

## To Forgive or Not to Forgive, That is the Question Pt. 3 Colossians 3:12-13

### Colossians 3:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

### Introduction:

Forgiveness is central to the gospel, in fact, it could be argued that forgiveness is the gospel. Jesus came into this world, to die for his enemies so that He could forgive them.

Without forgiveness, no one will see the Lord.

We have sinned millions of times against the Holy God who created us. We have rebelled, disobeyed, disregarded, blasphemed and hated.

Our sin set us at enmity with God. He was our enemy and we were His Enemy until He made the first move.

If we were left to ourselves, we would never seek God and we would never seek forgiveness. God in His great mercy has forgiven us and now He wants us to act like Him and forgive as he as forgiven.

So how do we do this.

FORGIVE those who wrong you, who harm you, who are your enemies or less than your enemies.

HOW

To be able to do this, we will need to understand a few things

And to do that we are going to build a house.

We are going to build a house that all of us can live in that will protect us from rain of bitterness that can saturate our soul and will provide for us warm grace filled place in the cold dark world we live in.

1. **The Foundation** - God is a Forgiving God
2. **The Floor** — Christ has Forgiven You
3. **The Four Walls**— You must Forgive others
4. **The Framed Roof**— Grace, Mercy, Trust.

## 1. The Foundation - God is a Forgiving God

A theme that clearly runs through the whole Bible is that God is a forgiving God. He Forgives sin and sinners and all sin is ultimately against God because to be a sin you have to violate or disobey His standard or his commandment.

Psalm 86:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,  
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon  
You.

God's forgiveness of us serves as our **motive** (we forgive because he forgave us) and our **model** (we forgive in the way he forgave us) for forgiving others. With the help of God's Spirit and the power of his enabling grace, God's forgiveness of us fuels us and

frees us to forgive our offenders. It pushes us to pardon others the way God has pardoned us.

Jones, Robert D.. Pursuing Peace (p. 131). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

1. The Foundation - God is a Forgiving God

**2. The Floor—Christ has Forgiven You**

Colossians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

1. His Forgiveness is Generous or Comprehensive

2. His Forgiveness is Sovereign

3. His Forgiveness is Compassionate, Merciful and Gracious

**1. The Foundation** - God is a Forgiving God

**2. The Floor** —Christ has Forgiven You

### **3. The Four Walls—You must Forgive others**

These walls are built for the purpose of guarding our hearts from the sinful attitudes of bitterness, anger and shouting, slander and malice toward those who have done you wrong.

These walls are built to insure if at all possible as much as depends on you, that we have reconciled relationships

These walls are also built to maintain our fellowship with God and to protect us from the chastisements of God.

#### **Wall number 1 is built out of Mark 11:25**

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

#### **Wall # 2 is built out of Luke 17:3-4**

Luke 17:3–4

<sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

### **Wall #3 is built out of Matthew 6:14**

<sup>14</sup> “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

### **Wall #4 is built out of Matthew 6:15**

<sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**These 4 walls, or 4 verses represents the totality of our responsibility to forgive one another.**

**Now some see a contradiction with wall #1 and wall #2.**

Mark 11:25

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him

Luke 17:3–4

<sup>3</sup> **Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him**

Some have argued that there is no such thing as **unconditional forgiveness** taught in the New Testament.

Some have gone as far as to say that if you teach unconditional forgiveness, it **cheapens grace** and makes forgiveness **more therapeutic and helpful for the one forgiving than for the one being forgiven.**

Others have said that if you take the **whole of scripture together** and don't isolate one verse from another then you will **end up with conditional forgiveness.**

..... as far as it being contradictory or teaching two different things, I would say **they are not contradictory but rather complementary.**

They are **2 sides of same coin** and the coin is forgiveness. both must be present for the coin to even exist.

These verses give a bigger picture of forgiveness that we need a bigger heart and attitude of forgiveness.

So which is it? Is forgiveness unconditional and generous and never ending regardless if there is repentance

Or is it Conditional, and limited and restricted to only those who repent and for the non-repentant, no forgiveness is granted.

The answer is YES and NO  
YES to BOTH.

