

Prayer: Galatians 5:22 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...”

Col 3:12 – “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

By taking action and practicing the above virtues, we learn over time to think differently, to think biblically. Actually, the above verses also describe how God thinks - how He *always* acts.

One of the nice things about practicing these virtues is other virtues become evident. Even when it is so hard to *be* patient, in the very act of patience we are kind, and may be perceived as gentle. For, when impatience rules and we blow up with rage, we paint a picture to those around us of being the opposite of kind or gentle. To be a Christian, we are meant to be like Christ. Like Christ in everything, especially our conduct with our families and to an unbelieving world looking for goodness.

Last week's devotion left off with an invitation to exercise patience. We'll begin here with the complete last paragraph from January 11th.

Continuation from last week:

If you are willing, I want you to try something. The next time you're in heavy traffic running late, or in a crowded place having a hard time getting where you need to be and frustration builds, the temper starts cooking – take a breath – let it out slowly and **refuse** to allow your anger, frustration, cursing, or whatever else you do is allowed to run its course when **impatience** comes. In the beginning, this is very hard. With enough time however, as you continue practicing being patient you will find it becoming easier. You must be patient with the process though.

Another virtue in Galatians 5:22 that is easier than patience is kindness. It is so easy to be kind when we try. To encourage others who are down is a kindness. Today, if you go out, look around you at the people. Look at their faces and you will see a lot of sadness. It is in the smiles that don't reach the eyes. You will see frustration, especially in parents with small children, or in families in general. When is the last time you actually saw a family in a restaurant and they were enjoying each other? I hardly ever see it. Instead, I see anger, rudeness, you name it. They need a touch of kindness in their lives. You can give it.

Ok, now one more virtue to try in our process of changing and renewing our minds, and this one is even easier. The next time the phone rings, and you are with someone *and* the call is not dire - **DO NOT ANSWER IT**. One of the most dishonoring things we do to one another is taking a call while spending time with someone else. The person you're with is left, just sitting there. Think about it, you've probably had someone do it to you. How did it feel? To let the phone ring, or better yet, turn it off, is being kind to other's feelings by making them feel special when we devote attention to them.

A simple act of kindness, whether a word of encouragement, a well placed compliment, or a good tip for service, these are everyday opportunities to leave a trail of blessings in the lives of others.

Do you have an idea of how you might put one of these characteristics into place? Go try it and let me know what happens. Really, I want to know. It encourages me to hear how God is working!

Even small beginnings have great potential. To try just one good act is awesome to God. It actually pleases Him to see the work of His Son and the work of His Spirit in our lives.