

FULLY CLOTHED 2 – Clothed with Kindness

CHRESTOTES (Col 3:12, Rom 2:4, Eph 2:7)

DEF^N: PROFOUND, ACTIVE KINDNESS that flows from a heart of goodness, compassion & strength.

Characterised by:

- a) MORAL GOODNESS that actively purposes good for those around you.
- b) ACTIVE GENEROSITY that resists all temptation to withhold that goodness & instead flows freely from the Father heart of God.
- c) TENDERNESS demonstrated by a gentleness & sensitivity that comes from the inner strength & security you have in Christ.
- d) GRACE & FORGIVENESS: Chrestotes will likely be UNDESERVED & UNEXPECTED.

→ *How would you define 'kindness'? Do you agree that a) - d) listed above are appropriate characteristics? Would you add anything to that list?*

→ *"Chrestotes' is not weak or passive trait, but requires inner strength & intentionality." Discuss!*

What might Chrestotes LOOK LIKE?

- 1. PRACTICAL HELP
- 2. EMOTIONAL PRESENCE
- 3. SPIRITUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

→ *Can you think of any memorable acts of kindness you have either experienced yourself or witnessed? What difference did it make?*

3 Qualifications / Explanations

- 1. Kindness is neither SPINELESS nor TOOTHLESS

- * Jesus was good & kindness PERSONIFIED, but He wasn't always stereotypically 'NICE.'

→ *What examples can you give to backup this point?*

- * Niceness is COMPLIANT, PASSIVE, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL; Kindness is an active spiritual FORCE.

→ *What does nice 'compliance' look like? Why are we tempted to be like that? And what potential damage might it cause?*

- * Niceness AGREES WHATEVER to avoid 'hurting someone's feelings,' coming across as judgmental or intolerant; Kindness is rooted in MORAL GOODNESS: sometimes the KIND thing is to CORRECT & not to do so is, in fact, UNKIND.

→ *When is nice unkind? When is kind not necessarily nice?*

- * Niceness thinks of IMPRESSIONS: I don't want to LOOK BAD, even it means AVOIDING truth or COMPROMISING values; Kindness sees CONSEQUENCES: My outcome DOESN'T MATTER, but theirs might affect their ETERNITY.

→ *Why might worrying about our own outcomes jeopardise the exercising of kindness? What changes when we are able to look beyond our own possible outcomes?*

Empathy = AWARE of others' feelings.

Compassion = MOVED by others' feelings.

Fear of man = RULED by others' feelings.

→ *How does the fear of man potentially drive you from kindness & goodness to niceness?*

- 2. Kindness has a PURPOSE (John 8:1-9, Jer 31:3).

- a) REPENTANCE
- b) RECONCILIATION
- c) RESTORATION

→ *Define each of those. How does the kindness of God lead us in each of those directions? Can you think of Bible verses or examples? How might our kindness help others find those outcomes?*

God's kindness is always an INVITATION to RELATIONSHIP.

- * Every time we release the fruit of kindness, we compel MOVEMENT TOWARDS repentance & heart change.
- * If you want to CHANGE your world, BOMBARD your relationships with the KINDNESS of God.

→ *Two strong statements: Discuss!*

- 3. Kindness is a FRUIT of the SPIRIT (Gal 5:22-26)

- * You have the FRUIT-GIVER within.
- * The Fruits of the Spirit don't come out because you've GOT IT ALL TOGETHER; they come out because you LET HIM OUT.
- * The more you attend to the FLESH, the more it will DOMINATE & the LESS likely you are to exercise kindness.
- * The more you attend to the SPIRIT, the more He will DOMINATE & the MORE likely you are to exercise kindness.

→ *"Kindness isn't a fruit of the flesh (meaning it's not dependent on you), but a fruit of the Spirit. So, like everything, it becomes a matter of nurturing that relationship, listening to that voice, responding to the nudge & doing exactly what it says. If we do that, we can all be vessels, conduits, overflows of God's kindness & world will be a far better place as result." Discuss!*