

Ephesians 4:31-32 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Ephesians 4:31 Let [all bitterness](#) and [wrath](#) and [anger](#) and [clamor](#) and [slander](#) **be put away** from you, [along](#) with [all malice](#).
([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [pasa pikria kai thumos kai orge kai krauge kai blasphemia artheto \(3SAPM\) aph' humon sun pase kakia.](#)

Amplified: Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath (passion, rage, bad temper) and resentment (anger, animosity) and quarreling (brawling, clamor, contention) and slander (evil-speaking, abusive or blasphemous language) be banished from you, with all malice (spite, ill will, or baseness of any kind). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: Let all bitterness. all outbreaks of passion, all long-lived anger, all loud talking, all insulting language be removed from you with all evil.

NLT: Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: All manner of harshness and violent outbreaks of wrath and anger and brawling and slanderous speech, let it be put away from you together with all manner of malice.

Young's Literal: Let all bitterness and all passionate feeling, all anger and loud insulting language, be unknown among you—and also every kind of malice.

LET ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH AND ANGER AND CLAMOR AND SLANDER**BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU:** [pasa pikria kai thumos kai orge kai krauge kai blasphemia artheto \(3SAPM\) aph' humon:](#)

- **Bitterness** - Ps 64:3; Ro 3:14; Col 3:8,19; Jas 3:14,15
- **Wrath** - Ep 4:26; Pr 14:17; 19:12; Eccl 7:9; 2Co 12:20; Gal 5:20; Col 3:8; 2Ti 2:23; Titus 1:7; Jas 1:19; 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 4:1,2
- **Clamor** - 2Sa 19:43; 20:1,2; Pr 29:9,22; Acts 19:28,29; 21:30; 22:22,23; 1Ti 3:3; 1Ti 6:4,5
- **Slander** - Lv 19:16; 2Sa 19:27; Ps 15:3; 50:20; 101:5; 140:11; Pr 6:19; 10:18; Pr 18:8; 25:23; 26:20; Je 6:28; 9:4; Ro 1:29,30; 1Ti 3:11; 5:13; 2Ti 3:3; Titus 2:3; 3:2; Jas 4:11; 1Pe 2:1; 2Pe 2:10,11; Jude 1:8, 9, 10; Re 12:10
- Ephesians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NEW GRACE CLOTHES FOR OLD GRAVE CLOTHES

Put off the "**grave clothes**". Put on the "**grace clothes**" (Eph 4:22-note, Col 3:8-note, Col 3:9-note, Col 3:12-note)

All ([3956](#)) (**pas**) means all without exception. Note how "all" (**pas**) is used at the beginning and the end of this exhortation to put away these ethically noxious elements from our daily conduct.

Let all bitterness...be put away (far away) - We need to be very careful to not nurse a grudge for it can grow into **root of bitterness**. Why put it **all** away? Because even a "*little*" bitterness is like leaven and it spreads and defiles (Heb 12:15note).

H A Ironside emphasizes "all" of "**all malice**" - I wish that as Christians we would let the Word of God have its way with us! Is there any bitterness in your heart against any one on earth? Do you say, "But you don't know how I have been tested, how I have been tried, insulted, offended?" If you had not been offended there would be no reason for the bitterness at all, but he says, "Let all bitterness...be put away from you..." ([Practical Expository Addresses on the Epistle to the Ephesians](#))

John Eadie...

All feelings inconsistent with love—all emotions opposed to the benign influence and presence of the Divine Spirit—were to be abandoned.

Wrath (Thumos) is that mental excitement to which such bitterness gives rise—the commotion or tempest that heaves and infuriates within

Anger (Orge) (Deut. 9:19) is resentment, settled and dark hostility, and is therefore condemned.

Clamour (krauge) is the expression of this anger—hoarse reproach, the high language of scorn and scolding, the yelling tones, the loud and boisterous recrimination, and the fierce and impetuous invective that mark a man in a towering rage. Ira furor brevis est. “Let women,” adds Chrysostom, “especially attend to this, as they on every occasion cry out and brawl. There is but one thing in which it is needful to cry aloud, and that is in teaching and preaching.”

Slander (blasphemia) signifies what is hurtful to the reputation of others, and sometimes is applied to the sin of impious speech toward God. It is the result or one phase of the clamour implied in krauge (clamor), for anger leads not only to vituperation, but to calumny and scandal. In the intensity of passion, hot and hasty rebuke easily and frequently passes into foulest slander. The wrathful denouncer exhausts his rage by becoming a reviler. Col. 3:8; 1Ti 6:4. All these vicious emotions are to be put away.

Evil (kakia) is a generic term, and seems to signify what we sometimes call in common speech bad-heartedness, the root of all those vices. 1Pe 2:1.

Let all these vices be abandoned, with every form and aspect of that condition of mind in which they have their origin, and of that residuum which the indulgence of them leaves behind it. The word is in contrast with the epithet, “tender-hearted,” in the following verse. Now this verse contains not only a catalogue, but a melancholy genealogy of bad passions—acerbity of temper exciting passion—that passion heated into indignation—that indignation throwing itself off in indecent brawling, and that brawling darkening into libel and abuse—a malicious element lying all the while at the basis of these enormities. And such unamiable feeling and language are not to be allowed any apology or indulgence. The adjective “**all**” belongs to the five sins first mentioned... Indeed, the Coptic version formally prefixes to all the nouns the adjective —“all.” They are to be put away in every kind and degree—in germ as well as maturity—without reserve and without compromise.

([Ephesians 4 Commentary Online](#))

Bitterness (4088) (**pikra** [word study] from **pikrós** from **pik-** = to cut, prick) originally meant pointed or sharp, as describing arrows, and then more figuratively of what is “sharp” or “penetrating” to the senses, a bitter, pungent taste or smell and finally what is “painful” to the feelings.

This gives us our English word **Picric acid** which is an explosive compound! This is not a bad picture for the impact that bitterness has on the one who retains it and the one on whom it is “poured!”

Pikria - 4x in 4v - Acts 8:23; Rom 3:14; Eph 4:31; Heb 12:15.

Pikria - 19v in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**- Ex 15:23 (bitter waters = Marah); Dt 29:18; 32:32; (**Observe the concentration in the Book of Job!**) Job 3:20; 7:11; 9:18; 10:1; 21:25; Ps 10:7; 14:3; Isa 28:21, 28; 37:29; Jer 2:21; 15:17; Lam 3:15, Lam 3:19 (= a good prayer! Note what happened La 3:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27!); Ezek 28:24; Amos 6:12;

Pikria was used literally to describe plants that produced inedible or poisonous fruit. Greeks defined this word as **long-standing resentment**, as the **spirit which refuses to be reconciled**. (think of it as synonymous with the deadly poison of an unforgiving spirit!) So many of us have a way of nursing our wrath to keep it warm, of brooding over the insults and the injuries which we have received.

In the NT **pikria** is used in a metaphorical sense to describe animosity, resentfulness, harshness or an openly-expressed emotional hostility against an enemy. **Pikria** defines a settled hostility that **poisons** the whole inner man (it does more damage to the one who is bitter, than to the intended “victim!”). Somebody does something we do not like, so we harbor ill will against him. Bitterness leads to wrath, which is the explosion on the outside of the feelings on the inside.

Expositor's Bible Commentary - **Pikria** is the opposite not only of sweetness (gleuketes) but of kindness (chrestotes). It is the spite that harbors resentment and keeps a score of wrongs (1Co 13:5 - **Ed**: Story of the man who literally kept a book, accounting style, of the wrongs done against him!). Aristotle defined those who display it as “hard to be reconciled” (Nicomachean Ethics 4.11). ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Pikria in this verse denotes that fretted and irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity, that inclines him to harsh

and uncharitable opinions of men and things, that makes him sour, crabby, repulsive in his general demeanor, that brings a scowl over his face and infuses the words of his tongue with venom. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary Online](#))

In the first use of **pikria** in the OT (Septuagint - LXX) Moses records - And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were **bitter** (pikria); therefore it was named Marah. (Ex 15:23)

Bitterness reflects a smoldering resentment, a brooding grudge-filled attitude, an unwillingness to forgive or a harsh feeling. Bitterness is the opposite of sweetness and kindness (cf. husbands toward wives in Col 3:19-note, where we see the "antidote" in context is to love them unconditionally!). The bitter person harbors resentment and even "keeps score" of wrongs (cf 1Cor 13:5-note. Don't be like the man who literally kept a book in which he recorded the wrongs done against him - needless to say he was miserable! Love doesn't keep score because love has a bad memory. Love finds a way to cover a multitude of sins. 1Pe 4:8-note)

Pikria or **bitterness** is the spirit of irritability that keeps a person in perpetual animosity, making him sour and venomous. Bitterness applies to the bitterness of spirit to which men give vent by bitter words.

Barclay adds that "the Greeks defined (**pikria**) as long-standing resentment, as the spirit which refuses to be reconciled. So many of us have a way of nursing our wrath to keep it warm, of brooding over the insults and the injuries which we have received. Every Christian might well pray that God would teach him how to forget (**Ed**: Or better yet to forgive ever time the "injurious thoughts" bombard one's mind)." ([The Daily Study Bible](#))

Wiersbe has this practical comment on "**bitterness**" to which even believers can fall prey...

An unforgiving spirit is the **devil's playground** and before long it becomes the **Christian's battleground**. If somebody hurts us, either deliberately or unintentionally, and we do not forgive him, then we begin to develop bitterness within, which hardens the heart (cp Mt 6:12, 14, 15-see notes). We should be tenderhearted and kind, but instead we are hardhearted and bitter. Actually, we are not hurting the person who hurt us; we are only hurting ourselves. **Bitterness in the heart makes us treat others the way Satan treats them, when we should treat others the way God has treated us.** In His gracious kindness, God has forgiven us, and we should forgive others. We do not forgive for our sake (though we do get a blessing from it) or even for their sake, but for Jesus' sake. Learning how to forgive and forget is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) (Bolding added)

In Acts **Peter** confronts Simon the sorcerer declaring

I see that you (Simon) are in the gall of **bitterness** and in the bondage of iniquity" (Acts 8:23).

Comment: Note in Acts 8:13 "Simon himself believed" but his subsequent actions and Peter's assessment make it clear that this was **not belief unto salvation** but was intellectual and/or a belief only in the signs and wonders. Do not be deceived!

Spurgeon - Sin is the gall of bitterness; a drop of it would turn an ocean of pleasure into wormwood.

