

# Northeast Church of Christ

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## From the Pen of Paul: *Kindness*

IN PAUL'S DISCUSSION OF THE "NEW MAN, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he names a number of attributes or qualities that the Christian is to possess (Eph. 4:24). This "new man" is the result of one's getting "in Christ." Paul had written to the church at Corinth concerning this "new creature" or "new creation." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). This is accomplished when we are "buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Paul goes on to explain that "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). In writing to the Galatians Paul described this process in his own life: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). This new creation is created because we are, at the point of our obedience to the Gospel, "then made free from sin," and have "become the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18). This "new man" is then to "seek those things which are above" and to "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." This is because "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Later, in this same chapter, Paul declares, "...ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

Now back to our beginning statement. Because we have put off the "old man" and have put on the "new man", thus becoming "new creatures," there is to be a difference in our lives. From Ephesians 4 we learn that we are to "put away lying" and "speak truth with our neighbor" (v. 25), "let not the sun go down upon our wrath," (v. 26), and we are to "labor, working with our hands the thing which is good" (v. 28). Paul further states that we are to let the communication that proceeds from our mouth be only "that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers" (v. 29). He tells us to get rid of "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking and all malice" (v. 31). Then, Paul urges, "Be ye kind one to another" (v. 32).

I want for us to concentrate on this last statement for just a moment. Kindness is a trait that just seems to have been pushed aside in this fast-paced world that you and I are a part of. However, this is not the only time kindness is mentioned and enjoined upon the Christian. In his description of "a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12:31), Paul tells us that "Charity suffereth long, and is kind" (I Cor. 13:4). Kindness is described by Christ as an attribute of the Father. In urging us to "love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again," He states that "your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). Peter urges us to add to our godliness "brotherly kindness" (II Pet. 1:7). From these two statements it is clear that we are to be kind to all men. Jesus lists the "unthankful and the evil" and Peter tells us to be kind to our brethren in

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*“How far does God hold the Christian accountable for managing his possessions and his money?”*

THIS IS A VERY UNUSUAL QUESTION but it is a good one. Many there be who do not care what God has to say about earthly goods and possessions. The time will come when they will have to face the issue but it will be too late, in most cases.

Money and possessions have always been touchy subjects for almost all. Many are quick to attack the rich about their wealth but a man can be poor and still have the wrong attitude about earthly goods.

Wealth is very deceptive. It will cause people to do and act in a way unbecoming. Some who have earthly goods in abundance act like they own the whole world. Others so blessed get the big head and strut their walk. Some with wealth seem to think they are God and therefore they have the right to command and direct everything. Often, some of the wealthy feel that they can do and act as they wish and still God will let them into heaven.

God has news for all the wealthy of earth. Here is a part of His news to them: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share. Storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (I Tim.

6:17-19). It is certain rich people cannot take it with them but they can send it ahead by giving liberally and helping God's cause. All it would take to place everyone on an equality, with reference to earthly wealth, would be two or three nuclear bombs. All of these stingy, miserly, stubborn, self-willed, deceived wealth-holders need to remember what God has said. There is going to be a payday some day for all of us including the rich and wealthy.

We are all held accountable both for now and the future, when it comes to what we possess. God commands that we be faithful stewards (I Cor. 4:2). A steward is appointed to take care of the goods of another. Christians are God's stewards. He expects us to use His goods that He has entrusted to our care and keeping in a right way. God's children have no right to spend what God has entrusted to them in a selfish way. Christians that leave all their wealth to unbelieving children or kinfolks will give an account to God for such. Sometimes God's children will leave their wealth to the state or some ungodly institution. For this they will give an account. To do things like these is but to be an unfaithful steward of God. It is good to have earthly wealth but there with it go tremendous responsibilities before God.

—Malcolm L. Hill

Christ.

Kindness rules out rudeness; kindness rules out sharpness. Paul also tells us that we are to “let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). Solomon realized this, for he wrote, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Prov. 15:1). In describing the many ways that he had conducted himself throughout his work as a minister and throughout his life of suffering, Paul mentioned “by kindness” (II Cor. 6:6). And he lists

kindness as one of the traits we are to “put on as the elect of God” (Col. 3:12).

Even though we must be doctrinally correct, we must also put on these attributes that mark us as children of God. Just after telling us in Ephesians 4:32 to “be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,” in the next verse he states “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children” (Eph. 5:1). Are you practicing kindness in your life toward all men?

—*Paul M. Wilmoth*