Attributes album](#)

⁵ Quoted by Ryken, *Loving the Way Jesus Loved*, 41.

⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 82

⁷ Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2006), 44–46.

⁸ Ryken, 43.

⁹ Leslie Vernick, “The Gift of Kindness,” in Taking the High Road During Marital Difficulties, *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Number 3, Spring 2004/22 (2004): 39.

¹⁰ Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2006), 44–46.