Tozer - I think there is little doubt that the teaching of salvation without repentance has lowered the moral standards of the Church and produced a multitude of deceived religious professors who erroneously believe themselves to be saved when in fact they are still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

Bitterness—extreme enmity; sour temper

A. Kinds of:

The heart Pr 14:10

Death 1Sa 15:32

B. Causes of:

Childlessness 1Sa 1:5, 10

A foolish son Pr 17:25

Sickness Is 38:17

C. Avoidance of:

Toward others Ep 4:31

As a source of defilement He 12:15

ISBE has this note on **bitterness**...

1. the physical sense of taste;
2. a figurative meaning in the objective sense of cruel, biting words; intense misery resulting from forsaking God, from a life of sin and impurity; the misery of servitude; the misfortunes of bereavement;
3. more subjectively, bitter and bitterness describe emotions of sympathy; the sorrow of childlessness and of penitence, of disappointment; the feeling of misery and wretchedness, giving rise to the expression "bitter tears";
4. the ethical sense, characterizing untruth and immorality as the bitter thing in opposition to the sweetness of truth and the gospel;
5. Numbers 5:18 the Revised Version (British and American) speaks of "the water of bitterness that causeth the curse." Here it is employed as a technical term.

Helen Grace Lesheid writing on on bitterness - It grows. It distorts reality. It keeps us chained to the past. Like bad air, it pollutes not just the bitter person, but those who come in contact with the person (He 12:15). (Breaking Free from Bitterness - Discipleship Journal, Vol 14, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1994)

Self-pity weeps on the devil's shoulder, turning to Satan for comfort. His invitation is: "Come unto me all you that are grieved, peeved, misused, and disgruntled, and I will spread on the sympathy. You will find me a never-failing source of the meanest attitudes and the most selfish sort of misery. At my altar you may feel free to fail and fall, and there to sigh and fret. There I will feed your soul on fears, and indulge your ego with envy and jealousy, **bitterness** and spite. There I will excuse you from every cross, duty, and hardship, and permit you to yield unto temptation." (From Green, M. P. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching)

The Cure for Bitterness is a Heavenly Vision (Pun intended) - The story of the blind songwriter [Fanny Crosby](#) ([Click for additional bio and links to many of her hymns](#)) who wrote more than 8,000 songs is a powerful example of a heart that refused to let the seeds of bitterness and unforgiveness germinate. When Fanny was only 6 weeks old a minor eye inflammation developed and as some tell the story, the doctor who treated her was a quack and the potion he prescribed resulted in her becoming totally and permanently blind! Talk about having a reason to be bitter! And yet this Spirit filled woman harbored no bitterness against the physician and was quoted as having said of him

If I could meet him now, I would say thank you, over and over again for making me blind.

Indeed Fanny Crosby considered her blindness to be a gift from God to help her write the 8000 hymns that flowed so freely from her pen. Warren Wiersbe in commenting on Fanny's life wrote that...

It was said of another blind hymn writer, [George Matheson](#), that God made him blind so he could see clearly in other ways and become a guide to men. This same tribute could be applied to Fanny Crosby, who triumphed over her handicap and used it to the glory of God. (Editorial comment: Here are words from his most popular hymn)

[O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go](#)

I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

And so when God allowed life to give Fanny Crosby "lemons", instead of choosing bitterness, she turned the lemons into some of the sweetest hymns ever penned! In short, Fanny filled with the Spirit and the grace of God, turned tragedy into triumph, becoming better instead of bitter! May her tribe increase!

English essayist and critic Charles Lamb (1775–1834) once commented about a person he did not want to meet:

“Don’t introduce me to that man. I want to go on hating him, and I can’t hate someone I know.” Our Daily Bread

Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.

Myth: "You must forget in order to forgive." Truth: Forgiving is not forgetting. The key is how it is remembered.... Forgiving is remembering without bitterness, hatred or resentment (June Hunt - Biblical Counseling Keys - Biblical Counseling Keys)

Bitterness always inflicts a deeper wound on the person who harbors it than the person against whom it is directed. A man who had car trouble on a lonely road asked a farmer to tow him to the nearest garage. On the way his wife was protesting to her husband the fee the farmer charged. “It is scandalous,” she said, “to charge us ten dollars for towing this car only three miles.” To which her husband replied, “Never mind, dear. I’m having my revenge—I’ve got my brakes on.” Many a person has thought himself to be getting revenge, but all the time the major damage was being done to him. (Speaker’s Quote Book)

Spurgeon - A few angry words have embittered the friendship of a life. A few bitter sentences have destroyed the usefulness of a sweet sermon, and even of a sweet life.

Robert Louis Stevenson, in his Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh, tells the story of two unmarried sisters who shared a single room. As people are apt to do who live in close quarters, the sisters had a falling out, which Stevenson says was “on some point of controversial divinity.” In other words, they disagreed over some aspect of theology. **The controversy was so bitter that they never spoke again (ever!).** There were no words, either kind or spiteful — just silence. Nevertheless, possibly because of a lack of means, or because of the innate Scottish fear of scandal, they continued to keep house together in the single room. A chalk-line was drawn across the floor to separate their two domains. For years they coexisted in hateful silence. Each woman’s meals, baths, and family visitors were exposed to the other’s unfriendly silence. At night each went to bed listening to the heavy breathing of her enemy. Thus, the two sisters (ostensibly daughters of the Church!) continued the rest of their miserable lives. They probably were not true Christians, because Christians are not to resist reconciliation and forgiveness. ([Hughes, R. K.: Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ. Crossway Books](#))

The Burden of Bitterness - Luis Palau writes...A friend of mine went through a massive emotional breakdown. After his recovery, we went for a walk. "Luis," he told me, "don't ever allow anyone to make you bitter."

He told me about his breakdown which proved very embarrassing.

"My problems began when I got so worked up about the contractor who didn't build my basement and driveway right. I hated what he'd done to my home. And since he lived next door, I saw him almost daily. Each time I saw him, my anger and bitterness grew even more intense until I finally cracked."

No wonder God's Word is so emphatic: "Get rid of all bitterness" (Ephesians 4:31). Why? Because if a "bitter root grows up" within you, it will "cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15). ([Luis Palau: How to Renew Your Spiritual Passion, Discovery House, October, 1994](#))

Purge Out The Poison - My friend and I were standing in the parking lot of a restaurant where we had just finished lunch. While we were discussing the damage a bitter spirit can cause, he took out his New Testament and solemnly read Hebrews 12:15 to me: "Looking carefully . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

In the six long decades since our conversation, the sad truth of that warning has been repeatedly verified by my experiences in pastoral ministry. Bitterness is a poison, and if not purged out by prayer, confession, and forgiveness, it does great emotional damage and destroys relationships. A little grudge that festers can become a devastating malignancy of soul. That's why the advice in Hebrews must be diligently heeded.

Have you been holding fast to the memory of some insult, some event, some criticism? As Paul put it in Ephesians 4:26note, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Take the proper steps to resolve the problem right away.

Holding a grudge poisons our spiritual lives. With the Holy Spirit's help, let's uproot any bitterness right now. It's amazing how joyful our lives will be when we allow God to purge out the poison of bitterness. --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC](#))

Thinking It Through

What are we to do when someone sins against us? (Lk. 17:3, 4). According to Jesus, how many times are we to forgive? (Mt. 18:21, 22).

**To get rid of weeds of anger,
dig out the bitter roots.**

Sunk by Own Attack ([USS Tang in Wikipedia](#)) - During World War II the U.S. submarine Tang surfaced under the cover of darkness to fire upon a large Japanese convoy off the coast of China. Since previous raids had left the American vessel with only eight torpedoes, the accuracy of every shot was absolutely essential. The first seven missiles were right on target; but when the eighth was launched, it suddenly deviated and headed right back at their own ship. The emergency alarm to submerge rang out, but it was too late. Within a matter of seconds the U.S. sub received a direct hit and sank almost instantly. Instead of doing battle with the enemy, Christians often use God's Word like a torpedo to attack one another. With precisely aimed missiles of criticism, contempt, or callousness, we can cripple the body of Christ, of which we are all members. You cannot sink someone else's end of the boat and still keep your own afloat. (Ed: "Amen" or "Oh my"!)

In much the same way we can destroy ourselves by our enmity and hostility directed toward others. The effects of holding a grudge are very serious. In fact, modern medicine has shown that emotions such as bitterness and anger can cause problems such as headaches, backaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, even contributing to the increased incidence of heart attacks, etc. When we do not love our enemies (Mt 5:44-note where "**love**" = present imperative - keep on loving them in effect "70 x 7"!) but strike back at them, we are usurping God's prerogative to mete out justice (Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note). When we seek to take our own revenge, beloved, we in effect are aiming the torpedo at our own heart and are sure to incur severe damage ourselves. For the sake of God's Holy Name and the forgiveness wrought in our behalf by the Cross of Christ, may the Spirit give each of us the necessary desire and power in the "knick of time" so that we think before we act in haste and hatred. Amen (Quoted in part by [Lenya Heitzig and Penny Rose - Pathway to Living Faith James](#))

A Little Grudge - A little grudge can create a huge gap in human relationships. The Philippines Daily Express reported on a couple in England who had lived together as "silent partners" for 12 years. The wife was finally seeking a divorce. "For 12 extraordinary years they had lived their lives so that they wouldn't have to meet each other," said lawyer Simon King, who was handling the case. "When one would come into the house, the other would leave. And when they did communicate with each other, it was with notes." They had lived happily together for the first 18 years of their marriage and had raised a son. For the last 12 years, however, they didn't speak to each other. Ironically, neither one could remember what the hassle had been all about.

Good Dads - Columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. grew up with a father he describes as physically present but emotionally absent. In his first book on parenting, Pitts openly chronicles his struggle to come to terms with his alcoholic father and the climate of fear he had created in their home. Pitts challenges all men to resolve the resentment toward their absent or abusive fathers instead of passing it on to the next generation.

There's a passage in Hebrews 12 that applies to all Christians, but it has special relevance to dads. It reads:

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (He 12:14, 15)

Think of what could happen in our families if we emptied our hearts of bitterness and made peaceful relationships our goal! If we have been blessed with a wise and loving father, we should be grateful and follow his example. But if our father has failed us, we must rely on God's grace, resolve our anger toward him, and strive to be the kind of dad we never had. It won't be easy, but with our heavenly Father as a perfect example, we can learn to be good dads. —David C. McCasland ([Ibid](#))

A faithful father leads by love
With tender firmness from above,
For he himself has learned from God
The lessons of His chastening rod. --DJD

A good father reflects

Hunt (Biblical Counseling Keys) has these insights on **bitterness**...

Resentment toward God and those who have not fulfilled your expectations will grow bitter roots that destroy acceptance of yourself and others.

If you don't forgive, you will develop a root of bitterness and a **bitter root** will grow **bitter fruit**... You will become bitter.

