

THE LOVINGKINDNESS MEDLEY

For two readers and a song leader

VERNA'S INTRODUCTION: This meditation has to do with what I consider to be one of the most beautiful words in our language: LOVINGKINDNESS. It is the blending of two words beautiful in their own right. Who doesn't appreciate a person who is both loving and kind? But somehow to me the word lovingkindness contains far more wonderful characteristics than the two obvious ones. Wrapped up in the word I see mercy, forgiveness, compassion, tenderness, gentleness, and more. Lovingkindness opens WIDE its arms and says: "Come on! There's room here for you!"

Unfortunately, the word seems to be going out of style. I learned it as a child from the King James Bible I was reading then, and from a hymn we used to sing in church. The Bible I now use has the word in only one place, and that is Jeremiah 31:3: *The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with lovingkindness."* Isn't that beautiful? Lovingkindness is a quality of God that draws us to him, and that we can imitate to reflect the image of God in us. What a calling we have: to live so that we draw people to God!

This medley includes Scripture passages in which lovingkindness is being expressed, even though the word is not used, alternating with the refrain from the hymn "Loving-Kindness." I enjoyed assembling some of my favorite Scriptures into five sections, each pointing out an aspect of lovingkindness, like the hymn did. The last section is called "Pass it on!" – it is full of ideas about spreading lovingkindness to others.

Lovingkindness Refrain:



(Sing each line 2 times)

- #1. Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how free!
- #2. Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how great!
- #3. Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how strong!
- #4. Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how good!
- #5. Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how pure!

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Verse 1

1 – Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?

2 – Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.

1 – For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

2 – For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

1 – This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let those who boast boast about this: that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.

Refrain #1 – “Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how FREE!”

Verse 2

2 – He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

1 – So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

2 – For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

1 – Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.

2 – “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

1 – Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Refrain #2 – “Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how GREAT!”

Verse 3

2 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

1 – For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

2 – My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch you out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

1 & 2 – I and the Father are one.

Refrain #3 – “Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how STRONG!”

Verse 4 (unison reading of Psalm 23)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Refrain #4 – “Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how GOOD!”

Verse 5 – Pass it on!

1 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

2 – A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

1 – Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

2 – Be devoted to one another with mutual affection. Honor one another above yourselves. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

1 – Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children,

1 & 2 – and live a life of love,

2 – just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Refrain #5 – “Lovingkindness, lovingkindness, His lovingkindness, oh, how PURE!”

Scriptures used in this reading: Isaiah 55:1-3a; John 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Isaiah 40:11; Isaiah 41:10, 13; Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5:7; Romans 8:35, 37-39; John 10:27-30; Psalm 23; Matthew 5:43-45; John 13:34; Ephesians 4:32; Romans 12:10,12,13; Ephesians 5:1, 2.

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Loving-Kindness

*The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying,
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jer. 31:3*

1. A - wake, my soul, to joy - ful lays*, And sing thy great Re - deem - er's praise;
2. He saw me ru - ined in the fall, Yet loved me not - with - stand - ing all;
3. Though nu - m'rous hosts of might - y foes, Though earth and hell my way op - pose,
4. When trou - ble like a gloom - y cloud, Has gath - ered thick and thun - dered loud,
5. Soon I shall pass the gloom - y vale, Soon all my mor - tal pow'rs must fail;
6. Then let me mount and soar a - way To the bright world of end - less day;

He just - ly claims a song for me, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how free!
He saved me from my lost es - tate, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how great!
He safe - ly leads my soul a - long, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how strong!
He near my soul has al - ways stood, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how good!
Oh, may my last ex - pir - ing breath His lov - ing - kind - ness sing in death.
And sing with rap - tures and sur - prise, His lov - ing - kind - ness in the skies.

Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how free!
Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how great!
Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how strong!
Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness, oh, how good!
Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness sing in death.
Lov - ing - kind - ness, lov - ing - kind - ness, His lov - ing - kind - ness in the skies.

WORDS: Samuel Medley, pub.1782. MUSIC: "Loving-Kindness"; attr. to William Caldwell, pub.1831. Public Domain. *lays: songs