

KINDNESS

MEANING AND USAGE

- *chresteuomai* means "to provide something beneficial for someone as an act of kindness"
- *chrestos* (*kind*) is used of (1) a man called "the Kind," (2) addressing a person as "my kind friend," (3) a husband's kindness to his wife, (4) kind gods, (5) kind wine that's not harsh going down (Luke 5:39), and (6) a kind yoke that's not harsh on your shoulders (Matt 11:30)
- *achrestos* (*cruel*)—the opposite of *chrestos*—is used of (1) a cruel command from King Xerxes telling Masistes to divorce the wife he loves and marry the king's daughter, and (2) cruel gods
- *chrestotes* (*kindness*) is used of (1) a title of address "your Kindness," (2) Seleucus showing kindness to a defeated enemy, (3) a rich man reduced to poverty because of his kindness in giving money to his greedy friends, (4) the kindness of a governor in not financially exploiting his subjects, and (5) a wife's kindness to her husband

GOD'S KINDNESS

- kindness is an attribute of God—a part of his essence: 'Kind and upright is the Lord' (Psa 25:8 LXX); 'You are kind and in your kindness teach me your ordinances' (Psa 119:68 LXX)
- *chrestos* and *chrestotes* are used more often of God than of anyone else in the Septuagint
- God has a lot of kindness and his kindness makes repentance for unbelievers possible (Rom 2:4; cf. Luke 6:35; 1 Peter 2:3)
 - salvation is a result of God's kindness, love, and mercy (Titus 3:4–5)
- God is kind to believers but harsh to unbelievers (Rom 11:22): the opposite of kindness (*chrestotes*) is harshness (*apotomia*)
- *apotomia* is used of (1) severe laws, (2) a cruel tyrant, (3) harsh rebukes, (4) a strictness that makes no concessions to reason, (5) ruthless tax-collectors torturing people in collecting taxes
 - since God is love (1 John 4:8, 16) and love is kind (1 Cor 13:4), it follows that God is infinitely rich in kindness (Rom 2:4)
- appeal to his kindness for answers to prayer: "let us fall before him as supplicants of his mercy and kindness" (1 Clement 9:1)
 - God's grace is expressed in works of kindness towards believers in the millennial and eternal Kingdoms (Eph 2:7)

DIVINE KINDNESS

- fallen men are not kind by nature and do not continually do acts of kindness—number 6 of a 14 count indictment (Rom 3:12): kindness expresses itself in doing acts of kindness (implied in Rom 3:12)
 - kindness is one of the fruits of the Spirit—listed fifth in order of importance (Gal 5:22)
 - kindness is a mental attitude and can be put on and off like clothing (Col 3:12): to put on these attitudes—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience—is to be like God
- to put them on requires their presence in your heart (fruit of Spirit), a volitional decision, and some effort—like getting dressed
 - put them on as needed; e.g., when someone irritates you, decide to put on kindness and patience (lengthen your anger)
 - be kind to fellow believers: "Be kind to one another..." (Eph 4:32)
 - be kind to your enemies—to ungrateful and evil men (Luke 6:35)
 - if you love your enemies (Matt 5:44), you will be kind to them because "love is kind" (1 Cor 13:4)
 - love is kind (1 Cor 13:4): you will be kind to animals and people if you love them
 - kindness is a prerequisite for serving God (2 Cor 6:6)
 - be careful who your friends are: 'Evil company ruins kind habits' (1 Cor 15:33 RCL)—people who were once kind to others now treat others harshly as they become like their evil companions