Unresolved anger produces bitterness. And the Bible links bitterness with being in bondage to sin. (Acts 8:23)

Give the situation to God. Jesus understands how much you have been wronged. When He was being persecuted, Jesus knew that the heavenly Father would judge justly... in His way, in His time. And you can know the same. Your trial will make you either bitter or better.

Following conflict, what keeps your heart from a negative focus? Jesus said, "Love your enemies."...If you are saying, "but they really aren't enemies," realize that if someone evokes resentment, bitterness, or hatred, that person is an enemy to your spirit. Because praying for your enemy is commanded by Christ, believers should obey this directive and not regard this as optional. And because praying for your enemy protects your heart from bitterness, you should want to obey this directive in heart and in deed. One approach is to pray "the fruit of the Spirit" for your offender. And because you are willing to "bless" your enemy, the Bible says that you will inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9)

Wrath ([2372](#)) (**thumos** [word study] from **thúo** = move impetuously, particularly as the air or wind, a violent motion or passion of the mind; move violently, rush along) describes passion (as if breathing hard) and so speaks of an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. **Thumos** describes a tumultuous welling up of the whole spirit; a mighty emotion which seizes and moves the whole inner man.

Thumos - 18x in 18v - Luke 4:28; Acts 19:28; Rom 2:8; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Heb 11:27; Rev 12:12; 14:8, 10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 18:3; 19:15. **NAS** = angry tempers(1), fierce(2), indignation(1), outbursts of anger(1), passion(2), rage(2), wrath(9).

As noted above the root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage. **Thumos** is a blaze of sudden anger which is quickly kindled and just as quickly dies. The Greeks likened it to a fire amongst straw, which quickly blazed and just as quickly burned itself out. It is used by the writer of Hebrews to describe Pharaoh's murderous fury at Moses (Heb 11:27-note; cf. Ex 10:28). It is used by Luke to describe the fury of the Jews in the synagogue at Nazareth who wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff (Lk 4:28,29). It is used of the pagan Ephesians who resented Paul's preaching the gospel and especially his claim that their idols "made with hands [were] no gods at all" (Acts 19:26, 17, 28). On the final day of judgment God's indignation will explode like a consuming fire upon all rebellious mankind. It is one of the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:20-note), and it is not acceptable behavior for Christians here in Ephesians 4:31!

William Barclay writes that "There are outbreaks of **passion (thumos)** and long-lived anger (**orge**). The Greeks defined **thumos** as the kind of anger which is like the flame which comes from straw; it quickly blazes up and just as quickly subsides. On the other hand, they described **orge** as anger which has become habitual. To the Christian the burst of temper and the long-lived anger are both alike forbidden....**Orge** is anger which has become inveterate (having a particular habit, activity, or interest that is long-established and unlikely to change.); it is long-lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep it warm. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Anger ([3709](#)) (**orge** [word study] from **orgaō** = to teem, to swell) refers to to an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders. Orge as used of God refers to His constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while **thumos** (which originally referred to violent movements of air, water, etc., and consequently came to mean "well up" or "boil up") refers more to a passionate outburst of rage. **Thumos** type anger represents an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage! **Orge** is more subtle, deep flowing anger.

Orge - 36x in 34v - Matt 3:7; Mark 3:5; Luke 3:7; 21:23; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4f; Eph 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col 3:6, 8; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; 1 Tim 2:8; Heb 3:11; 4:3; Jas 1:19f; Rev 6:16f; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15 **NAS** = anger(6), wrath(30).

ANGER CAN SPREAD: In the spring of 1894, the Baltimore Orioles came to Boston to play a routine baseball game. But what happened that day was anything but routine. The Orioles' John McGraw got into a fight with the Boston third baseman. Within

minutes all the players from both teams had joined in the brawl. The warfare quickly spread to the grandstands. Among the fans the conflict went from bad to worse. Someone set fire to the stands and the entire ballpark burned to the ground. Not only that, but the fire spread to 107 other Boston buildings as well.

ANGER CAN BE FATAL: The 18th-century British physician John Hunter, who was a pioneer in the field of surgery and served as surgeon to King George III, suffered from angina. Discovering that his attacks were often brought on by anger, Hunter lamented, "My life is at the mercy of any scoundrel who chooses to put me in a passion." These words proved prophetic, for at a meeting of the board of St. George's Hospital in London, Hunter got into a heated argument with other board members, walked out, and dropped dead in the next room. (Today in the Word)

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: National park ranger in British Columbia who has a two sets of huge antlers, as wide as a man's reach; locked together. Evidently two bull moose began fighting, their antlers locked, and they could not get free. They died due to anger.

A lady once came to Billy Sunday and tried to rationalize her angry outbursts. "There's nothing wrong with losing my temper," She said. "I blow up, and then it's all over." "So does a shotgun," Sunday replied, "and look at the damage it leaves behind!" Getting angry can sometimes be like leaping into a wonderfully responsive sports car, gunning the motor, taking off at high speed and then discovering the brakes are out of order.

WAGES OF UNCONTROLLED ANGER: Jim Taylor in CURRENTS tells the following story about his friend, Ralph Milton: One morning Ralph woke up at five o'clock to a noise that sounded like someone repairing boilers on his roof. Still in his pajamas, he went into the back yard to investigate. He found a woodpecker on the TV antenna, "pounding its little brains out on the metal pole." Angry at the little creature who ruined his sleep, Ralph picked up a rock and threw it. The rock sailed over the house, and he heard a distant crash as it hit the car. In utter disgust, Ralph took a vicious kick at a clod of dirt, only to remember -- too late -- that he was still in his bare feet. Uncontrolled anger, as Ralph learned, can sometimes be its own reward.

TEMPERING ANGER: Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was angered by an army officer who accused him of favoritism. Stanton complained to Lincoln, who suggested that Stanton write the officer a sharp letter. Stanton did, and showed the strongly worded missive to the president. "What are you going to do with it?" Lincoln inquired. Surprised, Stanton replied, "Send it." Lincoln shook his head. "You don't want to send that letter," he said. "Put it in the stove. That's what I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. It's a good letter and you had a good time writing it and feel better. Now burn it, and write another."

Anger is never without a reason, but seldom with a good one. - Benjamin Franklin

Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame. - B. Franklin

An author for Reader's Digest writes how he studied the Amish people in preparation for an article on them. In his observation at the school yard, he noted that the children never screamed or yelled. This amazed him. He spoke to the schoolmaster. He remarked how he had not once heard an Amish child yell, and asked why the schoolmaster thought that was so. The schoolmaster replied, "Well, have you ever heard an Amish adult yell?" - Reader's Digest.

Bruce Goodrich was being initiated into the cadet corps at Texas A & M University. One night, Bruce was forced to run until he dropped -- but he never got up. Bruce Goodrich died before he even entered college. A short time after the tragedy, Bruce's father wrote this letter to the administration, faculty, student body, and the corps of cadets: "I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my family for the great outpouring of concern and sympathy from Texas A & M University and the college community over the loss of our son Bruce. We were deeply touched by the tribute paid to him in the battalion. We were particularly pleased to note that his Christian witness did not go unnoticed during his brief time on campus." Mr. Goodrich went on: "I hope it will be some comfort to know that we harbor no ill will in the matter. We know our God makes no mistakes. Bruce had an appointment with his Lord and is now secure in his celestial home. When the question is asked, 'Why did this happen?' perhaps one answer will be, 'So that many will consider where they will spend eternity.'" Our Daily Bread, March 22, 1994

Doctors from Coral Gables, Fla., compared the efficiency of the heart's pumping action in 18 men with coronary artery disease to nine healthy controls. Each of the study participants underwent one physical stress test (riding an exercise bicycle) and three mental stress tests (doing math problems in their heads, recalling a recent incident that had made them very angry, and giving a short speech to defend themselves against a hypothetical charge of shoplifting). Using sophisticated X-ray techniques, the doctors took

pictures of the subjects' hearts in action during these tests. For all the subjects, anger reduced the amount of blood that the heart pumped to body tissues more than the other tests, but this was especially true for those who had heart disease. Why anger is so much more potent than fear or mental stress is anybody's guess. But until we see more research on this subject, it couldn't hurt to count to 10 before you blow your stack. Spokesman-Review, July 29, 1993, p. D3.

Many years ago during a Knicks-Bullets playoff game, one of the Bullets came up from behind the great Walt Frazier and punched him in the face. Strangely, the referee called a foul on Frazier. Frazier didn't complain. His expression never changed. He simply called for the ball and put in seven straight shots to win the game, an amazing display of productive anger. If you want to get huffy about it, it was a great moral lesson as well. U.S. News & World Report, June 14, 1993, p. 37.

A person who is angry on the right grounds, against the right persons, in the right manner, at the right moment, and for the right length of time deserves great praise. Bits & Pieces, May 27, 1993, p. 1.

Many years ago a senior executive of the then Standard Oil Company made a wrong decision that cost the company more than \$2 million. John D. Rockefeller was then running the firm. On the day the news leaked out most of the executives of the company were finding various ingenious ways of avoiding Mr. Rockefeller, lest his wrath descend on their heads.

There was one exception, however; he was Edward T. Bedford, a partner in the company. Bedford was scheduled to see Rockefeller that day and he kept the appointment, even though he was prepared to listen to a long harangue against the man who made the error in judgment.

When he entered the office the powerful head of the gigantic Standard Oil empire was bent over his desk busily writing with a pencil on a pad of paper. Bedford stood silently, not wishing to interrupt. After a few minutes Rockefeller looked up.

"Oh, it's you, Bedford," he said calmly. "I suppose you've heard about our loss?"

Bedford said that he had.

"I've been thinking it over," Rockefeller said, "and before I ask the man in to discuss the matter, I've been making some notes."

Bedford later told the story this way:

"Across the top of the page was written, 'Points in favor of Mr. _____.' There followed a long list of the man's virtues, including a brief description of how he had helped the company make the right decision on three separate occasions that had earned many times the cost of his recent error.

"I never forgot that lesson. In later years, whenever I was tempted to rip into anyone, I forced myself first to sit down and thoughtfully compile as long a list of good points as I possibly could. Invariably, by the time I finished my inventory, I would see the matter in its true perspective and keep my temper under control. There is no telling how many times this habit has prevented me from committing one of the costliest mistakes any executive can make -- losing his temper.

"I commend it to anyone who must deal with people." Bits & Pieces, September 15, 1994, pp. 11-13

The fastest horse cannot catch a word spoken in anger. Chinese Proverb in Bits & Pieces, July 25, 1992, p. 5.

