

## Wholeness

*Weekly Biblical reflections for looking after our Wellbeing*

### **Reflection: Living a Life of Kindness**

*"remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

Acts 20:35b

'In a world where you can be anything be kind'; we've heard that a lot this year, with #bekind trending on social media numerous times. I'm not sure many would disagree we need more of this, so let's look a little deeper into the world of being kind.

To be kind, or show compassion it not always an easy thing to do – it requires vulnerability and tenderness, as we are moved by the plight of others; we have to de-centre ourselves to be kind to others. However, it can lead us to emotional wholeness.

In Acts, Paul quotes Jesus: *'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'* This isn't just about giving financially, it can be giving of our time, our talents, or just a small random act of kindness. However, the point that is being made in scripture isn't about what we do, but that our lives are characterised by kindness, just like Jesus.

Do you remember the last time you did something kind, how did it made you feel? No matter the situation, kindness will make you feel good afterwards - we can look to science to explain why:

*Acts of kindness can release hormones that contribute to your mood and overall wellbeing. The practice is so effective it's being formally incorporated into some types of psychotherapy. Studies have also linked random acts of kindness to releasing dopamine, a chemical messenger in the brain that can give us a feeling of euphoria. This feel-good brain chemical is credited with causing what's known as a "helper's high." In addition to boosting oxytocin and dopamine, being kind can also increase serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood.<sup>1</sup>*

There is a great Friends episode where Phoebe tries to find a completely selfless good deed to perform, but she can't do it; every time she does something good, even if it's a sacrifice, she gets the benefit of feeling great. Maybe it's because our brains are created to almost reward us when we do kind things. And it doesn't stop there - the person on the receiving

end of the act of kindness also benefits in exactly the same way. These feelings don't last for ever so it's important we follow what Jesus said and live our life characterised by kindness, and he was a great example for us.

He healed the leper, when no one else would go near him. He ate a meal with Zacchaeus, the tax collector who most likely abused his position. He used stories to teach us how to live, like the Good Samaritan, that showed his compassion for those who would not ordinarily receive it. The New Testament is littered with examples of Jesus living his life characterised by kindness that are right at our fingertips today.

Questions to reflect on:

- What can I do today to show kindness to someone?
- How can I follow the example of Jesus to live a life of kindness?
- How can my school follow Jesus' example to live a life of kindness?

Prayer

Thank you Father that kindness isn't just a nice idea, but that you created us so that our bodies have a physical reaction when we are kind. Help us to follow Your Son's example by living a daily life of kindness. Amen

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cedars-sinai.org/blog/science-of-kindness.html#:~:text=the%20same%20time.%22-,Dr.,as%20a%20%22helper's%20high.%22>