

TakeFive

Biblical insights for the week of September 10-14, 2018
written by Pastor Troy Thornton

Kindness in an Unkind Culture

Monday — 2 Timothy 2:23

With the constant 24-hour news cycle that exists today, people are bombarded with political and cultural debate, and opinions. This continuous banter and debate often descends into what scripture calls, “foolish and stupid arguments.”

It is good to understand what is happening within our government and culture. However, a follower of Jesus mustn't get caught up in what will only, “produce quarrels.” As believers living in our society, people need to see that we handle ourselves differently in the political/cultural arena. Our lives aren't wrapped up in politics, or culture. People should see that our focus is on showing the kindness and love of Christ – no matter what views folks may have. Living and Loving Like Jesus requires us to handle the current “debate” with grace and kindness. Our lives are not determined by the latest political/cultural winds; they are focused on our Savior and His purpose.

For Today: Rise above the “debate” and show grace and kindness.

Tuesday — 2 Timothy 2:24

A porcupine is an interesting animal. They aren't very big, they don't run fast, and they are generally unimpressive. However, no one wants to get in the way of a porcupine. They can turn your day into a painful experience. Unfortunately, there are times when people (that includes you and me) can become like the prickly porcupine. There are times when no one wants to get in our way because they fear a painful experience.

Believers aren't immune to being “prickly,” but we are called to be the exact opposite. Paul warned the young Timothy not to be “quarrelsome,” or “resentful.” Rather, the follower of Jesus should be “kind to everyone.” This isn't some sort of “Pollyanna” insincerity. It is a demonstration of the kindness that we have experienced in our own life through the love and forgiveness of our sin. We should be the most approachable and least “prickly” people to those in our lives.

For Today: Let love and forgiveness be demonstrated, not “prickliness.”

Wednesday — 2 Timothy 2:25

It's football season. I am a big college football fan, particularly a huge Notre Dame fan (as all good folks are.) I want all Notre Dame opponents to be defeated. Sometimes this mentality can creep into real life as well. At times I can perceive people that don't believe in Jesus and The Truth as opponents that must be defeated.

Followers of Jesus aren't called to defeat people that oppose The Truth. We are called to “gently instruct” them. This is done with both prayer and patience as we consistently share and demonstrate the Gospel. Jesus was full of both grace and truth (John 1:14.) He was able to tell people the truth about their need for a savior, while patiently showing grace. People who don't know Jesus aren't our enemies; they are people who need Jesus – just like us.

For Today: Look to engage unbelievers, not defeat them.

Thursday — 2 Timothy 2:25-26

Sometimes I can become pretty impressed with myself. I think I am smart, or talented. It is in those moments that God usually humbles me. God shows me that He is the only one due any credit or glory. I am merely an object of His grace. I have no business looking at myself as better than any other. God loves all people equally and wants all to know Him.

As we interact with people each day, it's easy to look at those that don't know Jesus as “lesser” in some way. Let those of us who know Jesus remember that we were once “trapped” and in need of repentance found only, “by grace through faith” (Ephesians 2:8.) God desires that everyone would have “knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:25.) We cannot look down on anyone, but we should desire that his or her eyes be opened to the Truth.

For Today: Pray for someone you know to come to Jesus.

Friday — 2 Timothy 2:24

Our culture doesn't look favorably upon the title “servant.” It is a word that we associate with a lot of negatives. Even the idea of serving someone else is not desirable. We like the idea of someone serving us, but serving others doesn't appeal to many.

Paul uses the word “servant” in an almost passing fashion as he speaks to young Timothy. It is essentially an assumption that Timothy should consider himself as the “Lord's servant.” It was his calling; it is to be ours as well. God isn't looking for us to take charge and wow folks with our abilities. He desires servants that are willing to do His work.

For Today: Serve others.