A father of three won a shouting contest with a roar louder than a passing train. "If you want a war, you go!" Yoshihiko Kato shouted. The sound meter registered 115.8 decibels, louder than the racket of a train passing overhead on an elevated railroad. For that winning shout, Kato won the \$750 grand prize of the 10th annual Halls Year-End Loud Voice Contest. Kato admitted that he probably built up his loud voice shouting at his children. Resource, Jan/Feb 1991.

The great Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini was legendary for his fits of rage. The librarian of one of Toscanini's orchestras was particularly vexed by the maestro's habit of throwing valuable musical scores at the musicians when angry. Watching closely, the librarian observed that Toscanini's first act when enraged was to take his baton in both hands and try to break it. If the baton snapped, Toscanini usually calmed down and rehearsal continued. If the baton did not break, he began hurling scores. The librarian's solution? He made sure the conductor had a generous supply of flimsy batons on hand for rehearsal! Today in the Word, February, 1991, p. 22.

90% of the friction of daily life is caused by the wrong tone of voice. Leadership, Vol. 1, Number 4, p. 23.

Angry cynical people die young. Men who score high for hostility on standard tests are four times more likely to die prematurely than men whose scores are low. Bottom Line, quoted in Homemade, February 1989.

When Abraham Lincoln had to write a letter to someone who had irritated him, he would often write two letters. The first letter was deliberately insulting. Then, having gotten those feelings out of his system, he would tear it up and write a second letter, this one tactful and discreet. John Luther in Bits & Pieces, October 1990.

Clamor ([2906](#)) (**krauge** from **krazo** = clamor or cry = a word like "croak" ~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens = croak or cry out with a loud, raucous voice like donkey in Job 6:5, childbirth Is 26:17, war cry in Josh 6:16) can refer to a chorus of voices (one voice in Lk 1:42) speaking loudly at the same time (outcry, shout, clamor). A third meaning the loud sound accompanying weeping, crying or wailing. (cp Heb 5:7 = What a picture **krauge** presents of the pathos and agony the Creator incarnate had to endure on His way to the Cross! Also used this way in Rev 21:4 but here of sinners who were traumatized to see their evil world system passing away!)

In the present context **krauge** obviously refers to the shout or outcry of strife and reflects a public outburst that reveals loss of control (think of an out of control crowd rioting in the street in protest, etc). It is a a loud and confused noise, especially of shouting. In

Webster says **clamor** is "noisy shouting" and describes those who "become loudly insistent" making a vehement protest or demand. Clamor and slander are the outward manifestations of the foregoing vices.

Barclay in comments on Jesus in Hebrews 5:7...

The word he uses for **cry** (**krauge**) is very significant. It is a cry which a man does not choose to utter but is wrung from him in the stress of some tremendous tension or searing pain. So, then, the writer to the Hebrews says that there is no agony of the human spirit through which Jesus has not come. The rabbis had a saying: "There are three kinds of prayers, each loftier than the preceding-prayer, crying and tears. Prayer is made in silence; crying with raised voice; but tears overcome all things." Jesus knew even the desperate prayer of tears. ([The Daily Study Bible](#))

Barclay = A certain famous preacher tells how his wife used to advise him, "In the pulpit, keep your voice down." Whenever, in any discussion or argument, we become aware that our voice is raised, it is time to stop. The Jews spoke about what they called "the sin of insult," and maintained that God does not hold him guiltless who speaks insultingly to his brother man. Lear said of Cordelia: "Her voice was ever soft, Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman." It would save a great deal of heartbreak in this world if we simply learned to keep our voices down and if, when we had nothing good to say to a person, we did not say anything at all. The argument which has to be supported in a shout is no argument; and the dispute which has to be conducted in insults is not an argument but a brawl. ([The Daily Study Bible](#))

TDNT...commenting on the word group - **krázo** [to cry], **anakrázō** [to cry out], **krauge** [outcry], **kraugázō** [to cry]...

In the Greek world the group has religious significance in connection with the demonic sphere (invoking the gods of the underworld) and magic (incantations). The Greeks and Romans mostly felt that such crying was unworthy of the gods.

The Greek OT (Septuagint) uses the word group (**krázo** [to cry], **anakrázō** [to cry out], **krauge** [outcry], **kraugázō** [to cry]) for crying to God in times of need. God graciously hears such crying (Ex. 22:22; Jdg. 3:9; Ps 22:5; 34:7, 17, etc.), but he will not hear the cries of the wicked (Mic. 3:4; Jer. 11:11). In the Psalms this crying takes on a special form which expresses a confident appeal for a hearing and an answer (Ps 27:7; 28:1). There is here no magical attempt to force God; the crying to God may be both sorrowful (Ps 22:2) and joyful (Ps 55:17). A different usage occurs in Is. 6, where the seraphim cry "Holy, holy, holy" (Is 6:3). Different again is Is 42:2, where the Servant will not cry or lift up his voice. Jeremiah, however, is to cry to God, and he is granted a great vision of restoration (Je 33:3ff.). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

MacDonald - Loud outcries of anger, bawling, angry bickering, shouting down of opponents.

Robertson - Old word for outcry

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown - clamour—compared by Chrysostom to a horse carrying anger for its rider: "Bridle the horse, and you dismount its rider."

Poole - such inordinate loudness as men in anger are wont to break out into in their words.

Vincent - "the outcry of passion, the outward manifestation of anger in vociferation or brawling."

Lange says that **clamor** "is wild, rough crying, refers to the voice, improperly strained and sharpened, as in scolding, upbraiding, to the casting about of words uninterruptedly. It is the steed of anger (Chrysostom)."

Krauge - 6x in 6v - NAS = clamor(1), crying(2), shout(1), uproar(1), voice(1).

Matthew 25:6 "But at midnight there was a **shout**, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

Luke 1:42 And she cried out with a loud **voice** and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

Acts 23:9 And there occurred a great **uproar**; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and **clamor** and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Hebrews 5:7-note In the days of His flesh (= incarnation of Christ, not that He ever acted "fleshly" in the bad ethical sense!), He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud **crying** and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

Revelation 21:4-note and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or **crying**, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Krauge - 51x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint** -

Gen 18:20f; 19:13; Exod 3:7, 9; 11:6; 12:30; 1 Sam 4:6; 5:12; 2 Sam 6:15; 22:7; 1 Kgs 12:24; Neh 5:1, 6; 9:9; Esth 4:3; Job 16:18; 34:28; 39:25; Ps 5:1; 9:12; 18:6; 102:1; 144:14; Eccl 9:17; Isa 5:7; 30:19; 58:4; 65:19; 66:6; Jer 4:19; 8:19; 14:2; 18:22; 20:16; 25:36; 31:35; 46:12; 48:5, 34; 49:21; 50:46; 51:54; Ezek 21:22; 27:28; Amos 1:14; 2:2; Jonah 1:2; 2:2; Zeph 1:10, 16

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, "The **outcry** (LXX = krauge) of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.

Exodus 3:7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their **cry** (LXX= krauge) because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

Psalms 144:14 Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no **outcry** (LXX = krauge) in our streets!

Slander (988) (**blasphemia** from **blapto** = hinder, injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemí** = to speak; see study of verb form **blaspheméo**) refers to verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander. It is speech which seeks to wound someone's reputation by evil reports, evil speaking. Abusive speech against someone by telling lies or otherwise offending them.

In Classical Greek **blasphemia/blaspheméo** represented the strongest expression of personal defamation.

Blasphemia means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute and so to slander, **todefame** (to harm the reputation of by libel or slander), speak evil of, to **rail at** (revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language and rail stresses an unrestrained berating), to speak **calumny** (noun form = a misrepresentation intended to blacken another's reputation = the act of uttering false charges or misrepresentations maliciously calculated to damage another's reputation), to **calumniate** (verb form = to utter maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about - calumniate imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions)

Blasphemia is speech that is harmful, which denigrates or defames and thus refers to reviling, denigration, disrespect, slander, abusive speech (as against a person's reputation), evil speaking. In the Revelation blasphemia refers to that evil speech directed against the nature and power of God and especially characterizes the speech of the **Antichrist** (Rev 13:1, 5, 6)

The idea of **blasphemia** is that the words spoken hurt or smite the reputation of another. It means to destroy or discredit another's good name by speaking evil against them.

Blasphemy is an injury offered to God, by denying that which is due and belonging to him, on attributing to him that which is not agreeable to his nature. -- **Linwood**.

It is worth noting that in the OT blasphemy was a most serious sin, so serious in fact, that the Law of Moses decreed that anyone

who blasphemed the name of Jehovah God should be stoned (Lv 24:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). This law even included foreigners who were guests in the camp of Israel.

Barclay - When this is used of words against man, it means slander; when it is used of words against God, it means blasphemy. It means insulting man or God.

J. Vernon McGee explains "we are not to repeat gossip. It has been said that you can't believe everything you hear today, but you can repeat it! ... Many evil reports are passed from person to person without even a shred of evidence that the report is true. Another old saying is that some people will believe anything if it is whispered to them! ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

The Life Application Bible has an interesting note on this **gossip**, referring to it as "passive slander -- "We don't often call it by its right name, but gossip is **passive slander**, and it is a massive problem in churches today. It may be even worse than slander due to its dishonesty. A slanderer actively wants to attack and hurt someone, so that person is easily identified. Gossipers don't care whether or not a person is hurt as they pass along dishonest and harmful information. Churches can save a lot of headaches and heartaches by not allowing gossip (or gossipers) to gain a foothold." ([Barton, B. et al: The NIV Life Application Commentary Series: Tyndale](#))

Matthew Henry comments that we are "to speak evil of none, unjustly and falsely, or unnecessarily, without call, and when it may do hurt but no good to the person himself or any other. **If no good can be spoken, rather than speak evil unnecessarily, say nothing.** We must **never take pleasure in speaking ill of others, nor make the worst of any thing, but the best we can** We must not go up and down as tale-bearers, carrying ill-natured stories, to the prejudice of our neighbour's good name and the destruction of brotherly love. Misrepresentations, or insinuations of bad intentions, or of hypocrisy in what is done, things out of our reach or cognizance, these come within the reach of this prohibition. As this evil is too common, so it is of great malignity." (Bolding added) (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible)

The related verb **blasphemeo** refers to a "malicious misrepresentation". Note that in several of the New Testament uses of **blasphemeo**, we see that the actions of professed Christians can speak louder than their words and thus convey "malicious misrepresentation" of God and/or the Gospel to those who observe those actions. In such situations God and His Gospel have in effect been blasphemed. Thus Christians for their part must take care that they do not, by their own conduct, give cause for blasphemy against God or against his word.

