

VOICES OF HOPE



DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH

MISSION

*Ignited by faith,
we live out God's love by embracing,
equipping and empowering
vulnerable people in
Southern California*

VISION

*Sharing the love of Christ,
we are a community to care
and be cared for...*

*Where the vulnerable are
safer and stronger*

*Where the dependent
are self-sustaining*

*Where the isolated
dwell in community*

*Where the weary
will be given hope*

VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy
Collaboration / Respect
Innovation / Stewardship*

Happy Friday, Everyone!

I send you greetings and blessings today. What a wonderful week it has been. I hope you have experienced joy and happiness along with the exhilaration that comes with accomplishing things you set out to accomplish. As the week closes, I sit and think about how blessed we are.

On Monday mornings each week, I am the person who leads devotion in our office. For the last several weeks, I have focused on Galatians 5:22-23, where the Fruits of the Spirit are outlined for Believers. That scripture reads:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” - Galatians 5:22-23

This week, our focus was on the fifth fruit, which is KINDNESS. I read several articles relating to the word kindness, in the context of being a Believer. I don't know if you are familiar with the scripture that says, “when we were babies we were given milk, but solid food is needed as we grow older and mature”. That analogy stands out in my mind as I think about kindness. As immature Christians we may not always readily show kindness to those who attack us. However, as we mature as Christians, our actions should also show maturity. For example, when someone hurts us or shows that they despise us, instead of lashing out (that human side), we should pray for them. The scripture that comes to mind is found in Ephesians 4:31-32, which says, “Get rid of all *brawling and slander, along with malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. Just as Christ forgave you.*” - Eph 4.31-32

I will be the first to say that it is not easy to be kind when someone is mean. I want to tell them off, lash out and get back at them. However, what years of living has taught me, is that I don't have to retaliate. Christ fights for me. I think staying quiet and praying for them helps me as much as it will eventually help them. When I was younger, when someone hurt me, I did not want to pray for them and certainly not forgive them. Age should mellow us! When others talk about you or hurt your feelings, pray for them and forgive them right away. When all is said and done, you will be proud of yourself, and maybe, just maybe, the person who caused you harm will recognize what they have done and seek your forgiveness. If they don't, that's okay too.

Remember, kindness is required of Believers. When we show kindness, we show we care. When people feel you care, they will eventually respond even if their response is to stop and self-reflect.

I hope this brings you some encouragement today. May God richly bless you and keep you in His care.

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith
President & Chief Executive Officer