

Ransom Notes

A Pair of Ripped Jeans

November 12, 2023 was 'World Kindness Day'. Can you believe it? Is it possible to have kindness throughout this world, even for a day? Phil resents co-worker Tim, because he got two extra donuts at the company party. Hanna needs help crossing the street in her wheel chair, but does anyone slow down to help give her a push? We grumble when the neighbor's kitty eats the goldfish from our wee out-door fish-pond, so next time they are out of town, we refuse to take in their mail. College campuses explode with angry students, waving flags and screaming at each other. At times it seems like everyone is unhappy with someone for even minor irritations or differences of opinions. The words *compromise* and *peace* are apparently missing in this century's 'Problem Solving' dictionary. So, the question: Is it possible to have Kindness Day anywhere in the world? Perhaps the 'ancient' habit of performing 'Random Acts of Kindness' needs to be encouraged in this day of anger and unpleasantness. Three examples, however, come to mind that give me hope.

A high school friend had an uncle with some memory issues. Her uncle, living in a small, rural town, went to pick up some supplies at the store. He left home about eleven a.m. and was not found until about four a.m. the next day. His niece, my friend, was worried and unable to sleep that evening. Her mother, however, snoozed comfortably through the night.

Later, her daughter asked why she was not worried and was able to sleep. Her mother responded, "I just gave it to God." This may seem like a strange example of kindness, but her mother took the opportunity to model and discuss a valuable lesson for a teen-ager. Yes, kindness may take on a strange appearance. Mother was helping her daughter build an understanding of trust in God. She also might learn that by resting in the night, she could have energy to help her uncle, as he seeks comfort after several hours of 'lostness'.

Kindness and friendship put on another cloak. One Sunday, as I finished teaching the adult Bible class, I heard a voice say, "Kathryn". Turning toward the sound, I saw a woman walking swiftly toward me, arms outreaching. Taking a second glance, I realized the voice belonged to a long lost friend. As we hugged and smiled, she introduced me to her companion, and we took a couple of brief walks down 'memory-lane'. She had taken time to track me down that Sunday, just to renew a friendship. The hug and smiles certainly warmed my day. Kindness often only involves simple actions.

Other times kindness may involve swift action and thinking out of the box. I remember so well, the day when a class member noticed a homeless man, who sometimes attended our Bible class, had a problem. His jeans were not only quite dirty, but were ripped from his waist to his knees. He had difficulty even holding them on.

The class member took action and dashed to a near-by store that sold men's clothing. Estimating the size necessary for a comfortable fit, he bought a pair of jeans and returned to the church. Immediately the gift of kindness was given, the recipient found the restroom, and a transformation took place. This gentleman came back to class, smiling and whistling. For at least one day his jeans would be fresh and clean. I am also confident, the gift-giver had a moment of happiness.

The Lord challenges us to love and show kindness to both friends and enemies. He had Paul tell the Ephesians to get rid of brawling, anger, and yes, slander. (Ephesians 4:31-32) We know that our hearts are to be full of love.

The prodigal son received kindness the day he returned to his father's home. We find in Luke 15, how dad threw a party, much to the disgust of his other son. Dad forgave his younger son. He wiped away his tears and extended his arms in friendship, welcoming the wandering one home.

What an example of kindness! God, the Father, will welcome His children home someday in the future, even though each of us has probably disappointed Him many times. I'm glad God is a forgiving and kind Father. Revelation 19:7-8 tells us He plans for the wedding of the Lamb. The bride, His church, will be given fine linen, bright and clean, to wear. I plan to smile, and maybe even whistle a hymn, as I don my new garments that a kind and loving God gave me.

**Join me as we attempt daily to implement Kindness Day
Then prepare for God's Great Kindness Day – The Second Coming**

