

Candy and Kindness

According to writer Jon Van, at the 1995 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, researchers revealed the results of a study that show how important kindness is in day-to-day relations.

In the experiment, researchers gave 44 doctors the symptoms of a hypothetical patient and then asked for each doctor's diagnosis of the illness. But the real point of the study was not how well the doctors could diagnose illness. Before the experiment began, researchers gave half of the doctors a bag of candy, saying it was a token of appreciation for their involvement in the study. The other doctors received nothing.

Alice Isen, a Cornell University psychologist, said the doctors receiving the candy were far more likely to correctly diagnose the patient's problem. "Pleasant-feeling states give rise to altruism, helpfulness and improved interpersonal processes," she explained.

When God tells us to be kind to others, as always, He has a good idea. Kindness is God's program for making our world work better.

And perhaps the study also suggests that the next time we go to the doctor's office, we should take along a bag of candy. I wonder if mine prefers chocolate.

--Beecher Hunter