

# Upright Woman



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## Kindness

by Athena Scherffius



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When you hear the word “kindness,” what comes to mind? In a world filled with violence and sin, sometimes kindness is hard to find. As we take a look at Galatians 5:22-23 and consider the fruit of the Spirit, we see that kindness is listed as a characteristic we should all strive to emulate.

What exactly is kindness? Kindness is defined as “the act of being kind.” The word “kind” is defined as “friendly, deliberately doing good to others.” Our English word “kind” comes from an Old English word that actually carries the sense of “feeling of relatives for each other.” Thus, kindness is treating others as if they are relatives or family. This gives a much deeper connection to what it truly means to be kind.

### Developing A Kind Spirit

Kindness is not necessarily an attribute with which we are born. Like contentment, it is a learned trait (Phil. 4:11). A kind spirit is best developed by studying the scriptures and observing kindness in action in the inspired record. God has given us exactly what we need to develop this attribute.

Notice, as one example, how, in 2 Kings, the kindness of the Shunammite woman increased from a simple act to going “above and beyond.” She went from supplying a basic necessity of food to Elisha to providing a place to rest and renew his strength. How truly did this kind woman demonstrate the admonition “let us do good unto all men, especially” God’s own! Because of her kindness, she not only provided for his needs but also treated Elijah as one of her family.

Another occasion of kindness from which we can learn is the example of Dorcas: “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did” (Acts 9:36). She was known throughout the widow community for her good works in showing kindness to those around her, exhibiting a true character filled with kindness.

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As women we have many opportunities to be kind, to bring God glory through our acts of kindness. When we follow His word we show the world what it truly means to be Christ-like. We develop this fruit of the spirit by loving and doing for our fellowmen.

A Kind Spirit in The Face Of Adversity

When we strive to live for God and develop the spirit of kindness, how do we handle and maintain it when dealing with adversity every day? The world is filled with temptations, problems, heartaches, and many other obstacles that could cause our kindness to waiver. We must do all we can to stay focused and to remain faithful to what God wants us to be despite what comes our way.

Through the comfort of the scriptures, we can always find the answers we seek. When a sister in Christ hurts us by words or actions, what do we do? Do we talk about how we have been hurt to others and point out her faults to justify our pain? How do we keep our attitudes and hearts right and filled with kindness? Consider the words of Christ: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

Jesus admonishes us to pray for those who are opposed to us and to do them good. By focusing on others rather than self, we not only gain joy from service, but our example will lead others to Christ.

Kindness Vs. Cruelty

When we exhibit kindness to others, we are doing the will of God. We can show kindness in so many ways. We can reach the lost, encourage the disheartened, and bring joy to our lives. We read of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. In this familiar parable, we see the epitome of kindness. The Good Samaritan crossed social and racial barriers to show kindness to a complete stranger. When no one else would help, he stepped up and made a selfless sacrifice. Not only did he help the man with his immediate needs but provided for his continual healing. When showing kindness, we should not let the world dictate to whom or when we should be kind. Kindness is for everyone at any time.

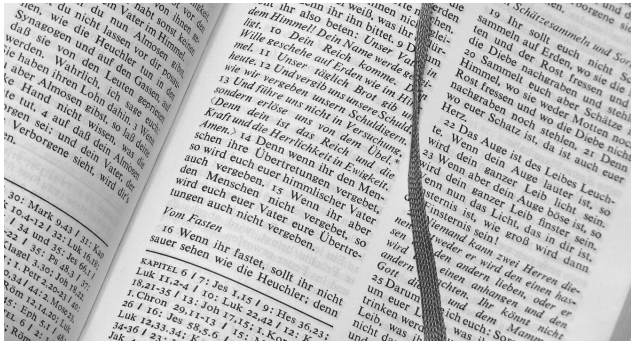
When we do not show kindness, it causes pain for those around us. In the book of Genesis, we read about Rachel and Leah, two sisters who withheld kindness. As we read of their lives, we see how the absence of kindness in their relationship caused great strife in their home. We sometimes see this in the church today. When brothers and sisters do not show kindness to one another, the church cannot grow. We cannot fulfill our duties as Christians to love one another and to serve one another without kindness.