Wiersbe - Blasphemy involves much more than taking God's name in vain, though that is at the heart of it. A person **blasphemes** God when he takes His Word lightly and even jests about it or when he deliberately defies God to judge Him. (Bolding added) ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

MacArthur - To slander people, however, is to blaspheme God, inasmuch as He created men and women (cf. James 3:9)...People are to be treated with dignity because they are made in the image of God. The believer's speech must not be marred by insults or disparaging remarks directed at others. James laments that "from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:10). ([MacArthur, J. Colossians. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Blasphemia in context is) the ongoing defamation of someone that rises from a bitter heart. ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Webster 1828 - An indignity offered to God by words or writing; reproachful, contemptuous or irreverent words uttered impiously against Jehovah...In the middle ages, blasphemy was used to denote simply the blaming or condemning of a person or thing. Among the Greeks, to blaspheme was to use words of ill omen, which they were careful to avoid.

Blasphemia in the present context is related to wrath and anger but is a more enduring manifestation of inward anger, that shows itself in reviling. It refers to an attempt to belittle and cause someone to fall into disrepute or receive a bad reputation. **Blasphemia** is the ongoing defamation of someone that rises from a bitter heart.

Poole - And evil speaking - either with respect to God or man, though the latter seems particularly meant here; railing, reviling, reproaching, &c., the ordinary effects of immoderate anger.

Vincent - The word does not necessarily imply blasphemy against God. It is used of reviling, calumny, evil-speaking in general.

Blasphemia - 18x in 17v - Mt 12:31; 15:19; 26:65; Mk 3:28; 7:22; 14:64; Lk 5:21; Jn 10:33; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8-note; 1Ti 6:4; Jude 1:9; Rev 2:9-note; Rev 13:1-note, Rev 13:5-note, Rev 13:6-note; Rev 17:3-note. **NAS** = abusive language(1), blasphemies(4), blasphemous(2), blasphemy(6), railing(1), slander(3), slanders(1). In the non-apocryphal Septuagint only in Ezekiel 35:12

Matthew 15:19 (cp Mk 7:21, 22) For out of the heart (the unregenerate, God hating, "black" heart is the source) come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, **slanders**.

Mark 14:64 "You have heard the **blasphemy** (false accusation against Jesus, cp Lk 5:21, Jn 10:33 = they were going to stone Him!); how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Col 3:8-note But now you also, **put** (aorist imperative) them all aside (because you have been raised up with Christ, because Christ is your life, because you are looking for His appearance - see Col 3:1, 2, 3,4): anger, wrath, malice, **slander** (blasphemia), and abusive speech (aischrologia = foul-mouthed from aischros = filthy or improper + lego = say) from your mouth.

Lawrence Richards - In the NT, blasphemy indicates a hostile attitude toward God that is expressed directly or indirectly in contemptuous or slanderous ways. The verb is found some thirty-five times of the fifty-nine occurrences of the word group. What we call swearing may be categorized as blasphemy in that it treats God's name contemptuously or lightly. But the hostility implied in the NT use of the word shows us that, biblically, blasphemy is far more than a casual curse. It is striking that one cause of the contempt in which unbelievers may hold the Lord is the actions of those who claim to believe. The Gentiles blasphemed God's name because of the hypocrisy they saw in the Jews (Ro 2:24-note). How important it is, then, that our lives honor the Lord so that we elicit praise, rather than contempt, for him. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

The point of Richard's note is that not only one's speech but one's behavior (including believers) can be blasphemous! It is tragic that many Christians **speak contemptuously** of politicians and other public figures, not realizing that in doing so they hinder the work of redemption. David's prayer is apropos when we are tempted to speak inappropriately and in a malicious, demeaning way of others

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. [Ps 141:3](#) ([See Spurgeon's comment](#))

You are writing a Gospel,
A chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do
And the words that you say.

Men read what you write,
Whether faithful or true:
Just what is the Gospel
According to you?
--- Author unknown

Put away ([142](#)) (**airo**) means to lift up something, such as an anchor of a ship to that the ship could set sail (see Acts 27:13). It is used figuratively here to picture taking up and carrying away (removing) these evil works just mentioned along with malice. It means to make a clean sweep of these vices! Imagine these vices as the worn out, filthy, dirty coat our old unregenerate self once wore continually, for it was the only "coat" we owned, having inherited it from our forefather Adam (Ro 5:12-note, 1Cor 15:22). Now, that the old self has been crucified with Christ and made effectively inoperative (it can still spring into action if "fed" or stimulated!), let us put off the old "coat" (put away) and put on the new garment of Christ-likeness, that the world might see Him in our words and works (His life lived out through us, a new life, a supernatural life, an aroma of life to some who see, and an aroma of death to others who see and reject Christ's offer of eternal life).

The **aorist imperative** is a command to be carried out even with a sense of urgency. The means to let it BE put away - I get the idea that we have to yield to the Holy Spirit, so that He can exert the influence or effect on our hearts which allows us to carry out this command. And if you doubt that this is the sense, just try to put away one of these negative traits in the "heat of the moment!"

Expositor's Bible Commentary - "let it be removed" and therefore "have no more to do with it." Every kind or any trace (pas = "all") of these blemishes is to be forsaken. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

ALONG WITH ALL MALICE: sun pase kakia:

- Genesis 4:8; 27:41; 37:4,21; Lv 19:17,18; 2Sa 13:22; Pr 10:12; 26:24,25; Eccl 7:9; Ro 1:29; 1Co 5:8; 14:20; Col 3:8; Titus 3:3; 1Jn 3:12,15
- Ephesians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

With (sun) is a conjunction signifying a closer, more intimate relationship than the other Greek word for "with" (meta), and here indicates the intimate association of all previous 5 vices into one evil bundle **with** malice.

All (3956) (pas) means **all** without exception. We are called to be holy and holy is practically related to wholly, necessitating that we put all malice wholly away that we might be holy as He is holy!

H A Ironside emphasizes "all" of "**all malice**" - "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all—**a-I-I**—malice." Now, you see, if you do not live up to that, you are not living a real Christian life. This is Christianity in the power of the Holy Ghost. And we are not merely told to put these things away, there must be the positive side....I wish that as Christians we would be obedient to this word of God! Is there any **bitterness** in your heart against anyone on earth? Do you say, "but you don't know how I have been tested, how I have been tried, insulted, offended?" If you had not been offended there would be no reason for the bitterness at all, but Paul said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." If you do not live up to that, you are not living a real Christian life. **This is Christianity lived in the power of the Holy Ghost.** ([Ephesians 4 - Ironside's Notes](#))

Expositor's Bible Commentary - The poisonous source of all theSe regrettable reassertions of the "old self" (Ep 4:22:note) is named as "**malice**" (**kakia** "bad feeling"). ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Malice (2549) (kakia [word study]) is the general term for evil that is the root of all vices. Kakis is synonymous with the quality of wickedness and thus in a moral sense means depravity, vice or baseness. It is the opposite of **arete** (note) and all virtue and therefore lacks social value.

In reference to behavior **kakia** conveys the idea of a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition as indicated by words such as malice, ill-will, hatefulness, and dislike. It is an attitude of wickedness as an evil habit of one's mind. Kakia is used in NT to describe the wickedness which comes from within a person. **Malice** desires to hurt another and rejoices in it!

Trench says that **kakia** is

"that peculiar form of evil which manifests itself in a malignant interpretation of the actions of others, an attributing of them all to the worst motive"

Webster says that "**malice**" is a desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another and implies a deep-seated often unexplainable desire to see another suffer.

One Greek scholar terms **malice** "the vicious character generally."

Malice is not only a moral deficiency but destroys fellowship. To varying degrees, the unsaved spend their life maliciously.

In Romans Paul describes those who have refused to acknowledge God and are given over by God to a depraved mind as "being filled with all unrighteousness, **wickedness**, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips." (see **note** Romans 1:29).

Wayne Barber writes that...

In Ephesians 4:31-32 Paul contrasts the two garments. We are in a flow now that continues through the rest of the book. How we are to walk? How we are to live this new life? He gives us a contrast. One is a cesspool, the other a wellspring. One I would rather not speak about, the other one is an artisan well. It is something that never ends in its supply and provision to others.

Paul shows us the cesspool of the old self and the wellspring of the new self, the new garment. He lets us see what is underneath everything that is going on in our life. We can either tap into the cesspool, the old stagnant, rotten, putrid type of thing, or we can tap into the wellspring of Jesus Christ. Which garment are you going to put on?

Let's look in Ephesians 4:31 at the cesspool of the old garment.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you [put off like taking off a garment], along with all malice."

Now Paul does something here that really throws me. Normally when Peter or Paul make a list, the first thing they mention is the most important thing. It tends to be the subject, whereas the rest of it seems to modify that subject. In Galatians 5:22 he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Then all the things that follow are just

manifestations of that love. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul says in the last days men will be lovers of self and then he gives 19 different characteristics of a lover of self.

However, here in Ephesians 4:31 he reverses it. Let me show you what I mean. The last word, **malice** is the catch-all word. Malice is the "house" that all these words live in. I think it would be best to start there. He does the same thing in verse 32 putting the source at the end, and he puts the symptoms in the front.

Let me show you what **malice** means.

Look at 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 where we find **malice**, the essence of all that **flesh** is. It is the word **kakia** the word for inherent unrighteousness. It is a viciousness that comes along with the old garment. All these are relationship words. **The signal that we are spiritual and have on the new garment is going to be in our relationships.** Over and over and over we see this.

Well, here we go again. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul exhorts, "Clean out the old leaven."

Do you know what leaven is? It is yeast. I don't know much about cooking, but I do know that when you put yeast into things, it causes it to rise up. Yeast causes something to happen. You see, the moment I put on the old garment, immediately a viciousness begins to set in. Immediately I am out to get you. Immediately I am going to manipulate you. Immediately something I am going to do, say, or whatever is going to divide me and you because I am not interested in you anymore. I am interested in me. That is the old garment. That is *kakia*. That is inherent unrighteousness. It comes along with the old garment. It is in that cesspool when we put that thing on and we won't bow before the Lord Jesus.

So Paul writes...

"Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

That gives you an idea of what the *kakia* is. It is the thing that stirs something up in your life.

Look in Acts 8:22. Here is a man who wanted to purchase the Spirit of God. His name was Simon. Simon Peter really lays this guy out. Let's begin with verse 20.

"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.'"

Now watch out! Peter says, "Your **heart** is not right before God." It is **an attitude you have towards God**.

You put on the old garment and say, "God, I don't want You ruling my life." Can a Christian do that? You better believe they can! We make choices all day long whether or not to let Him rule us versus whether or not we are going to take over rule ourselves.

Luke goes on to record Peter's words...

