

Proverbs Week #23 (3:3)

Proverbs 3:3 "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart."

In reference to this verse commentaries ask what type of kindness is it talking about? Is it a kindness based upon our ideas about being kind and loving, or is it something greater? Ultimately God's kindness toward us is our standard and we learn from His example the type of love we are to model. It is the reality and truth of His love that we are to keep as treasure in our hearts on a daily basis.

"We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, the Messiah died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, the Messiah died for us." (Rom 8:5-8)

The Messiah demonstrated God's love in word and deed. This love teaches us to receive from God and then model His type of kindness to others. Let's look at how this relates to receiving God's forgiveness and forgiving others. Try to see how experiencing the truth of God's example in this area should impact how we live our lives.

Now one of the Pharisees invited Yeshua to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Yeshua was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Yeshua answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Yeshua said. (Luke 7:39-43)

Understanding God's love and forgiveness should cause us to love more. As we understand how much we are forgiven it should change us. Not everyone who hears about this truth puts it into practice. Yeshua told this parable:

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt... Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matt 18:23-35)

Part of binding God's kindness and truth around our neck is allowing God's truth to change how we act toward others. Families think about these very important questions this week: What do you need to know and do to receive God's forgiveness? If God forgives you, how do you forgive others?