*It is unconditional and conditional  
and sometimes it is conditional and all times it is  
unconditional*

*Let me explain*

*First*

*It is clear that the Bible makes statements that seem to teach the forgiveness should be  
Unconditional*

### **Mark 11:25**

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him,



Luke 23:34 (NKJV)

<sup>34</sup> Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

Acts 7:60 (LSB)

60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”

/ but love covers over all wrongs” (Prov. 10:12).

/ but a prudent man overlooks an insult” (Prov. 12:16).

“He who covers over an offense promotes love, (Prov. 17:9).

/ it is to his glory to overlook an offense” (Prov. 19:11).

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36; cf. James 2:13).

“[Love] keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Cor. 13:5).

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13).

love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8).

**Second**, it is also clear that the Bible seems to teach that forgiveness can only be granted to those who repent.

Luke 17:3–4

<sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If **he hears you**, you have gained your brother.

The solution to this apparent dilemma is not to eliminate one or the other or to dilute one or the other. Rather, we need to understand that there are 2 categories of forgiveness and within those 2 there are 2 kinds of forgiveness.

The 2 main categories are

**1. Vertical —my relationship with God.**

**2. Horizontal—my relationship with man**

## **1. Vertical –my relationship with God.**

First In our Relationship with God we have two kinds of forgivenesses

### **1. Judicial Forgiveness**

Judicial forgiveness forgives all of my sin because the sins against God have been punished already by Jesus dying on the Cross.

They are forgiven permanently, eternally, justly and graciously.

Judicial forgiveness makes me a son of God and brings me into the family of God

Judicial forgiveness keeps me out of Hell

Judicial forgiveness is the Judge forgiving the criminal

### **2. Parental Forgiveness.**

Parental forgiveness forgives me temporarily, justly and graciously.

Parental forgiveness frees me from chastisement because I already am a child of God

Parental forgiveness keeps me in fellowship with my father in heaven.

Parental forgiveness is the parent forgiving the child.

*This is the believer in I John 1:9 who continually confesses his sins, and Jesus is faithful to forgive him.*

### **1. Vertical –my relationship with God.**

*Once I am Judicially forgiven and are being forgiven daily Parentally from my Father, I am now responsible for.....*

### **2. Horizontal –my relationship with man**

And I would argue that there are 2 kinds of forgiveness that we are to practice when it comes to each other and even our enemies.

#### **1. Attitudinal Forgiveness –heart, disposition.**

#### **2. Transactional Forgiveness -relational, and reconciliational.**

#### **1. Attitudinal Forgiveness –heart, disposition.**

Attitudinal forgiveness involves releasing the offender from our judgment, and entrusting him,

ourselves, and the situation into God's hands. In forgiveness we decide to stop playing the role of judge

We don't take revenge

We don't return evil for evil but rather good.

We don't revile for being reviled but do as Jesus did,

He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

**This Attitude of forgiveness is the heart attitude of**

### **Mark 11:25**

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive him,**

***This forgiveness is eager to forgive, quick to forgive, immediate and permanent. It is gracious, compassionate, flowing with mercy and humility.***

*This is the heart attitude of*  
Colossians 3:12–14 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving (grace) one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as** Christ forgave (graced) you, so you also *must do*.

- 1. Attitudinal Forgiveness – heart, disposition.**
- 2. Transactional Forgiveness -relational, and reconciliational.**

**Wall number 1 is built out of Mark 11:25**

- 1. Attitudinal Forgiveness – heart, disposition.**

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

**Wall # 2 is built out of Luke 17:3-4**

## 2. Transactional Forgiveness -relational, and reconciliational.

Luke 17:3–4

<sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

### **Wall #1 of the Attitude of forgiveness. mindset, disposition.**

has been built and will need to be connected to the second wall to become sturdy and strong.

\_\_\_\_/In other words, the Attitude and mindset is I have forgiven and am ready to grant forgiveness now.

There are hundreds of people in a lifetime that you will never be able to grant forgiveness although you have forgiven them.

It may be the man who stole from you  
The persons to took advantage of you

The person who cursed at you on the high way.

or the man who did violence to you family but died in the process.

\_\_\_ There are 1000s of example of people you will need to forgive and never be reconciled to.

