

## Controversial Kindness

### Scripture Reading — Colossians 3:12-14

*Love is patient, love is kind.*  
—1 Corinthians 13:4—

On the surface, kindness does not seem controversial, writes Princeton professor Tom Long. Kindness seems safe, even soft. Everybody promotes kindness. And yet we must be honest: kindness, properly lived, can lead to controversy, upsetting the status quo. We are wise to consider kindness carefully before blindly tolling its virtues.

Long describes a time when he arrived early for a worship service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. It was a beautiful spring day. He hadn't eaten yet, so he visited a nearby deli to get a cup of coffee and a sweet roll. Walking across the street, he sat in a lovely park, ready to enjoy his breakfast. The lid wasn't off his coffee when a man who had obviously spent the night in the park walked up and asked, "Spare change?" Long had a few coins and, reaching into his pocket, had that warm, self-congratulatory feeling of doing his "good deed for the day." But then behind this man he saw another homeless man, watching. Behind him were others, hungry and hoping. In his imagination, Long soon pictured all the homeless people of New York City surrounding him—and all he had was 30 cents in his hand.

You can't be kind in small things without connecting yourself to big things like homelessness, civil rights, economic justice, war and peace. Have you thought of kindness in big ways as well as small ways? Have you acted on it?

### Prayer

*Father, you promise to make every wrong right. Help us be kind in small and big ways. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Kindness](#), [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Love](#), [Stewardship](#)

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