

FORBEARING AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER (Colossians 3:13)

1. Forbearing one another (Colossians 3:13).

- a. Vincent's Word Studies defines the Greek word, *anochē*, as "strictly a holding back."
- b. Robertson's Word Pictures describes it as "holding back oneself".
- c. A word that is closely associated with forbearing or forbearance is patience.
- d. This forbearing is a characteristic modeled for us by God.
 - i. Romans 3:25.
 - ii. His "divine forbearance" is how the the ESV translates that last phrase.
 - iii. God bears with us at times so that it may lead to the our repentance and the forgiveness of our sins.
 - iv. 2 Peter 3:9 is a verse that teaches us of the forbearing nature of God.
- e. For us, it means that we hold back our anger or our actions when we are frustrated by others and even when someone sins against us.
 - i. Our Lord modeled forbearance according to Peter.
 - ii. 1 Peter 2:23.
 - iii. We know for a fact that Jesus held Himself back.
- f. Remember that Paul was inspired to write this to brethren.
 - i. He told them to forbear one another.
 - ii. We must put up with some things with one another to keep the peace.
 - iii. In our easily offended society, Christians are to model forbearance, especially towards one another.
 - iv. I'm going to do something or some things that may rub you the wrong way, I'm human.
 - v. By the way, you are going to do the same to me.
 - vi. How do we respond to one another?
- g. I came across this while studying forbearance: "Thus, it comes about that no Christian grace is likely to be called into play more frequently than that of mutual forbearance. Without it, there can really exist no close and lasting friendly relationships in a society composed of imperfect beings. Even the most tender intimacies and the holiest associations require the constant exercise of patience. If we resent every apparent injustice, demand the righting of every little wrong, and insist upon chafing and uttering our feelings at every infinitesimal grievance, and if all the other parties in the circle claim the same privilege, what miserable beings we shall all be, and how wretched life will become!
- h. We are so thankful for the forbearance of God aren't we?
- i. In our quest to love one another, we must be forbearing like God is.

2. Forgiving one another (Colossians 3:13).

- a. We mentioned that forbearing our brethren does not always have to do with a sin being committed.
- b. However, there are times when we forbear a brother or sister, or a family member, who has sinned against us.
- c. You and I, then must not stop with forbearing, or not blowing our top, we must also forgive them.
- d. This, of course, is modeled for us by God.

- i. Forgiveness is at the heart of who God is.
 - ii. We mentioned that His forbearance with us is, in part, to give us opportunity to repent and give Him the opportunity to forgive us.
 - iii. The Psalmist said of God... (Psalm 86:5).
 - iv. Part of the New Covenant that Jeremiah told us of is forgiveness of sins (Jeremiah 31:34).
 - v. 1 John 1:9.
- e. We must forgive like God does:
- i. Freely - God does not hesitate to forgive those that ask for forgiveness according to His will.
 - (1) We must forgive freely in order to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).
 - (2) Luke 17:3-4.
 - ii. Completely and forever - all of our repented of sins are completely removed and never brought back up to us.
- f. Notice what our verse says about the way we forgive: even as Christ forgave you.
- i. Despite the fact that we have treated our Lord terribly through sin, He willingly forgave us and even provided the sacrifice.
 - ii. He did and does this out of love and so should we.
- g. Those that forgive have been found to be happier.
- i. Studies by a number of psychologists show that it is not great riches that make people happy, but friends and forgiveness. Commenting on these findings in a USA Today article, Marilyn Elias says, "The happiest people surround themselves with family and friends, don't care about keeping up with the Joneses next door, lose themselves in daily activities, and most important, forgive easily."
 - ii. Notice what a U. of Michigan psychologist named Christopher Peterson had to say about forgiveness: "He calls it "the queen of all virtues, and probably the hardest to come by." He also says that it is the trait most closely linked with happiness.
- h. Why is that?
- i. One reason is that with forgiveness, there is a release.
 - (1) This release is of the person who sinned against us, but it is also for us.
 - (2) We release the anger and bitterness that we hold against the person who sinned against us.
 - (3) This allows us to be happy people.
 - (4) I read the account of a family who experienced a brutal loss, having a daughter kidnaped and then killed.
 - (5) For weeks they had no idea what happened and it tore the parents up inside.
 - (a) The mother, though, decided that to get on with things she had to be willing to forgive whoever took their daughter and it brought her peace.
 - (b) The father, however, never did and died at the age of 56 of a heart attack and had experienced bleeding ulcers for many years before his death.
 - ii. We also are happy because we are reflecting the character of God.

(1) It may be that when we are forgiving we are the most godly we ever are in life.

(2) We are letting the person know that God is at work in us and we are being the light we should be.

i. We can't let forgiveness stop at us, it must go through us.

i. There is a book on forgiveness titled "Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace." In the book the author uses the beautiful imagery of a stream to show how God's love is poured into us by His Spirit and becomes our character.

ii. God is certainly the fountainhead. The stream of love and forgiveness flows from Him because it is His nature and character. Mistakenly, we often think we are at the end point of the stream ... the recipient ... the forgiven one. But, truth be told, we all stand mid-stream. We are indeed recipients but not the end.

iii. The Jordan River flows down through the Middle East and it pours into the north end of the Sea of Galilee and flows out the south end.

iv. It then flows down into the Dead Sea, but the Dead Sea does not allow it flow on through and we know how salty and undrinkable the Dead Sea is.

v. We must be like the Sea of Galilee when it comes to forgiveness.

j. One thing we must not forget however, is that we cannot do what God Himself cannot do.

i. Remember, we are to forgive others even as Christ forgave us.

ii. Jesus did not forgive us until we repented.

iii. Luke 13:3.

iv. Unless repentance takes place, there can be no forgiveness.

v. We need to be willing to forgive and show to the one who sinned that we are ready to forgive.

vi. If and when they do ask for forgiveness, we must forgive at once and then forget the offense.

k. Love for our brethren will allow us to do just that.