*This is Mark 11:25*

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have **anything** against **anyone**, **forgive him**,

*This is the forgiveness that allows you to love your enemies or your brothers and sisters in Christ , and not allow bitterness to take root and to grow in your heart.*

*You release him or her of the debt, you graciously, mercifully, compassionately with a tender heart forgive them....even if they don't acknowledge it or repent of it.*

Since you are not the Judge and these people do not ultimately stand accountable to you, and because you are not responsible to grant Judicial forgiveness, you are free to be gracious and forgive



But when opportunity avails itself and as much as depends on you

Work to build the second wall

**which is transactional forgiveness.**

This is the forgiveness that is granted to restore a relationship. This is as important for you as it is for the offender.

This is

Luke 17:3–4

<sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

This is the forgiveness of for the purpose of reconciliation to restore a broken relationship. It requires confession and repentance on the part of the offender but also requires compassion, grace,

mercy and immediate forgiveness on the part of the offended party if repentance is present.

This is the **Matt 18 servant** who comes to a fellow servant and begs for forgiveness confessing that he has a debt that he will no longer neglect but has repented and will pay.

***This is the Conditional Forgiveness is for purpose of reconciliation.***

It is for the purpose of restoration  
It is for the purpose of bringing a broken relationship back together.

It is for the purpose of removing, forgiving and releasing the offender of the hurt, the offense, the stumbling block and sin that they have committed against the other person.

*This is true in all relationships that seek reconciliation.*

### **The relationship between God and man**

Confession and Repentance is required for forgiveness and Restoring a severed relationship.

**Acts 2:36–38 (NKJV)**

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This was the message of the **prophets**

This was the message of **John the Baptist**

This was the message of **Jesus.**

This was the message of the **Apostles**

If you want to be in a right relationship with God and be reconciled to God, move from being an enemy of God to a son of God, and escape the judgement of Hell given to you by this Same Jesus.... you must Confess and repent.

At this point there is **Only Judicial Forgiveness.**

Parental forgiveness is not offered or practiced, because you are not part of the family of God until you are reconciled to God.

Parental forgiveness **after salvation** restores the fellowship, not the relationship.

**The relationship between Man and man,**

The attitude, mindset and actual forgiveness **is already present** in your heart,

This would include our enemies and our friends, our bothers in the the Lord and those that are lost. The ones we have many conversations with and a relationship with and those we may never have a conversation or relationship with.

This forgiveness is universal, unlimited, unconditional, gracious, merciful, returning good for evil, blessing our enemies, loving our enemies, doing good to those who harm us.

For many, we will never reconcile because we are unable do to no more contact or anonymous nature of the sin committed or because they refuse to admit what they did was wrong....

But for the many relationships where reconciliation can be sought we do what we can to make that happen.

This is especially true when it comes to our relationship with one another as believers in the church.

First we are to immediately forgive, all offenses and sins committed against us... regardless of repentance.

This is for our fellowship with God as a child of God. We forgive, so we can be forgiven.

## **Mark 11:25**

<sup>25</sup> “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

\_\_\_ You don't forgive to get saved, you forgive because you are saved. And your heart of forgiveness is big enough to cover anything from anyone. Any sin and no matter how much or how many.

You forgive others because you have been forgiven and you want to keep your walk with God right and your fellowship and communion pure.\_

The reason we do this is because we have been forgiven, and Punishment for these sins against us have already been paid for.

Think of it this way,  
Christ has already bore the punishment for the sins of our brothers and sisters who sin against us.

“If those who wrong us are true Christians or become Christians in their lifetimes, then the wrong that they did to us — with all their other sins — was punished in the suffering of Christ. ....I just think (if we understand this) it would have such a vast impact on the way we treat each other:

Christ bore the punishment for the sins they committed against us.

Think what that means if we are unwilling to forgive their wrong against us. It means we are acting as if the sufferings of Christ were not enough. We are making light of the horrors he endured to bear the guilt of that wrong committed against us. We do not want to be found in that horrible attitude.... That’s a dangerous attitude to think that Christ’s sufferings are inadequate.” John Piper

But in order to restore a broken relationship and reconciliation to occur and the wall to be torn down that has been erected because of our sin, there needs to be a conversation where the sin is pointed out, graciously and compassionately and a calling on the one who has sinned against men to acknowledge it or confess it and repent.

This will take a heart of forgiveness that is already present so you can grant that forgiveness to the offender.