"Therefore repent of this **wickedness** [*kakia*] of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the **intention of your heart** may be forgiven you."

There it is. The intention of your heart is not right.

So we are seeing this old garment is an attitude and it is going to affect the lifestyle. The attitude is rooted into that old cesspool. What is going to come out of it is nothing that is good. It is going to do nothing but tear relationships down. It does nothing to build relationships up.

Look in Acts 14:1-2, and I will show you one more place where a form of the word is used, not the word itself but a form of it. It says,

"And it came about that in Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles, and **embittered** (kakoo = verb form related to *kakia*) them against the brethren."

The word "**embittered**" is a form of that word ***kakia***.

You see, when you put on that old garment, you want others to agree with you. You are going to find somebody else who is negative. You are going to find somebody else who doesn't want to think about others but wants to think of themselves. What do you do? You begin to embitter others towards the brethren. In other

words, you are no longer preserving the unity of the Spirit. What you are doing is dividing by your very attitude, which comes right out of the old cesspool of self.

BITTERNESS

First of all, out of that *kakia*, out of that old garment, out of that malice, is a word called "bitterness."

Now we know that **bitterness is when you have been injured by somebody**. You are not bitter unless you have been affected wrongly by somebody. The word for "bitterness" is the word *pikria*. It refers to something that is acidic, **that will literally eat you alive**.

You know that **the problem with many of us as Christians is not what we are eating, but it's what is eating us!** That is what bitterness does. Somebody has offended you. It always starts with being personally injured or personally hurt. You know, if it weren't for people, we could live the Christian life!

But because there are people, we are going to be offended. You are going to be offended by me if I am not wearing the right garment. If it is not the right one, it is going to say what it shouldn't have said. It is going to act in a way that it shouldn't have acted. It is going to offend you. We are the church and we have got to remember that every one of us will show those moments when we chose not to wear the new garment. **And that is also why we need to be forgiving to each other**. Now, if you didn't have any sin in your life, throw the first stone.

Bitterness is something that comes from a personal injury. Somebody has hurt you. You have heard what somebody said about you and it dug deep into your life. You didn't put on the garment of Christ, which would be strengthening you in the inner man with something that you didn't have before, **forgiveness and unconditional love**. You have put on that old garment which is rooted into the cesspool of old **self** and what comes out is **bitterness**.

Let me show you just one Scripture, Hebrews 12:15. I have constantly warned all of us what will happen if we give the devil an opportunity. I don't mean he gets inside of us, but he gets inside the body of Christ by using people, not the body physically but the body spiritually, the church. He uses people inside. You see, there used to be a day when people would come to church, go out and be persecuted. The devil would fight them outside the walls. Now he is going to church, folks. When we give him an opportunity, look out. Look at what it will do.

"See to it that no one comes short of the **grace of God**; that no root of **bitterness** springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"

What is the **grace of God**? It is the transforming power of God in your life and in my life. When I put on the new garment, that is His grace working within me, transforming me. Now, I am different than I used to be.

Bitterness is usually a reaction that you have to some injury that somebody else caused you, but it is a wrong reaction. You put on the wrong garment. You dipped into the wrong place. You went back to the "cesspool of self" instead of coming to the "wellspring of Jesus Christ".

WRATH

Let's look at the word "**wrath**." There are several words here for "anger" and "wrath." We are going to see "**anger**" in the next section. I need to explain them to you. As a matter of fact, let's put them together right now.

"**Wrath**" (in this verse) is the Greek word *thumos*. It is when you explode. Have you ever done that?

I can remember when I was in church recreation. I lost a basketball game one night because of a stupid referee. I mean a stupid, brain dead referee. We lost a championship in overtime. Stupid referee. I remember how mad I got. I was the Minister of Activities, and I took the basketball and threw it against the end wall so hard that it went all the way to the other end of the court. Take a basketball and see how hard it is to throw it to make it go that far. Everybody walked out of the building kind of like, "Whew!" I went into the fireside room of that activities building, slammed the door and sat down. I was ready to take on half the city because of stupid referees. Everybody left. My assistant turned the light off on me and left me sitting there in the darkness. That is wrath, *thumos*. I wasn't just mad. I exploded! That is what *thumos* is.

As a matter of fact, did you know that the seven bowls of God's judgment called the bowls of wrath are called *thumos*? Folks, we haven't seen anything until those seven last bowls of judgment fall on this earth. Then those who are here will realize the anger of a holy God towards sin. Without mercy He is going to pour out those bowls of wrath on this earth.

ANGER

But there is another word. He goes on and says "**anger**" which is **orge** which means you are angry, but you may not necessarily have shown it yet. Oh, you are capable of blowing up, but you haven't blown up yet. You see, this is why we get so judgmental. Some people carry it and hold it pretty well for a long period of time. So we think they are really godly. Are you kidding me? Look at the other things in their life. You see, anger can be disguised. It can be covered over. *Thumos*, is bursting out, the outburst. *Orge*, is the actual anger itself.

CLAMOR

Then he gives the word "**clamor**." This is when you get loud. This is the word for loud. It says there was an uproar over in Acts. In Hebrews it says He cried out before the Father. The word is a loud, loud cry. This is when you are getting a little noisy with the way you feel in that cesspool.

SLANDER

Then he uses the word "**slander**." Now that is not the same word Peter uses in I Peter 2:1. There it means to speak against. Here in Ephesians the word is *blasphemia*. It means abusive language. When you start cursing somebody on the highway, you've have just nailed it. You've got on the wrong garment. Watch out. You see, all these are tied intricately together. Either way you go it is the same thing. You are injured somehow inside and now that acid has built up inside you. You are ready to just absolutely stamp out anybody that gets in your path. That comes from that cesspool of self. Think about that. The Holy Spirit will prick your heart and say,

"I want you to make this choice."

You say,

"No, I won't do it."

Do you realize what you have just done? You have just put that old sick cesspool garment on (you've grieved, quenched, resisted the Spirit). Everything that comes out of it is going to defile any relationship you have all day. That is why you have to continuously say,

"Oh, God. I've put the wrong one on. I confess it. I am repenting."

What do I mean by **repenting**? You turn around and put the right one on. Listen, folks, we have to see that there is a performance or a perfection level.

**Spirituality is not an arrival.
It is a pursuit.**

So often we misunderstand relationships. We think because we are putting on the right garment, everybody else ought to be judged by us. Friend, as soon as you think that way, you have just put the wrong garment back on! Who in the world are we to point a finger at anybody? Does being spiritual mean that you have a quiet time every morning at 5:00? Is that spirituality? Are you spiritual because you passed out tracts last year? Are you spiritual because you have witnessed to everything that has moved on the downtown streets? Does that mean that you are spiritual? I doubt it. Every one of us are guilty of putting that wrong garment on. That is why when we see a brother who has the wrong one on, it ought to lead us to bleed for him because we know what he has just done. We have done it ourselves (Ephesians 4:31-32: A Brand New Way of Life - 5)

Ephesians 4:32 **Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [ginesthe \(2PPMM\)](#) [de] eis allelous chrestoi, eusplagchnoi, charizomenoi (PMPMPN) [heautois kathos kai o theos en Christo echarisato \(3SAMI\)](#) [humin](#)

Amplified: And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave you. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: Show yourselves kind to one another, merciful, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

NLT: Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has

forgiven you. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Be kind to each other, be understanding. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And be becoming kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other even as and just as also God in Christ forgave you.

Young's Literal: On the contrary learn to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER: ginesthe (2PPMM) [de] eis allelous chrestoi:

- Ruth 2:20; Psalms 112:4,5,9; Proverbs 19:22; Isaiah 57:1; Luke 6:35; Acts 28:2; Romans 12:10; 1Corinthians 13:4; 2Corinthians 2:10; 6:6; Colossians 3:12,13; 2Peter 1:7
- Ephesians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

John MacArthur aptly entitles this passage "from natural vices to supernatural virtues".

Be ([1096](#)) (**ginomai**) means to bring into existence or to become. This is an interesting picture - bringing kindness to one another **into existence!** What must it have been like before the gospel! Expositors Greek Testament says that the idea of the verb **be** (**ginomai**)...

is that they had to abandon one mental condition and make their way, beginning there and then, into its opposite.

The **present imperative** calls for this to now be their new lifestyle! Keep on becoming kind, etc. The **middle voice** calls for the subject to initiate the action and participate in the results or effects thereof. The idea is keep on becoming. Paul is not calling for an "arrival" in this life but for a lifelong process, a journey toward greater and greater Christlike behavior.

Phillips puts it this way noting that **Kenneth Wuest** translates it...

"**be becoming kind.**" We might not be able to achieve the kind of total revolution of inner disposition demanded by the Holy Spirit all at once. God is reasonable. He knows our frame. He makes allowance for us to learn and practice, even though we already have the indwelling Holy Spirit to provide the energizing power needed for change. But God does demand that here and now—right away—we start putting away the old nature and putting on the new. ([Phillips, John: Exploring Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#))

Kind ([5543](#)) (**chrestos** from **chráomai** = furnish what is needed or from **chresteuomai** = to act kindly) has a basic meaning being well adapted to fulfill a purpose and so describes that which is useful, suitable, excellent, serviceable. It means goodness with a nuance of 'serviceableness.' (as in Luke 5:39 where the old wine is fine or superior for use). **Chrestos** refers to morals in 1Cor 15:33 as those which are useful or benevolent. **Kind** as opposed to harsh, hard, bitter, sharp, caustic!

In several NT verses (Lk 6:35, Ro 2:4-note; Ep 4:32-note; 1Pe 2:3-note) the main idea of **chrestos** is **kind**, an adjective which includes the attributes of loving affection, sympathy, friendliness, patience, pleasantness, gentleness, and goodness. Kindness is a quality shown in the way a person speaks and acts. It is more volitional than emotional.

Matthew Poole - sweet, amiable, facile in words and conversation, Luke 6:35.

Vine writes that **chrestos** "primarily signifies "fit for use, able to be used" (akin to **chraomai**, "to use"), hence, "good, virtuous, mild, pleasant" (in contrast to what is hard, harsh, sharp, bitter). ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson](#))

Chrestos refers to that which is fit for use, able to be used and hence is good, kind, benevolent, worthy, useful, virtuous, and pleasant (in contrast to what is hard, harsh, bad or unprofitable).

Chrestos expresses the material usefulness of things with regard to their goodness, pleasantness and softness.

Chrestos was a common proper name of the first century. (See note on use in 1 Peter 2:3 below).

