



Dear Friends,

Recently, Cherie Gilmour wrote an opinion piece in a Sydney newspaper where she confessed to having a 'feminist malfunction.' I was immediately intrigued. What could she be talking about?

Ms Gilmour explained that she has a feminist malfunction "when a male, usually older but not always, holds the lift door open for me to enter before him." She says, "I smile politely while doing an internal dance of, 'chivalry is good', 'chivalry is outdated', debating whether or not to enter the lift first."

Ms Gilmour then muses on her dilemma. On one hand, some think male chivalry toward women as perpetuating a patriarchy "which is patronising and misogynistic." On the other hand, she says, "perhaps we need to extend a spirit of generosity to others in our interpretations of their actions and motivations." She admits that when dating, she appreciated the chivalrous actions of her male companion, whether he was pulling out a chair for her or insisting that he pay for their meal.

Ms Gilmour then frames her dilemma as a choice between being right or showing kindness. She says, "The bottom line is: is it better to be right or is it better to be kind?"

I appreciated her conclusion:

The feminist malfunction I experience is the result of a multitude of mixed messages from every corner of the political spectrum. If I listen closely to my internal compass, kindness trumps being right every time. Just walk through the door.

Kindness is an attribute of God. But what does it mean to be kind?

To be kind is to do something good for a person who has not done anything to deserve such treatment.

Kindness originates in God. God is kind in simply creating us. God didn't need to create you. He chose to make something other than himself just because he is good and loving. God demonstrates his kindness by creating us 'good' to live under his good rule and find our satisfaction in him as our ultimate good. Psalm 63:3 says:

*Because your **loving kindness** is better than life, my lips will glorify you.*

God's kindness is most fully and gloriously demonstrated in his saving actions toward us in Christ Jesus. That's because we have sinned against God by rejecting his kindness toward us. We don't want to treat him as our creator. We rebel against his rule. We're determined to choose what we think is best for us. Despite our rebellion, God, in his kindness, moves toward us. Titus 3:4-5 says:

*But when the **kindness** of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.*

Because God is kind, it's no surprise then that if we have received his kindness to us in Christ, we are to be kind. Galatians 5:22-23 says that the fruit of the Spirit includes kindness. Kindness is to characterise Christians.

I want to think and pray more intentionally about the ways in which I can show kindness. To take the initiative to do good toward another – without being asked, and not because they first did something good for me. Take someone out for a coffee. Say an encouraging word. Drop a meal over to a person in need. Make a donation to support a community in crisis. Open a door to let someone else go before me. But I won't be able to do this off the back of my own resolve. To show kindness, my heart needs to be changed by God's kindness toward me in Christ. It requires no less than the Spirit's work in me.

God Bless
Mark Adams