When we think of kindness, let's remember what it truly means to be a child of God. We are to strive to emulate Christ and His characteristics. His life provides endless examples of kindness that He continually portrayed throughout His life on earth.

Goodness  
by Hannah Surles

In "the fruit of the Spirit" passage in Galatians 5:16-26, we see the development of godly character. These character traits are called "fruit" because they are found in one who humbly and lovingly serves the Lord. They are a product of the Christian's life. The one we will be looking at is "goodness."

What is goodness? Well, dictionary.com defines it as "the state or quality of being good; moral excellence; virtue." The word good has so many different types of meanings in the English language today; to help us narrow down the specific definition for the text, let's look at the Greek word and its meaning. The Greek word used here is agathosune, which means an uprightness of heart and life, so it is more like kindness in action.



This Greek word occurs only three other times: Romans 15:14, Ephesians 5:9, and 2 Thessalonians 1:11. This goodness is knowing God and actively fulfilling His commands in our lives.

The world focuses more on looking good, feeling good, and having the goods. Many spend much money on ways to look good, yet there is no perfect standard by which to measure because it changes with time and culture.

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Luke 8:14 talks about the person who hears the word but is so concerned with the cares and riches of this world and the pleasures of life—or in other words, those things that feel good—that the fruit doesn't ever mature. The rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22 shows us the trap of having the goods.

So, how can we develop the kind of goodness in our lives that is talked about here in Galatians? We can look to an example in God's Word that will show us how to develop this kind of goodness—Jesus Himself. When it comes to goodness, no one compares to Jesus. During his time on earth, He went about doing good. Jesus did the kind of good that is active and aggressive. Goodness is like faith in the sense that without works, it is dead (James 2:14-26).

Charles Spurgeon said, "I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine." Jesus showed his goodness through his actions and we can do the same today if we will just follow His example. We have to know what He says if we are to be able to do good like Jesus, so we must be in God's Word. We need to hide God's Word in our heart (Psa. 119:11). We need to let His Word dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16). We need to be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must cultivate goodness in our lives even in times of adversity. We all know that every life has its ups and downs. Some days will be difficult, and some days won't. Will we push through and continue to have this goodness and show it through our actions, or will we let the world choke out the goodness? The Christian life is one that has many blessings. Galatians 6:9-10 says, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

So, you see, God will bless us as we do good to others and as we do good for Him. Don't we want to hear Him say, "Well done, thy good and faithful servant..."? Let's all strive to live like Jesus and to do good like He did so we can live eternally with him in heaven one day.

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**"We need to let His word  
dwell in us richly"**

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## **Faithfulness**

by Carolyn Coward

Have you ever wondered what someone's answer would be if they were presented with the question, "What does it mean to have faithfulness towards God?" Depending on who you ask, you may get a variety of different responses. A common response might be, "Well I have faith that there is a God, and I believe that He is looking after us." This kind of response sounds nice, but is it the kind of faithfulness that God is commanding from us in Galatians 5:23?

I bring up this topic because when the world is presented with this type of question, I hear/see a similar response quoted over and over again. People tend to take comfort in the notion that having faith is simply just believing that there is a God out there, fully unaware that these ideals are their own worldly version and it is completely separate from God's teachings. Paul writes in Colossians 2:8 that we need to be on guard against the world's own ideas/philosophy that will separate us from the teachings of Christ. We must not be swayed with the world's made-up ideas of faith, for they will lead us further away from Him.

Faithfulness comes from our loyalty and complete trust in God's word. Faith is described in Hebrews 11:1 as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Later in that chapter we are presented with the examples of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah of the Old Testament who died in faith, not able to see what was to come, but who had trust in God and submitted to His authority. We live in an era now where in order for us to believe something to be true, we must be able to see it, touch it, and prove it in physical experiments/observations. However, this is a teaching of the world, for God asks us to have faith in Him even if we are unable to see it fully and to trust in the word that He does give us.

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## Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Also, please note that a key element of faithfulness is that it is not one-sided; God's faithfulness to us is evident in His promise of salvation. It is described in Lamentations 3:23, where Jeremiah writes that he has hope because of God's faithfulness. Jeremiah served God faithfully and heartily even though the world, which included his own family, turned away from him, beat him and imprisoned him. He suffered all that he did because he trusted in God's own faithfulness and promise. We are instructed to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23).