NIDNTT states in classic use "**chrestos** originally denoted usefulness, and hence what appeared useful, good, suitable and proper (e.g. mild wine). This was very soon followed by the broadening of the concept to include moral excellence and perfection, in which

inner greatness was linked with genuine goodness of heart. So *chrestos* meant morally good and honourable, the capacity to show kindness to everyone. Used as a noun, *chreston* meant a friendly nature, kindness; in the plur. *ta chresta*, kind actions (Herodotus). In the same way the noun, *chrestotes*, from Euripides on, acquired the meaning of friendliness, kindness, mildness, and was used in inscriptions as a title of honour for rulers and important public figures. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Barclay writes that **chrestos** was defined by the Greeks...

as the disposition of mind which thinks as much of its neighbour's affairs as it does of its own. **Kindness** has learned the secret of looking outwards all the time, and not inwards. He tells us to forgive others as God forgave us. So, in one sentence, Paul lays down the law of personal relationships—that we should treat others as Jesus Christ has treated us. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

There are two words for good in Greek; there is **agathos** and there is **chrestos**. The difference between them is this. The goodness of a man who is **agathos** may well issue in rebuke and discipline and punishment; but the goodness of a man who is **chrestos** is always essentially kind. Jesus was **agathos** when he drove the moneychangers and the sellers of doves from the Temple in the white heat of his anger. He was **chrestos** when he treated with loving gentleness the sinning woman who anointed his feet and the woman taken in adultery. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Christ's yoke is called *chrestos* (Mt 11:30), that is, it does not chafe. The whole idea of the word (**chrestos**) is a goodness which is kind. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

He says, "My yoke is easy." The word "easy" is in Greek *chrestos* which can mean well-fitting. In Palestine ox-yokes were made of wood; the ox was brought, and the measurements were taken. The yoke was then roughed out, and the ox wigs brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was carefully adjusted, so that it would fit well, and not gall the neck of the patient beast. The yoke was tailor-made to fit the ox. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Vincent says **chrestos** is...

Actively benignant, "as distinguished from other adjectives which describe goodness on the side of its sterling worth and its gentleness" (Salmond). (Commenting on the use of *chrestos* to describe Jesus' yoke in Mt 11:30 Vincent writes) In Luke 5:39, **chrestos** is used of old wine, where the true reading, instead of better, is good (*chrestos*), mellowed with age.

Plato ("Republic," 424) applies the word to education. "*Good nurture and education, implant good (agathos) constitutions; and these good (chrestos) constitutions improve more and more;*" thus evidently using *chrestos* and *agathos* as synonymous. The three meanings combine in the word, though it is impossible to find an English word which combines them all. Christ's yoke is wholesome, serviceable, kindly. (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament)

Chrestos is used 8 times (twice in Romans 2:4) in the NT...

Matthew 11:30 "For My yoke is **easy**, and My load is light." (**Comment:** Here **chrestos** refers to that which causes no discomfort or does not chafe [rub so as to cause irritation]. It is that which is **well-fitting**. In Palestine ox-yokes were made of wood; the ox was brought, and the measurements were taken. The yoke was then roughed out, and the ox was brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was carefully adjusted, so that it would fit well, and not gall the neck of the patient beast. The yoke was tailor-made to fit the ox. **Ponder** that thought for a moment! Christ's yoke is wholesome, serviceable, kindly. "*Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird; not loads, but helps to motion*" -- Jeremy Taylor. *Chrestos* can also mean "pleasant" so that wearing Christ's easy yoke is actually pleasant!).

Luke 5:39 "And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is **good enough**.'" (**Comment:** Here **chrestos** refers to that which meets a relatively high standard of value. The nuance here in the context of wine would also include the idea of wine that is mellow, well aged, pleasingly mild.)

Luke 6:35 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is **kind** to ungrateful and evil men.

Romans 2:4 (note) Or do you think lightly of the riches of His **kindness** and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the **kindness** of God leads you to repentance? (**Comment:** Here *chrestos* refers to the beneficent nature of God, His desire to perform acts of kindness and charity. This meaning also applies to His

children in Ephesians 4:32 who perform acts of charity because of His life in them and flowing through them).

1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived (stop being deceived): "Bad company corrupts **good** morals."
(**Comment:** Here **chrestos** refers to that which morally good and thus which is reputable)

Ephesians 4:32 And be **kind** to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (**Comment:** In experiencing the kindness of the Lord, men are to be like him in showing kindness towards others)

1 Peter 2:3 (note) if you have tasted the **kindness** of the Lord. (**Comment:** Plato used **chrestos** for food. There also may be a play on words between "kindness" (**chrestos**) and "Christ" (**Christos**), two words which were probably pronounced the same at that time. The believers have therefore tasted **chrestos**, that is, Christ Himself, the Living Word.)

Chrestos is used 25 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)**

Job 31:31; Ps. 25:8; 34:8; 52:9; 69:16; 86:5; 100:5; 105:45; 106:48; 109:21; 112:5; 119:39, 68; 135:21; 145:9; Prov. 2:21; Jer. 24:2f, 5; 33:11; 44:17; 52:32; Ezek. 27:22; 28:13; Da 2:32; Nah. 1:7

Here are a few representative uses of **chrestos** to **meditate** upon...

Psalm 25:8-note Good (**chrestos**) and upright is the LORD. Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.

Psalm 34:8-note O taste and see that the LORD is **good** (**chrestos**); How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Psalm 86:5-note For Thou, Lord, art **good** (**chrestos**), and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee.

Psalm 100:5-note For the LORD is **good** (**chrestos**); His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 119:39-note Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Thine ordinances are **good** (**chrestos**)

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is **good** (**chrestos**), a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.

Boles notes that **chrestos** in this context...

is more than gentle and polite; the word also means "useful" and "serviceable." It has the flavor of action and productivity. God showed his "kindness" to us (Ep 2:7-note) when he took steps to save us. (Boles, K. L.. Galatians & Ephesians. The College Press NIV commentary. Joplin, Mo.: College Press)

Lehman Strauss - Kindness should characterize believers in their relationships with one another. Kindness is that gentle, gracious, easy-to-be-entreated manner that permits others to be at ease in our presence. The word "kind" comes from such words as "kin" and "kindred," so that to deal kindly with others is to deal with them as our own kin. And after all, believers are brethren. Kindness and tender-heartedness go together. They express a warm sympathy and love for all men, both the righteous and evil doers. I fear that sometimes we are not very pitiful and compassionate toward others. Kindness and compassion find expression in forgiveness ([The Conduct and Duty of the Church Ephesians 4-6](#))

One another (240) (**allelon** from **állos** = another) means just what it says. It is like the sequoia trees of California which tower as high as 300 feet above the ground. You might be surprised to discover that these giant trees have unusually shallow root systems that reach out in all directions to capture the greatest amount of surface moisture. Their intertwining roots also provide support for each other against the storms. That's why they usually grow in clusters. Seldom will you see a redwood standing alone, because high winds would quickly uproot it! That's what "one another" means!

Related Resource: Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative

Kindness of a Great President - Despite his busy schedule during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln often visited the hospitals to cheer the wounded. On one occasion he saw a young fellow who was near death. "Is there anything I can do for you?" asked the compassionate President. "Please write a letter to my mother," came the reply. Unrecognized by the soldier, the Chief Executive sat down and wrote as the youth told him what to say. The letter read, "My Dearest Mother, I was badly hurt while doing my duty, and I won't recover. Don't sorrow too much for me. May God bless you and Father. Kiss Mary and John for me." The young man was too weak to go on, so Lincoln signed the letter for him and then added this postscript: "Written for your son by Abraham Lincoln." Asking to see the note, the soldier was astonished to discover who had shown him such kindness. "Are you really our President?" he asked. "Yes," was the quiet answer. "Now, is there anything else I can do?" The lad feebly replied, "Will you please hold my hand? I think it

would help to see me through to the end." The tall, gaunt man granted his request, offering warm words of encouragement until death stole in with the dawn.

TENDER-HEARTED: *eusplagchnoi*:

- Ps 145:9; Proverbs 12:10; Luke 1:78; James 5:11
- Ephesians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

George Morrison...

the great secret of the **tender heart** lies in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. It is a continual wonder about Jesus that He was so strong and yet so tenderhearted. No authority could make Him fearful; no array of power could ever daunt Him, and yet a bruised reed he would not break, and smoking flax He would not quench. He was not tender because He knew so little. He was tender because He knew so much. All that was hidden from duller eyes He saw--all that men had to bear and battle through. Their helplessness, their crying in the night, their inarticulate appeal to heaven--all this was ever audible to Jesus and kept His heart as tender as a child's. And He never lost this tenderheartedness even in the darkness of the cross. Men scorned Him, and they spat on Him, and crucified Him, yet "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." And what I say is that when that mind of Christ is given by the Spirit to you and me, then whatever happens, however we are treated, we shall be kind one to another, tenderhearted. (George Morrison. Glasgow Pulpit New Testament Commentary)

Tender hearted ([2155](#)) (*eusplagchnos* from *eú* = well + *splagchnon* = bowel) literally means "having strong, healthy bowels" (as used once literally in a medical sense by Hippocrates, 430BC). The inward organs were considered the seat of emotion and intention. The word then means compassionate, easily (quickly) moved to love, pity, or sorrow. It describes one having tender feeling for someone else.

UBS Handbook comments that *eusplagchnos*...

may often be expressed idiomatically as "show how your heart feels toward others" or "let your heart go out to others" or "feel sorrow in your heart for others"

The root word *splagchnon* was used by the Greeks to refer to the upper abdominal viscera, the heart, lungs, liver and upper bowels, which the ancients regarded as the seat of affections and emotions, such as anger and love. The phrase "I feel it in the pit of my stomach" is a modern parallel. And we all know how that feels! So *splagchnon* refers to that deep, internal caring comparable to the modern expressions of deep feeling such as "broken-hearted" or "gut-wrenching". *Splagchnon* is the strongest Greek word for expressing compassionate love or tender mercy and involves one's entire being. It describes the compassion which moves a man to the deepest depths of his being. In the gospels, apart from its use in some of the parables, it is used only of Jesus

John Eadie...

So far from being churlish or waspish, Christians are to be noted for their tenderness of heart. They are to be full of deep and mellow affection, in opposition to that wrath and anger which they are summoned to abandon. A rich and genial sympathy should ever characterize all their intercourse. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary Online](#))

Eusplagchnos not a word about conduct but about your insides -- literally, your innards, your belly. Be well-disposed to each other in your deepest parts. It's exactly the opposite of hypocrisy that acts tender and feels malice.

Webster says that the English word **tender hearted** means easily moved to love, pity, or sorrow

The only other Biblical use of *eusplagchnos* is...

