

mar 5

have we forgotten to be kind

"but also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." 2 pet 1:5-7

i used to have a preacher and he called this our "exercise program." i can't tell you the number of time he used to refer back to these scriptures. yes, we were in training; Godly training. and he used to work us like a drill sergeant in the service. he had us hoping all over the bible, going from scripture to scripture.

it was good training. but you know, one can read and read about something but until it is actually put into action, it will have little effect on someone. what was it the apostle paul said? "though i speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, i have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." 1 cor 13:1 in other words - all show and no go!

God wants more from us. we are to be changed from glory to glory and that means we have an exercise program to complete. the scripture instructs us plainly. one must begin with faith. "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." rom 10:17 in studying we will come to know the truth. knowing the truth will birth virtue in us. when the diseased woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment, it is said "virtue"

went out of Him. virtue means power.

oh, but we still have much left in our exercise program. with great power comes great responsibility. we need to learn self-control. it means "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 cor 10:5 just like the children of israel set up camp in the wilderness, we too may find a suitable spot and decide to set up camp there. camping means you aren't traveling. we've still got to learn that "perseverance." perseverance to press on.

press on until we get to godliness. surely, we say, this is more than a camping place. it is our destination. we say and do all the right things but still something is lacking. it is our heart. we don't want to be a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. we must have meat on the bone. there must be substance instead of shadow.

have we forgotten to be kind? have we looked upon the one who is lost and confused and failed to extend a hand to lead them in the "right" way. have we offered and when they refused, "shaken the dust" from our feet and traveled on? have we turned the other cheek to be smitten as well? have we forgotten the command to forgive seventy times seven. if we can learn true kindness we are nearing our goal.

"love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all

things, hopes all things, endures all things. love never fails." 1 cor 13:4-8

you see - God is love. if we are ever to find our way into God's presence, it must be through love. not man's love which would preach tolerance and acceptance. it must be "pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father... to keep oneself unspotted from the world." james 1:27

i so remember the night my mother died and i was grudgingly doing the necessary. the deeds were right but the heart wasn't. God whispered in my spirit: "if you don't do it in love, it doesn't mean anything." love conquers all.

so often we strive hardest for that which is temporary and passing away. "for bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." 1 tim 4:8 do your bodily exercises. "these you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." luke 11:42

exercise everyday. both in the physical and in the spiritual. when one can pay no attention to a suffered wrong and still remember to be kind, "it is no longer i who live, but Christ lives in me." gal 2:20 "you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 cor 3:23