

Not-So-Random Acts of Spirit-Empowered Kindness

Kindness is a virtue most of us appreciate and many of us aspire to.

You may have heard about the practice of random acts of kindness. It supposedly began in 1982 when Anne Herbert scrawled the words “practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty” on a placemat. The rest, as they say, is history.

Now there’s a new way to express kindness. Zachary Gibson started the Tiny Mailbox Project earlier this year. Gibson set a goal of 100 tiny mailboxes around Los Angeles earlier this year. But his idea has spread far beyond the city limits of LA.

The Tiny Mailbox Project provides the opportunity to be kind, one person at a time, without necessarily meeting the recipient of your kindness.

The concept is simple. Each mailbox contains an encouraging note along with several blank cards. The recipient takes the note and leaves one for someone else.

In a recent interview, Gibson shared his belief that “trying to restore a little faith in humanity is a good thing.”

I confess: I don’t have much faith in humanity any more. The Bible tells us no one is righteous (Rom. 3:10). Even if I didn’t believe what the Bible says, all I have to do is observe humanity in action.

Yet, just when it appears kindness has died out, it shows itself once again—this time in the midst of disaster. Hurricane Harvey is the worst weather event to hit Houston in

50 years. Still, it provided the backdrop for a massive, ongoing act of kindness on the part of furniture store owner Jim McIngvale.

McIngvale has opened up his two showrooms for evacuees without regard for his immediate profits. His daily losses are estimated at a minimum of \$30,000 per day.

So what can professing Christians learn from Zachary Gibson and Jim McIngvale?

We know the Bible tells us kindness is a “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22). This means that the more we surrender to the leading of God’s Spirit in our lives, the more kindness will mark our relationships.

Yet kindness has not marked our conversations and behavior very much in the area of politics or morality. Christians are known more for what we are against than what we are for. Many of us have lost the ability to stand firm for biblical values without trying to destroy those who disagree with us at the same time.

And along come tiny mailboxes and a furniture store owner to remind us what kindness could look like if we stopped being belligerently self-righteous.

What would happen if Christians spoke the truth—in love (Eph. 4:15)?

Or if we were so surrendered to the Holy Spirit that our “fruit” attracted those who are hungry for food that feeds the soul?

What would happen if being kind wasn’t just something we practiced with other Christians, but something we practiced regardless of the recipient?

Perhaps it’s time to find out. What do you think?

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 Chicken Soup for the Soul books. She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

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