

To Rake or Not to Rake—An Act of Kindness

Introduction

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

Kindness is something we do. Kindness means many things, and one of them is laying aside ourselves to help someone else. It is putting others before us, and doing what needs to be done. It could mean helping the poor, the elderly, and the sick. It can mean doing a neighborly deed when it needs to be done, not when it is convenient for us. And, this is the lesson that Tommy learned regarding Mr. Potter.

The Scripture

Read the Scripture to the group.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” —1 Corinthians 13:4

A Real Life Example

Read the following or relate it in your own words.

To Rake or Not to Rake

Tommy ran home from school one sunny afternoon. He saw old Mr. Potter slowly raking the leaves in his yard as he went by. Tommy looked at him and ran by as fast as he could. Mr. Potter looked up and grunted and went back to raking.

“He looks mean to me,” said Tommy to himself. “I don’t think I ever see him smile. I wonder if he has to rake that big yard all by himself? I’m glad that we raked our yard on Saturday. Now I can go play baseball with the guys.” He ran in the house and grabbed his glove and bat.

“Don’t be late for dinner,” his mom called after him.

“I won’t,” he answered. He started down the street to the park. He passed Mr. Potter’s house again and saw old Mr. Potter still raking away. Tommy was glad that they didn’t have such a big yard to rake as Mr. Potter did.

“Too bad that he doesn’t have anybody to help him,” he said. He thought for a moment. “Maybe *I* should help him,” he said, “but then I won’t be able to play ball with the guys. But I know that I would like someone to help me if I was raking such a big yard . . . Oh, what should I do?” Next, a thought came to: charity is kind. Another thought—what is the kindest thing I can do right now? “Well, no question about that! I should just stop and help him and then play ball if there is time. If not, there will be other days to play ball.” And that is just what Tommy did, and you should have seen the smile on Mr. Potter’s face when Tommy offered to help him! He didn’t look so mean anymore.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why would Tommy think Mr. Potter may need some help?
2. What was Tommy’s dilemma?
3. Why was this a hard decision for Tommy to make?
4. What must Tommy give up in order to be kind to Mr. Potter?
5. What is charity?
6. How did the verse on charity help Tommy to make a godly and kind decision?
7. What do you think Jesus would have liked Tommy to do?
8. What would you do if you had been Tommy?

Conclusion and Resolution

Read the Scripture again. Read or explain the conclusion in your own words. Ask the group to suggest what specific changes that they can resolve to make in their daily lives that will help them to implement needed changes in this area. Ask them to especially consider things they have learned in the Bible to use as scriptural guideposts to a more competent and productive life.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.”—1 Corinthians 13:4

Kindness is one of the virtues that every Christian should possess and every Christian should be known by. Charity envelops kindness. Kindness takes thoughtfulness. It takes some moments to think in any given situation what the kindest thing possible would be to do. We should learn to take time to think and pray before we speak or before we act or before we make any decision. That is the only way we can be sure that we are putting Jesus first and putting others first.

Teacher’s Notes
