

**“LOVE IS”**

**Kind**

**SHOWING KINDNESS TOWARD OTHERS**

**Part 1 of 4 in the “Love Is Kind” Series**

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## 1 Cor 13:4

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”*

### What does this mean?

At its heart this means that love is gentle and cares about the well-being of others. Love is patient and thoughtful. It is not harsh or cruel.

### What does this look like in the Bible?

**Titus 3:4-5 NIV** “But when the kindness of love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us...” God’s love led Him to act kindly toward us, even when we didn’t deserve it — offering salvation through grace.

**2 Sam 9:1-13 NIV** “Don’t be afraid... I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan.” When we offer mercy and generosity to someone who has nothing to offer in return, we honor God.

# Showing Kindness Doesn't Require Grand Gestures

*Small Consistent Acts of Kindness Can Have a Greater Impact*

**Do you wish that you could make the world a better place?**

I'm here to tell you that you can. We all have it within us; in fact, it starts with us. More precisely, it starts with Christ in us. As we allow God's love to pour through us, lives will be changed, and hearts will be transformed from Hearts of Stone to Hearts of Flesh.

Simple acts of kindness can have a profound impact on our friends, neighbors, loved ones, and even complete strangers. Consider the lives Jesus touched through his acts of kindness. He modeled the kind of life he wanted us to lead.

# Petrification of The Heart

## Philippians 4:8 (NIV):

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

God understands the power of thought and its ability to shape our minds and hearts. He also understood how these thoughts can pervade our speech. Jesus once said to a crowd of people, ***“Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”***

## Proverbs 23:7 (KJV):

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Our thoughts often reveal our true nature. If you don’t like what goes on in your head, consider the words spoken in Philippians and Proverbs. Dwell on what is good and right and see how that transforms your mind.

The anonymity of the internet has given rise to a significant number of keyboard warriors, many of whom are emboldened to speak hate and vitriol towards others under the presumption of some greater truth. I question the truth of any speech that is spoken in such a way. This type of speech can harden our hearts over time and eventually reach a point where it spills into our personal lives, poisoning our relationships with friends and loved ones. Whatever your truth is, try speaking it in love. Let your audience judge its merits. Whatever your political or theological standpoint is, remember we are all human; as such, we should extend one another at least some measure of respect.

Petrification of the heart doesn’t usually happen all at once. It’s a gradual process that occurs one unkind moment at a time. Each time we’re unkind to another, our hearts harden a little. Let’s work together to reverse that process. The next time you have the opportunity to act kindly toward another, take that step.

## How Can We Help Transform Hearts? — Showing Kindness Toward Others

**Listen Fully:** Truly listening to someone is one of the kindest acts we can do for them. It lets them know that we value them, and that we care enough about them to give of our time. Listening is a skill; it requires attention and humility.

### Common Mistakes that hinder our ability to truly listen:

**Focusing on what you want to say instead of what the other person is saying:**

We can miss important details, underlying emotional messaging, and nonverbal communication.

**Interrupting someone when they're trying to share something with us:**

This can make the person speaking feel that you're not really listening, and in the process, shut down further communication.

**Offering unsolicited advice or solutions prematurely:**

It's human nature to want to fix problems; this can feel dismissive to someone who is really just wanting to be heard. Wait for them to request your advice. If you feel compelled to offer some suggestion, at least wait until they've said what they wanted to say.

**We bring conversation back to some experience we've had that may be similar:**

In an effort to empathize with someone, we may bring up an experience that we have had that is similar. Though your intentions may be pure, this can lead them to feel like you're minimizing their issue. It can also have the unintended effect of drawing attention to yourself and away from your friend or loved one in need.

### **Suggestion:**

After your friend or loved one has shared their problem, ask questions to better understand their issue. In doing so, you may gain a deeper understanding of their issue and perhaps even help them discover the solution for themselves. Don't try to control or manipulate the conversation.



## How Can We Help Transform Hearts? — Showing Kindness Toward Others

**Respect the Dignity of Others:** Respecting others' dignity means that we acknowledge their worth, that we treat them fairly with decency and humanity, regardless of their status, background, or beliefs. Most of us find it easier to respect some people more than others. This is particularly true when we share the same background and beliefs. Try being kind not only to your friends and peers but also to those who are often marginalized. Be polite to the service workers, manual laborers, the indigent, and to those who haven't had the same advantages that you have. In God's eyes, we're all equal.

