

FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE
(Ephesians 4:2)

I. The principle of endurance.

- A. The word translated forbearing is used fifteen times in the New Testament.
 - 1. It is translated suffer seven times, endure two times, forbearing two times and bear with four times.
 - 2. Notice some instances:
 - a. Matthew 17:17;
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:1 (twice);
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:3.
- B. What we learn is that this word is used to express the idea of enduring things we may not want to endure.
- C. Wayne Jackson says of the word forbear: “the term ‘forbearing’ derives from a compound word portraying the idea of “holding up” - with reference to a potential action. The present tense, middle voice for indicates a pattern of behavior that one exerts, which, ultimately, is in his personal best interest.”
 - 1. What does all that mean?
 - 2. It means that we hold up from doing something because that is the best thing for us to do.
- D. If a brother presses his opinion on us, we don’t respond by biting back and arguing, but enduring with love for our brother.
- E. To this br. Jackson wrote, “But kinsmen in Christ are not to respond quickly and hatefully when conflicts surface; to the contrary, they are to resist every inclination to explode and attack.”
- F. Not everyone here likes me and I know that.
 - 1. More than likely, not everyone here likes you either.
 - 2. Do we have to like one another to maintain unity?
 - 3. No, but we do have to love one another and that involves being a forbearing Christian.
- G. Notice some various Bible translations of this phrase:
 - 1. NASV - showing tolerance in love.
 - 2. ESV - bearing with one another in love (most common translation of this passage in newer versions).
 - 3. CSV - accepting each other in love.
- H. All of these carry the idea that we can’t be belligerent over matters of opinion but that we have to endure things.
- I. We have to be able to compromise on things of a non-doctrinal nature in order to maintain peace.
- J. I am not always going to get my way no matter if I am a elder, deacon, Bible class teacher, member or preacher.
 - 1. Someone is going to oppose an idea that you or I have from time to time.
 - 2. How do we respond when we are opposed in matters of opinion?
 - 3. That is what is being discussed in this passage.
- K. I must be willing to step back in matters of judgment in order to maintain

unity and be right with God.

- L. If I am fighting all the time about matters of judgment, it is very likely that I am not following the principle of endurance.

II. **The principle of tolerance.**

- A. As was mentioned, one version translates this phrase as “showing tolerance.”
- B. A tolerant person is one who understands that everyone, including himself, is not perfect.
- C. This type attitude only comes from a heart that is humble and gentle and patient with himself and others.
- D. What if God was not tolerant with us?
 - 1. What if Jesus had not been tolerant with the disciples?
 - 2. How long would Peter have lasted with the group if Jesus was not tolerant.
 - 3. The responses given by Jesus to Peter were given in love, with a desire for what was best for Peter.
- E. Jesus was not out to win an argument.
 - 1. That is where our problems lie many times.
 - 2. We are going to get our point across no matter what the cost to unity is or how hurtful we may be.
- F. One writer stated, “Forbearing one another in love signifies bearing their infirmities out of a principle of love, and so as not to cease to love them on the account of these.”
- G. If we are not tolerant, it means that we only love perfection, and we know that is not Christian love.

III. **The principle of maintenance.**

- A. You and I have to maintain care for one another.
 - 1. How do you maintain care for a person that doesn't like you?
 - 2. How do you maintain care for someone that opposes you on a matter?
 - 3. How do you care and not become hostile or unloving?
- B. Notice the verse again - only by being lowly, meek and patient.
- C. Notice also Colossians 3:13.
 - 1. It involves a willingness to forgive.
 - 2. The reason for this is because Christ also forgave us despite our faults.
- D. We have to work to maintain these attitudes in our lives in order to be forbearing in love.
- E. It takes effort and maintenance to keep unity in a congregation and in personal relationships.
 - 1. Thought before speech is required.
 - 2. Listening and hearing the other person's point of view is required in order to get and maintain unity.
- F. Is it easy? Absolutely not.
- G. Is it essential? Absolutely.