Paul lists the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 and states at the end of the passage, "...that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God," acknowledging that if you practice any of these attributes of the world, you are separated from God and cannot fulfill the fruit of the spirit that is commanded in verses 22-23. It also informs us that in order to obtain the characteristic of full faithfulness in our lives as Christians, we must ensure we are not involved in any worldly acts that break our ties with God. We must continue and apply the teachings of God and detach ourselves from the world completely.

People blind themselves with the false impression that as long as you believe that God exists and you are a "good" person, then you are worthy of His promise. It is hard to realize how many actually fall towards this path of thinking. Before my husband and I became Christians, we used to live by these false ideals. Thankfully, God's true teachings and scripture set us straight. No matter what the world tries to convince us to believe, it is written that "the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His.'" (2 Tim. 2:19).

### Gentleness

by Lisa Puckett

Very often the fruit of the Spirit is quoted from the English Standard Version of the Bible. As the children's song goes, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...." However, in the case of "gentleness," perhaps a more helpful translation is from the KJV which translates the Greek *praotes* as "meekness." Gentleness brings to mind a mother's gentle or mild nature. This attribute is described by the Greek word *epios*. Paul uses the word *epios* when he says in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 [KJV], "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." While gentleness is a valuable trait for Christians, it is meekness, *praotes*, that is the fruit Christians produce as they seek to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).

When considering meekness, the two Bible characters that immediately come to mind are Jesus and Moses. Jesus was prophesied to be meek in Zechariah 9:9 and we read of this prophesy's fulfillment in Matthew 21:5, which describes Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives one week before His death on the cross. Jesus also describes Himself as "meek and lowly in heart," and Christians are told to take on the same yoke in seeking to follow Him (Matt. 11:29-30). Moses is described by God as meek: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). In contemplating the meaning of meekness, keep these two men in mind as the God-given examples of the characteristic Christians are striving to produce.

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# Getting to Know...

By: Carol Tisdale

## Rhonda Kinser

To begin with – Welcome Back Kinser Family!! Rhonda and Winston are former members of SW and have returned to work and worship with our family here. We are so blessed by them.

Rhonda was born in Tyler, TX to Wanda and Lester Van Pelt. For most of her childhood, the family lived in Dawson, TX close to grandparents and it was her grandmother who took her to worship services from the age of 8 and Rhonda was baptized at age 19. At Dawson HS she graduated valedictorian of her class. The goal had always been to either become a nurse or an accountant, so when UT Nursing School accepted her and so did the Business School at Texas A&M, Rhonda Van Pelt had a BIG decision to make. Which would it be...drum roll... she became an Aggie and in 2009 received a degree in Finance. During this time, she and Winston met and became engaged. And eventually Rhonda did come to Austin where Winston was living and where she worked in the field of banking. They were soon married.



There are Kinser kids and they are precious! Lucas is 8-1/2, Evan is 6 and Kayla is 3-1/2. For Rhonda and Winston, their ultimate desire as parents is to raise these children to love the Lord and remain faithful to Him. For the present, the kiddos are enrolled at Brentwood Christian School where Rhonda works as an aide 2 days a week so she can truly be involved in and aware of the children's curriculum and overall learning experience. The boys are thriving thus far and Kayla is scheduled to join them when she begins Pre-K next year.

More about Rhonda herself – She loves making her kids' birthday cakes and is anxious to learn someday how to decorate more professionally for family and friends to enjoy her creations. She enjoys lifting weights and going to spin class and wishes for more time to do that! These activities help her when presented with frustration and stress. When the "blue moods" surface, Rhonda likes to be alone but also wants to be able to talk things out with a friend. It's a lovely thing that Winston is usually "that friend" who can talk her through emotional times.