While it's important to respect the dignity of others, it shouldn't be at the expense of another. Favoring one person or group over another often breeds resentment and division. This isn't respect; it's injustice. It's been said that respect isn't a limited resource. We don't need to borrow from one to give to another. This may seem difficult when views differ, but remember, respecting others doesn't mean we have to agree with them. It has more to do with how we treat them. Resorting to name-calling and coercion only breaks down the lines of communication. *Recognize that at some point, you may have to simply agree to disagree on some issue.*

In John 8:3-11 NIV, Jesus shows his deep compassion and respect for the woman's humanity by choosing not to condemn her despite her weakness in committing adultery. The Pharisees, seeking to trap Jesus, reminded him of the law that stated such a woman should be stoned to death. Jesus responds, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." One by one, her accusers walk away. In a further act of love, Jesus demonstrates that kindness can be shown without condemnation when he says, "Go now and leave your life of sin." He reminds her she doesn't have to live in sin and, in doing so, gives her hope.

## How Can We Help Transform Hearts? — Showing Kindness Toward Others

**Forgive and Let Go of Anger and Pain:** Offer forgiveness to a friend or loved one who you believe has hurt or wronged you in some way. If God can forgive us our many sins and transgressions, perhaps we could extend that grace to others. Forgiveness has a way of healing hearts and relationships. Offering forgiveness may not be easy, but it certainly will be worth it.

**Gen 45:5 NIV** “And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.”

Joseph was sold into slavery at an early age by his brothers, yet he not only forgives his brothers but also provides for them and their families during a difficult time in the land.

For some, offering forgiveness to a friend or loved one may be the hardest thing they will ever do. If you ask, Christ will help you through this experience.

Holding onto pain for some is a way of affirming that what happened to them was real and unfair. Letting go may feel like they're minimizing the pain or saying that it didn't matter. For others, suffering becomes a part of their identity, and they become a victim. Letting go may feel like they're giving up a part of themselves. Still others have been hurt so much that the pain becomes familiar, and in some strange way, they can't imagine their lives without it. Their bodies have adjusted to it, much like we do when we adjust to hot or cold temperatures. There are a number of reasons why we may hold onto this pain, but I'll leave you with one more: the fear of vulnerability. Releasing the pain opens us up to trust, hope, and even love. If, for some reason, you're holding onto some past injury, I encourage you to let it go. No good can come from holding onto it. If you've suffered some injustice, my heart goes out to you, and I pray that you would find it within yourself to offer up this pain to God, allow him to take this burden from you. Ask Him to heal your heart. He is a mighty counselor and healer. Don't carry this burden any longer. Offer up your pain and anger he can replace it with love.

## How Can We Help Transform Hearts? — Showing Kindness Toward Others

**Offer Help to Others:** Assist the elderly or someone in need without expecting anything in return. If you know someone who is going through a rough patch, sit with them and let them know they're not alone.

**Acts: 9 36-43 NIV** “In Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha; she was always doing good and helping the poor.”

Tabitha had devoted herself to helping the poor, when she fell ill and died, Peter was called. Showing great compassion and mercy for her loved ones, he calls her back from the dead. Leading a good life doesn't guarantee a long life or that God will raise you from the dead to spare your loved one's grief, but at the very least, it will make the world we live in better.

**Luke: 10 25-37** In these verses, an expert in the law stands up to test Jesus and asks, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Through the course of their discussion, Jesus shares the parable of the good Samaritan, in which a man is beaten and left for dead. A priest and a Levite pass by this man without rendering aid. Finally, a Samaritan, someone the Jewish people would regard as an outcast, comes to the man's aid, caring for him and paying for his recovery. Jesus asks, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” Be a good neighbor today.

While I'm sure there are many individuals who could be recognized for having tirelessly devoted themselves to helping those less fortunate, Mother Teresa stands out in my mind as being singularly significant. Her life was marked by sacrifice. She cared for the poor, the sick, and those society otherwise rejected. If you know someone who is doing such work, please thank them and let them know that their efforts are appreciated. If you have the means or time to assist in this vital work, I encourage you to do so. If the Lord has placed it in your heart to start such a ministry, listen to the call. You won't regret it in “The End.”



## How Can We Help Transform Hearts? — Showing Kindness Toward Others

**Compliment Others:** When someone does something worth complimenting, give them a kind word. Let them know that they are appreciated. This can go a long way in making someone's day. Each of us faces daily trials, some more severe than others. In some instances, a kind word can make the difference between life and death for some poor soul who's experiencing a particularly difficult time in their life.

**Matthew 8: 8-13 NIV** The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed ..."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly, I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you have believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment. Here, Jesus not only praises the centurion for his faith but also rewards it by healing his servant.

**Romans 1:8 NIV** "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world."

Paul often began his letters by acknowledging the good work of fellow believers and encouraging them to persevere in their faith.

Do you remember how it felt when a complete stranger complimented you? Pay it forward! And mean it! Don't give disingenuous compliments; they can be more harmful than none at all.