### **This is that transactional forgiveness.**

There is a transaction between the one sinned against and the one who committed the sin.

Forgiveness is offered and granted to the one who repents so the relationship can be restored.

This is  
**Luke 17:3–4**

**1** Then He said to the **disciples**,

**3** Take heed to yourselves. If your **brother** sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. **4** And if

he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> "Moreover if **your brother sins against you**, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

So one unconditional forgiveness is for your heart, to be protected from bitterness and anger and keep your fellowship with God and avoid chastisement.

And Conditional forgiveness is for your help in restoring the relationship with your brother, for reconciliation and healing and keeping your brother from continuing in unrepentant sin.

So our house is coming along, The more we build, the better are protected from bitterness, anger, slander and the more we are saturated with grace, mercy and love.

- 1. The Foundation** - God is a Forgiving God
- 2. The Floor** — Christ has Forgiven You



### **3. The Four Walls**—You must Forgive others

#### **Wall #1**

**Attitudinal Forgiveness —heart, disposition.**

I have already forgiven, because I am forgiven, and am ready to grant forgiveness.....

#### **Wall #2**

**2. Transactional Forgiveness -relational, and reconciliational.**

Having already prepared my heart with forgiveness, I am eager to forgive the one who repents and I am desirous to restore the relationship.

**But there are 2 more walls and a Roof.**

**Wall #3 is built out of Matthew 6:14**

**14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**Wall #4 is built out of Matthew 6:15**

**15** But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Both of these walls are built on the Parental Forgiveness of God, Not the Judicial forgiveness. You have already been forgiven and made a son or daughter of God.

These 2 verse refer to those who have God as Heavenly Father.... so believers.

The Foundation and Floor have been built which is the Eternal forgiveness we have of all our sins because Jesus paid the price in His death.

But this is the Parental forgiveness of those who are already saved.

These are essential to keeping the cold winds of bitterness out of your house.

With just the 2 walls up the cold will get in, you need to finish job and build the other two and add the roof .

**Wall #3 is built out of Matthew 6:14**

**14** “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

This is a requirement for fellowship, communion, walking with the Lord.

As a believer, you cannot have unforgiving in your heart, ever.

If you forgive men what they do to you, God will forgive what you do to him.

And the Father/son relationship is restored.

But we also need

### **Wall #4 is built out of Matthew 6:15**

**15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

This is chastisement. God will make you pay, in a temporary sense by chastising us.

Matthew 18:28–35 (NKJV)

**28 “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will**

pay you all.’<sup>30</sup> And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.<sup>31</sup> So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.<sup>32</sup> Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.<sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’<sup>34</sup> And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

It is a severe sin, not to forgive and is as far away from what God desires of you. So instead of allowing one of his children to act like the devil and and unbeliever. He will use the necessary measures to correct your action.

- 1. The Foundation** - God is a Forgiving God
- 2. The Floor** —Christ has Forgiven You

**3. The Four Walls**—You must Forgive others

**4. The Framed Roof**—Grace, Mercy, Trust.

## We build the Roof next week

*This is the heart attitude of*  
Colossians 3:12–14 (NKJV)

**The Framing material is.**  
**The Rafters or Roof Trusses**

**12** Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved,

No one becomes a Christian solely by their own choice. Rather, believers are **those who have been chosen of God**. The truth of divine election is clearly taught in Scripture. Ephesians 1:4 says that God “chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.” Paul was confident of God’s choice of the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:4) and thanked Him for it: “We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through

sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). God did not call us because of our good works, “but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9). Believers’ names have been written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world (cf. Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Underlying our response to God’s free, sovereign grace is His plan and initiative.

Because of God’s election, believers are **holy and beloved**. *Hagios* (**holy**) means “set apart,” or “separate.” God chose believers out of the mainstream of mankind and drew them to Himself. They are different from the world. When believers fail to act differently from the world, they violate the very purpose of their calling.

That believers are **beloved** of God means they are objects of His special love. Election is not a cold, fatalistic doctrine. On the contrary, it is based in God’s incomprehensible love for His elect: “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will” (Eph. 1:4–5).

**Now that we put on the the plywood and the shingles** to make is previous to the storms of conflict and offenses.

### **Colossians 3:12–13 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

**Put on** is from *enduō*, which means “to put on clothes,” or “envelope in.” The qualities that follow are to cover the new man.

