

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

Romans 12:17

The Tender Heart

Ethan R. Longhenry

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

(Ephesians 4:32)

As human beings, we tend to allow our feelings and emotions to color the way we view people. If we are favorably disposed toward someone, we are more likely to be kind to them, trust them, and always give them the benefit of the doubt. If we are unfavorably disposed toward someone, we are not as likely to be as kind to them. We will not trust them, we will look upon them with suspicion and maybe fear, and we certainly will not give them the benefit of the doubt!

This seems rather natural, as Jesus makes clear in **Matthew 5:43-48** and **Luke 6:31-36**. Most people love those who love them, and most people do good for those who do good to them. Most people also hate their enemies. Jesus indicates that there is no substantive virtue in these things, because people do them naturally. In short, it does not take a lot of effort to be kind to those to whom we are favorably disposed.

God calls us to a higher path. Christians are to be kind and tenderhearted toward everyone, even to those to whom they are not favorably disposed. Personal, political, religious, and any other type of enemies or "opponents" should be treated as kindly and as lovingly as relatives and close friends. We must be willing to think the best of everyone and give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

This is extremely challenging and counter-intuitive, and it is clearly part of God's purposes in the Kingdom. When we no

Store In My Heart Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

We must remember that Christ is the absolute ruler over the church. It belongs to him, and he controls it as your head controls your body. He is deserving of such honor and obedience because He is the Savior of the church. His body will submit to Him in all things.

Our place in the body is to be used by the Head according to His desire. Jesus knows what must be done to please God. He will guide us in what is right. We need to submit to Him as Head in all things.

As Paul illustrates in other letters, what the hand wants is of no consequence except as the head directs it. Without the head to guide, the individual parts cannot function properly. He guides us as one unit. We must let Christ reign as our Supreme guide in all things!



longer act like the world and nurse suspicions and hostilities, we demonstrate that we are no longer of the world (**John 15:19**). When we demonstrate that we are willing to be favorably disposed toward everyone, others will be more likely to be favorably disposed toward us!

The world thrives on conflict, opposition, hostilities, suspicions, fears, and judgmentalism. The forces active in this world love nothing more than to promote conflict, opposition, hostilities, suspicions, fears, and judgmentalism among those who would profess Jesus Christ, toward those within and without (cf. **Ephesians 6:12**). When that takes place, Christians lose their savor, and people see the hypocrisy and judgmentalism (**Matthew 5:13-16**). Since they can get that in the world, why not stay in the world?

The path of kindness, the tender heart, and forgiveness is very difficult. Nevertheless, it is not really an option, for Christians are called to be like their Lord (**1John 2:6**). We should show mercy because God has showed us mercy (**Luke 6:36**). Where would we be if God were unfavorably disposed toward us? If God were suspicious of us, and never gave us the benefit of the doubt, where would we be? God has demonstrated immeasurable kindness and His tender heart by giving us of His Son so that we may have eternal life, and that kindness is shown to all men (**John 3:16, Romans 5:5-11**). If we want to be as God and Christ, we must show that same kindness to our fellow man. We must allow our heart to be open to them and attempt to get beyond whatever would divide and separate us from them. The love of God must compel us in these matters.

Let us no longer be of the world, but let us show the kindness and tender heart of God to all men!

(The Gospel of the Kingdom calls us to exceed in our righteousness. **Matthew 5-7 DLH**)

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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The
CHURCH OF CHRIST

MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study

For Our Information

Paula Laubach has a follow-up appointment with her surgeon on the 24th. She also will see an ENT sometime soon.

Brenda Keisler will have a spot of cancer removed from her scalp on April 25th.

Sue Soliday is wearing an arm sleeve for her lymphedema.

Jaina Keisler is home and doing better after a difficult weekend with some infections.

Sunday Evening - **Ezra 9** Wednesday - **John 2**

Meeting – Reuben Prevost – April 21 -25
Announcements are available in the foyer