

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Forbearance and Forgiveness

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Paul writes, *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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”* (Colossians 3:12-13).

God envisioned a people who would manifest certain characteristics. As a people separated from the world and beloved of God, we must therefore be forbearing and forgiving toward others. *“Forbearing”* will demand that I *“bear up under”* certain things in my relationship with others, while *“forgiving,”* I will *“let go”* the wrongs that others do.

When sin occurs, we as God’s people cannot ignore it. Jesus directs us to do the following: *“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him”* (Luke 17:3). Jesus gives us direction in matters of sin committed against us personally: *“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”* (Matthew 18:15).

In love and kindness, we should always be ready to forgive

others. But forgiveness cannot take place when repentance is absent. The Lord does not forgive us our sins apart from repentance (Acts 2:38; 8:22), and therefore we must manifest the same mind toward others. *“As the Lord forgave you, so also do ye”* not only teaches us that we must forgive others, because the Lord has forgiven us. It also enjoins us to forgive *“as”* the Lord forgives us. Forgiveness comes when repentance is manifested.

In our *“live and let live”* world, many do not want to confront others with their sin. Some advocate when your spouse has been unfaithful, you should ignore it as if the wrong did not occur, because the pain of confrontation is worse. If we ignore the sins of our husband or wife, we do not love them. Fornication and adultery will keep one from his or her inheritance and send one’s soul to eternal Hell (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). How do we manifest love when we ignore soul damning sins in others, especially the sins of our mates, *“the love of our life?”* How can we say we love and do not urge them to repent? Their sin needs to be brought before their eyes so they can repent and be forgiven, first by God and then by you.

Just forbear it and not confront it is not God’s way for peace, even the sins committed against us.

Showing the fault, acknowledging the wrong, and repenting of the sin is the way unto *“letting it go”* in forgiveness and restoring peace with God and with one another. If this process is ignored, resentment builds in relationships until they explode apart or just wither away.

Even apart from sin, forbearance is necessary in keeping the unity among various individuals. Paul writes, *“...with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Ephesians 4:2). Distinctive facets of humility (lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance) keeping self in check creates space for considering the experiences, thinking and wisdom of others. Forbearance is the glue that allows relationships to endure.

While not ignoring sin, we may have to forbear others until they acknowledge their sin. The Lord’s servant must be *“...forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth...”* (2 Timothy 2:24-25). We may have to hold up under the burdensome wrongs of others, but not without confronting their sin. Hopefully, repentance emerges so forgiveness can start its healing process.