

The Character of Kindness

Ephesians 4:31-5:2; Colossians 3:12-13

What?

Kind living in the Body is forbearing and forgiving in the Body

5:1—imitate God in showing kindness

5:2—walk in love, give yourself up as Christ did

4:32—Kindness is to be shown to the others in the Body

This comes from tenderhearted, merciful compassion, which can only be produced by the Spirit

It also involves never forgetting how God forgave us

4:31 shows how much selfishness kindness replaces

Forbearing and forgiving—

Colossians 3:12-13, ESV—Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive

God's kindness involves His forbearance, or patience

In bearing with one another, we're imitating God (5:1)

Forbearance means enduring one another's imperfections

The only way to do this is adopting Paul's humble stance of realizing that he was the foremost of sinners

Kindness is doing good while enduring others' faults

Kindness also includes the more difficult area of forgiveness

We feel a debt is owed to us because of an infraction

This tends to cut off our interaction with the other person

Connection with Jesus—

Luke 23:33-34, ESV—When they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals,

one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"

Jesus gave up vengeance, even the right to judge

God promises to repay, so that makes it a matter of faith

Jesus paid our brother's debt, God accepted His payment, and that person's offense toward you is covered

The Big Question—Should I forgive and forget?

Only God can "remember our sins no more"

Forgiveness means releasing a debt, and no longer holding a past offense against someone

It doesn't mean forgetting; some offenses are too large to ever forget

True forgiveness is remembering the incident with an attitude of mercy, and even showing kindness to the person

So What?

One of the greatest lines from the old hymns we used to sing is "Calvary covers it all"

When you are forbearing others' imperfections or even remembering their personal offense, say to yourself "Calvary covers it all"

Showing kindness is a fragrant offering to God (5:2)

The last word—Paul (the first word for next week)

Colossians 3:19-21, NIV—Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them... Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged

Now What?

Ask God for a changed heart, a tender one

Choose the way of Calvary; choose to be a fragrant offering to God