

The Fruit of Brokenness, Part II

... love is kind. —1 Corinthians 13:4

There is another demonstration of the fruit of brokenness—kindness. Most of us know what this word means. We certainly know when we are not treated with kindness.

Kindness is a positive action. Whereas patience shows how we react, kindness shows how we act. But how do we show this positive action of kindness? True kindness is the fruit of brokenness. It is more than being nice; we can be manipulative and still be nice. It is more than being courteous; we can be manipulative and courteous because we hope to achieve something. Niceness and courtesy are mere imitations, the fruit without the root. Kindness comes from the root, which is brokenness.

There are three words that demonstrate what Paul means by this word that is translated “shows kindness.” It first of all means goodness. It is possessing that quality that could be called “unself-righteous-morality,” that is, morality without being judgmental. That is what Paul means by love showing kindness. We can’t manipulate that. It flows from within a person who has been broken.

Second, this word translated “shows kindness” also means graciousness. Graciousness accepts people just as they are, seeing the rough diamond that others want to dismiss out of hand, noticing the potential in someone that others are blind to. Graciousness puts the intimidated person completely at ease. God is gracious.

And so, when Paul says “show kindness” he means goodness, graciousness, and, third, gentleness. Gentleness is having the grace to use our words to diffuse tension as opposed to saying

what is emotive. There is just something about this kind of person. I am not talking about syrupy, mushy emotionalism, but just a special quality in the person that makes us want to be around them.

There is one further description that transcends all the others: kind people are peacemakers. They are the mediators of the world; they get enemies together; they don't take sides; they are ruthless in their objectivity, but sweet in the way they talk to people. A person like that has been broken and has come to terms with suffering. There is a kindness that mirrors Jesus, expecting nothing but continuing to be good, gracious, and gentle.

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