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It's a fact that in this life we're going to be presented with times that test us and challenge us to our core. The Kinsers have experienced such a time. Just after Kayla turned one, Winston was diagnosed with a rare form of Lymphoma 2. Evan was three and Lucas was five. In Rhonda's words: "I was very grateful Lucas was in school which gave him routine and structure every day and Evan was in a preschool 3 days a week. Kayla was home with me while I was taking care of Winston during his chemo treatments. It was the hardest time of my life seeing my husband so sick while also caring for our 3 children. But the Lord gave me the strength and the people we needed to bring us through, and for that we will be forever grateful. When I have a hard day now, I think back to all the pain and anxiety I felt during that time and I quickly count my blessings and try to not get worked up about meaningless stuff. I'm so grateful to still have my best friend by my side as we raise our three beautiful souls that God has blessed us with. I'm grateful the Lord answered our prayers so that I am not alone raising them, as that was my worst fear when we first learned of the diagnosis. Cancer is such a scary word. We were very blessed that it was a treatable form of cancer and that Winston is now healthy and doing well. Praise the Lord!!"

Fun quick things about Rhonda: Favorite restaurants are True Food Kitchen and Chipotle. Summer Moon Coffee Shop. Dream Vacation: Turks and Caicos beach with family. A morning person - turns into a pumpkin at 8:00 pm!! An omnivert - can be either introvert or extrovert depending on circumstances. Text or phone call - texts if in a hurry but prefers real conversations. Favorite holiday is Christmas. Prefers country life over city. Favorite season is Summer for swimming in the family pool. Leader or worker - a worker and will do it joyfully!!

When asked about challenges as a Christian woman, Rhonda sometimes cares too much what others think about her and she expects perfection of herself. But she is reminded that the Lord knows her heart and intentions and that is what matters. Regarding perfection, Rhonda says "perfection doesn't exist and I shouldn't expect that out of myself OR others. We all fail. I'm learning to extend more grace to myself and to others. Adam and Eve had the PERFECT parent and they still made a bad choice, but thankfully the Lord had a plan of redemption for His people".

This issue of Upright Woman is a continuation of an examination of the "Fruits of the Spirit". Rhonda has these thoughts to share with us about faithfulness: "Faithfulness has been a challenge for me the last few years but one thing is certain - I never gave up and stopped trusting the Lord. Just like Jesus, we must be faithful in tough situations. Those difficult times have driven me to my knees in prayer like I have never prayed before and have driven me to the Word to learn more about Him and His character. This is what hard times are meant to do - to grow you and make you more like Jesus! A passage on faithfulness that I lean on is Lam. 3:22-23 which says "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." The Lord wants good for His people. He grants us mercy every day that we are alive that we don't deserve. He is eternally faithful to us. We need to be faithful to Him and faithful to our friends and family who He has blessed us with while we navigate this life. In the end it is our choice to be faithful. What will you choose?

**"Love one another with brotherly affection.  
Outdo one another in showing honor."**

**Romans 12:10**

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Strong's Concordance defines the Greek word *praotes* as "gentleness, mildness, meekness." How does this word contrast with a more common use of mild or gentle? Meekness includes a gentle disposition, but it also includes a strength that comes from humbling oneself to God. Moses was meek because he did the will of God in spite of his fear and his lack of confidence in himself. Jesus was meek as He entered Jerusalem. Listening to the deafening praise of the Jews as they cheered His entry into the city, He knew that just a few days later they would also be supporting His violent death on the cross. Jesus showed meekness as He submitted to the will of God with a willing attitude and a humble heart.

Meekness is a quality all Christians must strive to achieve. It is not easy. In Colossians 3:12 meekness is listed as one of the characteristics with which a Christian must dress. This is more than just a decision to be meek. It takes thought and purpose and effort. Paul tells Timothy to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6:11). Perhaps one of the most frequent uses of the word meekness in the Bible is to describe the manner in which Christians must strive to reach the erring. In Galatians 6:1, just four verses after the fruit of the Spirit is listed, Paul writes, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Paul also asks the Corinthians, "Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. 4:21). Finally, as a woman seeks to convert her unbelieving husband, she is told to do so with "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4).