### **tender mercies**

**A heart of compassion** is the first character trait that is to mark the new man. **Heart** translates *splanchna*, a Hebraism that literally refers to the inward parts of the human body (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, etc.). As already noted in the discussion of 2:2, however, it is often used in the New Testament

to speak figuratively of the seat of the emotions. That is its use here.

*Oiktirmos* (**compassion**) means “pity,” “mercy,” “sympathy,” or “compassion.” Taken together, the phrase could be translated, “put on heartfelt compassion,” or “have a deep, gut-level feeling of compassion.”

That divine quality (Luke 6:36; James 5:11), so perfectly exhibited by Jesus (Matt. 9:36), was sorely needed in the ancient world. For example, sick, injured, or elderly people were often left to fend for themselves.

As a result, many died. Believers must not be indifferent to suffering, but should be concerned to meet people’s needs.

**Kindness** is closely related to compassion. The Greek term refers to the grace that pervades the whole person, mellowing all that might be harsh. Jesus used the word when he said, “My yoke is easy” (Matt. 11:30), not harsh or hard to bear.

The kind person is as concerned about his neighbor’s good as he is about his own. God is kind, even to ungrateful and evil people (Luke



6:35). In fact, it was His kindness that led us to repentance (Rom. 2:4; cf. Titus 3:4).

Jesus' kindness was expressed in His invitation to "take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.

For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matt. 11:29–30). Kindness was epitomized by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), whose example we should follow.

*Tapeinophrosunē* (**humility**) and its related words always have a negative connotation in classical Greek (cf. H. H. Esser, "tapeinos," in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977], 2:259). It took Christianity to elevate humility to a virtue. It is the antidote for the self-love that poisons relationships. Paul advocates genuine humility, in contrast to the false humility of the false teachers (cf. 2:18, 23). Humility characterized Jesus (Matt. 11:29), and it is the most cherished Christian virtue (Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3ff.; 1 Pet. 5:5).

**Meekness** *Prautēs* (**gentleness**) is closely related to humility. It is not weakness or spinelessness, but rather the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it.

The gentle person knows he is a sinner among sinners and is willing to suffer the burdens others' sin may impose on him.

This gentleness can only be produced by the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22–23) and should mark the Christian's behavior at all times, even when restoring a sinning brother (Gal. 6:1), or defending the faith against attacks from unbelievers (2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Pet. 3:15).

**Patience** translates *makrothumia*. The patient person does not get angry at others. William Barclay writes, “This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath” (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians,*

*and Thessalonians* [Louisville: Westminster, 1975], p. 158).

Patience is the opposite of resentment and revenge. It was a characteristic of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy,

“For this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Tim. 1:16).

Were it not for God's patience, no one would ever be saved (2 Pet. 3:15).

**Bearing with one another** means “to endure, to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not retaliate.”

It characterized Paul, who told the Corinthians, “when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure” (1 Cor. 4:12). It did not characterize the Corinthians, who were actually taking each other to court.

Paul exclaims, “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:7). Believers are to exhibit forbearance (Eph. 4:2).

Such were the Thessalonians, of whom Paul wrote,

“We ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure [*anexomai*, the same term used here in 3:13]” (2 Thess. 1:4).

Believers are to be marked not only by endurance, but also by **forgiving each other**. The Greek *charizomenoi* literally means “to be gracious” and the text uses a reflexive pronoun, so it literally reads, “forgiving yourselves.”

The church as a whole is to be a gracious, mutually forgiving fellowship. By including the phrase **just as the Lord forgave you, so also**

**should you** Paul makes Christ the model of forgiveness. Because He has forgiven us, so also must we forgive others (Eph. 4:32; cf. Matt. 18:21–35).

The phrase **whoever has a complaint against anyone** refers to times when someone is at fault because of sin, error, or debt.

The Lord Jesus is our pattern for forgiveness, because He forgave all our sins, errors, and debts. He is also the model for the rest of the virtues discussed in this section.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). [Colossians](#) (pp. 155–157). Moody Press.

## Ephesians 4:31–32 (NKJV)

<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

<sup>32</sup> And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as** God in Christ forgave you.