

# Seven Acts Of Kindness

Colossians 3:12

Have you noticed that we seem to be very busy these days and often preoccupied with our own lives and activities? We live in fast changing times and everyone seems to be in a hurry. We seek service in the marketplace, but instead we receive little attention by limited staff.

Telemarketing can cause us to react with hostility and abruptness when we receive phone calls during meal time. We tend to withdraw, when our space is invaded or we are treated disrespectfully.

One of the areas of life that has been impressed upon me by the Holy Spirit is that of common courtesy in communication and the need to give others preferential treatment over our own interests and time.

As Christians we are given careful instruction to live in such a way that we exemplify the characteristics of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5). We are to follow him in all we say and do. This means we will be different than others, in that we will practice kind consideration, respect and practical courtesy in all we do.

There are many verses in the New Testament that instruct Christians on how to live. It is very important

today to be courteous in our relationships, particularly as social and moral values are being eroded and replaced by crudeness, rudeness and ugliness.

The results are evident. People feel hurt, misunderstood, rejected and lonely. This ends in some form of depression. We see people being "angst" and being uptight with each other over the slightest incident, look, remark or action.

Kind courtesy is also a basic outgrowth of the Christian belief in the importance of civility. We need help to focus on that which will help enrich and develop healthy interpersonal relationships in our community.

The Bible instructs us to say things that encourages others, rather than what tears them down. Ephesians 4:29, says "*Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them*" (NLT).

But, we need more. We need some simple guiding principles to raise awareness and impact behavior. Here are seven timely acts of kindness.

## 1. Respect Others

The ability to see the actual individual is part of acknowledging each other, and the first step to positive regard. Respect for the whole person entails

listening to others' opinions, their feelings, their time, even their physical space. At the core of "respect for others" is the "golden rule," - "*do to others as you would have them do to you*" (Luke 6:31).

## 2. Pay Attention

How often do we go through our daily routines as human robots with little awareness of others surrounding us? The root of "attention" is "to attend to." That means that every act of acknowledgement or kindness begins with "attending to" the other person. In other words, to be at our best in our human encounters, get off of auto pilot and pay attention.

Philippians 2:3-4 says, "*Don't be selfish; and don't live simply to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing*" (NLT).

## 3. Speak Kindly

Words have a way of putting others down or lifting them up. It costs nothing to be kind. Kindness can inspire others, lift their spirits, and help them make sense of life. And isn't that a great way to make a difference? Think about what God says in Ephesians 4:29, "*Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be*

an encouragement to those who hear them" (NLT).

#### 4. Say "Thank You"

Such a simple deed, is the acknowledging of an act of service or kindness by saying "Thank You." It is not hard to give thanks to those who deserve it. Sometimes we are so self orientated that we do not express thanks to others. We need to say "Thank You" as often as possible. God says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (NLT).

#### 5. Accept Others

George Bernard Shaw, in his play "Pygmalion," speaks of "having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in heaven... where one soul is as good as another." The crux of accepting others, is welcoming all with the same enthusiasm as we desire to be received. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" Romans 15:7 (NIV).

#### 6. Listen

These days we like to hear of stories and events in the lives of others. But when they begin to share their story, we often interrupt and begin competing with our own story or hasten to give advice. We don't listen. We must be listeners first! The act of listening takes work. Instead of focusing on what

we want to say and our own needs, good listening requires that our attention go to others. How refreshing to demonstrate that we value others before ourselves. How non competitive and civil. God says, "Dear friends, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry" James 1:19 (NLT).

#### 7. Keep Your Cool

There is too much "angst" all around us. Medical science tells us that non-assertive behavior is a health risk. On the other hand, being a bully is just as unhealthy as being a doormat. The key is to find that happy medium where you express your needs without intruding on the needs of others and do it in a calm and kind way. God says, "When you get angry, do not sin. And do not go on being angry all day" - Ephesians 4:26 (ICB). Forgive and be cool!!

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# SEVEN ACTS OF KINDNESS



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