In conclusion, meekness is an attribute that will grow as Christians grow. Meekness must be trained and developed. In considering how to develop meekness, the field of martial arts provides an earthly example of developing meekness within a sport. Any advanced martial artist should be able to spar with others of any ability. Against a formidable opponent, that martial artist should seek to have the strength and ability to fight and spar, but with a child or novice, the advanced martial artist must be able to control his or her strength and be gentle and nourishing. A well-trained martial artist will have an outward gentleness that all can see, yet internally he is strong and has his emotions submitted to his own will. In considering the fruit of the Spirit meekness, the appearance of meekness is very much the same as the appearance of gentleness, but the fruit of meekness also necessitates a strength which can only come from humbling one's spirit to the will of God and seeking to obey His will in every thought, with every word, and in every action.

## Self-Control

by Luann Rogers

God expects Christians to bear the fruit of patience (2 Thess. 3:5). The Greek word for patience in Galatians 5:22 is "*makrothymia*" which is rooted in the word "*makrothymos*." This is a compound word made up of "*makros*" (long-lasting) and "*thymos*" (fierceness, passion, momentary boiling anger). In putting these concepts together, we learn that patience means long-lasting resistance to becoming angry. Strong's Concordance suggests an interesting synonym to the word patience: constancy. In the midst of suffering, difficulties, and trials it is difficult to remain constant in mood and attitude. Without preparation, thorns of frustration and anger can grow in the place of the fruit of patience.

Consider that James teaches the testing of our faith is what produces patience in our hearts and lives (James 1:2-4). Trials are actually how we grow in patience as Christians. In life, we think about showing patience when we're waiting on a situation to be resolved (e.g., traffic, grocery lines, restaurant seating, etc...). It is no different as a Christian. Demonstrating patience in trials means waiting on God to provide relief, strength, and resolutions to our trials. The Psalms frequently discuss this concept.

### CONTROL YOUR ATTITUDE

In Titus 2:5 Paul tells Titus the older women should teach the younger to (among other things) "...be self-controlled" (ESV). When we live "self-controlled" lives, with our minds set on Christ and His will, we will have life and peace (Rom. 8:6). On the other hand, a woman without self-control deserves pity. She is "like a city broken down, without walls" (Prov. 25:28)—uncontrolled and insecure.

### CONTROL YOUR DESIRES

"Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things" (1 Cor. 9:25, NASV). Joseph Henry Thayer wrote that this is, "...a figure drawn from athletes, who in preparing themselves for the games abstained from unwholesome food, wine, and sexual indulgence." [2]

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Bringing our fleshly appetites into control is difficult. We have to practice controlling the desire to eat a gallon of ice cream when we know that it is not beneficial for us. Being faithful to God and our brethren by assembling together causes us to set aside things we might otherwise desire to do...shopping, watching TV, attending or participating in sporting events, and so on.

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Sexual desire is God-given, and He ordained that the proper place to satisfy that desire is in the marriage bed (1 Cor. 7:2). Before we marry, restraining that desire requires self-control to avoid fornication. We need to teach our young girls that before they face this temptation, they should decide not to give in to this desire. Letting God’s will rule in our hearts makes this temptation easier to overcome (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

### CONTROL YOUR SPEECH

Our speech should glorify Christ, not bring shame or embarrassment to Him. Our tongues can get us into a world of trouble (James 3:2-6). Before we speak or write on social media, we should “count the cost” to be sure that our words will bless and not curse. Proverbs 13:3 says, “He who guards his mouth preserves his life.” When we are together, sisters, don’t judge one another: exhort each other. Control the urge to pick apart other sisters who might be struggling in ways we don’t know.

### CONTROL YOUR APPEARANCE

“Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control” (1 Tim. 2:9, ESV). Our clothing should let us shine as examples for Christ, not as images of the world. When you clothe your heart with God’s will, your outward clothing should fall in line. Modesty is not about “wear this and don’t wear that.” What is modest for one may not be modest for another, depending on body shape and style of clothing. Let us not judge each other in matters of modesty (Rom. 14:13); it can be hurtful and divisive.

Self-control will always lead to godliness when we apply it to our attitude, desires, speech, and appearance. “Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. 10:31)

[1] Vines, W. E., M. A. Entry for 'Temperance, Temperate'. Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words. <https://www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/t/temperance-temperate.html>. 1940.

[2] Thayers's. #1467 1 Corinthians 9:25. <https://www.studydrive.org>

## About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

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**“FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE.” PSALM 11:7**

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We pray that, with every issue and with every article, all glory is given to God.