1Pe 3:8 (see note) To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, **kindhearted**, and humble in spirit;

FORGIVING EACH OTHER, JUST AS GOD IN CHRIST ALSO HAS FORGIVEN YOU: *charizomenoi* (PMPMPN) *heautois kathos kai o theos en Christo echarisato* (3SAMI) *humin*:

- Ep 5:1; Ge 50:17,18; Mt 6:12,14,15; 18:21-35; Mk 11:25,26; Lk 6:37; 11:4; 17:4; Ro 12:20,21; 2Co 2:7,10; Col 3:12,13; 1Pe 3:8,9; 1Jn 1:9; 2:12

THE WIDE SPECTRUM OF UNFORGIVENESS

Remember that the spectrum of unforgiveness includes all manner of insults and injuries we receive that result in reactions varying from resentment, to grudge holding, to bitterness, to even overt anger. All of these self-destructive feelings (eg, bitterness is an "acid" that damages the "container" as much or more than those it is poured on) need to be dealt with at the Cross where our forgiveness was paid for in full (Jn 19:30 where "It is finished" = "Paid in full!") and is thus the fountain head of all supernatural forgiveness. While forgiveness may entail just one act on our part, often forgiveness is a process as the painful thoughts and feelings recur and we find ourselves needing to repeat this divinely enabled act of forgiveness "seven times seventy". It is vital that we as the body of Christ deal with the poison of an unforgiving spirit for this is one of (if not the most) common problems in evangelical churches today, with rotten fruits of disunity, divorce, disappointment, etc (according to Bryon Paulus, director of Life Action Ministries, a revival focused ministry). Jesus addressed believers in Matthew 18:21-35 (implied by the fact that He calls for seven times seventy type forgiveness in Mt 18:22, a quality which is only possible supernaturally, and He also classified this parable as related to the "kingdom of heaven", Mt 18:23) in the parable of the unforgiving steward. In this parable our Lord concluded that the unforgiving person is the one who shows no mercy (Mt 18:33, cp Jas 2:13, Mt 5:7) and who will be turned over the torturers "until he should repay all that was owed" (Mt 18:34, read the entire parable Mt 18:21-35). Note the "time phrase" **until**. **Until** can be a few minutes, a few months or many years, even a lifetime. How often we hear stories of unresolved relationships lasting a lifetime, only to be dealt with (or not dealt with) on one's death bed! Unforgiveness is an important topic for the church to deal with.

John MacArthur commenting on Jesus' parable in Mt 18 concludes that our Lord...

vividly drives home the importance of forgiveness in the Christian life (in) the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant. In this passage Jesus' teaching underscores not only the necessity of forgiveness but also the imperative that if God, Who has received the greater offense, can forgive us, then believers, who have been offended far less, must forgive fellow believers. (**Ed**: cp Lk 7:40, 41, 42, 43,47)... When God does need to chasten believers for any grievous sin, it is perfectly evenhanded, more so than any king's punishment could be. The Lord, while always angry at sin, disciplines his own because He loves them (He 12:6-note, He 12:10-note, He 12:11-note). If they forget the forgiveness they've received (as the first slave did) and refuse to forgive fellow believers, God causes them to endure such "torturers" as stress, hardships, troubled consciences, and other trials until they deal with the sin. James says: "Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy" (Jas 2:13).

I believe the lesson of the parable is clear: any believer who offends a fellow believer has offended God much more, and God has forgiven him; therefore, the offended believer should always be willing to forgive the brother or sister who sins against him or her and asks to be forgiven. Christians must always reflect God's forgiveness because they have experienced that same forgiveness.

Genuine forgiveness, however, does not excuse the wrongs of others. Compassion and mercy will not rationalize an offense away but will always call it what it is. But in confronting a sin, the forgiving believer will eliminate bitterness and all other negative feelings that can only increase the sin rather than eliminate it. Then he or she can confidently and sincerely pray the familiar prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12-**see notes on forgiveness related to this passage**). (MacArthur, J. The Pillars of Christian Character: The Basic Essentials of a Living Faith. Page 88. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books)

The subsequent verses in Ephesians 5 draw a conclusion based on Paul's instructions at the end of chapter 4 (which is why I think chapter breaks can be sometimes distract from the flow of thought)...

Therefore **be** (present imperative) **imitators** (mimetes = One who **mimes** = acts a part with mimic gesture and action usually without words Let your actions speak louder than your words) of God, as beloved children and **walk** (present imperative) in love (The "imitation" must take effect in the practical, unmistakable form of a loving course of life), just as (Paul introduces our great **Example** we are to seek to imitate) Christ also loved you (**How did He love us? How much?**), and gave Himself up (the ultimate surrender of self or death to self) for (pictures substitution - in our place) us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma (So Christ in this passage is present as our preeminent perfect pattern as well as motive of that divine love which should mark God's beloved children who are on display before a spiritually dead, desperately lost watching world!). (Eph 5:1,2-note)

Expositor's Greek Testament: The "*therefore*" points to the same connection of ideas, while it introduces new

exhortations based on the supreme fact of God's forgiving love in Christ. Of the duties inculcated on that basis the first and the one most immediately in view is that of the **forgiveness of those who wrong us**—a forgiveness which should be **free, loving, ungrudging, complete** as God's forgiveness is. (**Ed**: Just try to carry out this objective in your own power! The only chance we have is by relying on the indwelling Spirit and the grace in which we stand which is sufficient for our every weakness!)

Forgiving (5483) ("given as an act of grace") (5483) (**charizomai** [word study] from **charis**= grace) means literally to give freely and unconditionally or to bestow as a gift of grace and then to remit a debt, and hence to forgive. Look at the word "forgive" and observe the last 4 letters which speak volumes about what is required to forgive others (for**GIVE**). **Charizomai** means to extend grace, to show kindness or to bestow favor. The concept came to include both the gracious action and agreeable human qualities. The **present tense** calls for this to be the believer's continual practice, our new way of life (our "new garment" worn continually) as **saints**. Don't say you **can't** forgive, for what you are really saying is you **won't** forgive. We **can** forgive others because He **forgave** us! As an act of **mercy** make the conscious choice to extend **grace** to others who don't necessarily deserve it. In fact Paul uses the **Middle voice** which pictures believers as those who are to initiate the action of forgiving and then to participate in the results of forgiveness, not the least of which is we free ourselves from the "**prison**" and "**poison**" of **unforgiveness!**

Another way to explain the tense using the context of Paul's exhortation to put on new garments, the **present tense** pictures that those who have **put off** the old man and **put on** the new man and now are to wear this "garment" at all times and in all places. The **middle voice** indicates that we as new men (and women of course) in Christ are to initiate the decision to put on the "garment of forgiveness" and that we participate in the effects of this new "attire" (the freedom that comes by living with an attitude of letting the injuries of others go, of remitting the debts they owe us).

I found a little remedy
To ease the life we **live**
And make each day a happier one:
It is the word "**forgive**."
—Anonymous

By the very nature of the word **charizomai** (derived from **charis** = grace) this verb requires one to be a (transforming)**grace filled believer** to fulfill its requirements of forgiving freely, graciously and ungrudgingly (a supernatural, Spirit empowered work! Compare Paul's earlier request for power in Eph 3:16-note). Stated another way, **charizomai** represents the exercise of grace in freely forgiving.

Geneva Bible Notes (1599)...

An argument taken from the example of Christ, most grave and strong, both for the pardoning of those injuries which have been done to us by our greatest enemies, and much more for having consideration of the miserable, and using moderation and gentle behaviour towards all men.

Pfeiffer rightly says that...

The only way we can be enabled to forgive is through the forgiveness which we ourselves already have received for Christ's sake. As God's love produces our love, so our realization of God's forgiveness produces our forgiveness of others (cf. 1Jn 4:19).

The People's Bible...

What our Father has done—that makes all the difference in the world! His actions not only set a pattern and serve as a model, but they give loveless sinners new hearts and new minds. It is God who creates the new man in Christians, who now have the power and the ability to forgive a repentant brother or sister (**Ed**: And even those who don't repent!). And Christians will do it. They will not merely go through the motions but will forgive sincerely—from their hearts. They can do so because they are now living lives of love, in imitation of their heavenly Father. "We love because he first loved us" (1Jn 4:19). (Panning, A. J. Galatians, Ephesians. The People's Bible Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House)

Warren Wiersbe writes that

Here Paul put his finger on the basic cause of a bitter attitude: We cannot forgive people. An unforgiving spirit is the **devil's playground** (cp Ep 4:26, 27-note), and before long it becomes the **Christian's battleground**. If somebody hurts us, either deliberately or unintentionally, and we do not forgive him, then we begin to develop bitterness within, which hardens the heart. We should be tenderhearted and kind, but instead we are hardhearted and bitter. Actually, we are not hurting the person who hurt us; we are only hurting ourselves.

Bitterness in the heart makes us treat others the way Satan treats them, when we should treat others the way God has treated us. In His gracious kindness, God has forgiven us, and we should forgive others. We do not forgive for our sake (though we do get a blessing from it) or even for their sake, but for Jesus' sake.

Learning how to forgive and forget is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life.

Review once again the motives for "walking in purity": We are members one of another (Ep 4:25-note); Satan wants to get a foothold in our lives (Ep 4:27-note); we ought to share with others (Ep 4:28-note); we ought to build one another up (Ep 4:29-note); and we ought not to grieve God (Ep 4:30-note). And, after all, we have been raised from the dead—so why wear the grave clothes? (Ep 4:22-note, Ep 4:23-note) Jesus says of us as He said of Lazarus: "Loose him, and let him go!" (Jn 11:44KJV) (From comments on Ephesians 4 in [Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) (Bolding and color added for emphasis)

Each other ([1438](#)) (**heautois**) is the third third person reflexive pronoun which in this context emphasizes the fact that believers are all members of Christ's body—everyone members one of another. As Alford phrases it...

"Doing as a body for yourselves that which God did once for you all"

DOCTRINE PRECEDES DUTY

Just as God in Christ has forgiven us (cp Col 2:13-note) - The underlying motive for believers to forgive others is God's action through Christ toward us (cp 1Jn 3:16). The believer's **duty** (privilege, not legalistic burden) is to forgive, based on the **doctrine** that we have been forgiven. **Revelation** always calls for a **response** from the heart (cp Mt 18:35). If the revelation remains in the intellect, we run the risk of becoming modern day Pharisees! What we **believe** should always determine how we **behave**. If we **believe** (and comprehend to some degree the measure of) God's forgiveness, we should **behave** according to that truth in which we trust. As someone has said, God's "**imperatives**" (His commands, His instructions) are always preceded by His "**indicatives**" (the mood of reality = statement of objective fact or reality).

It follows that we as believers are most like our Father in Heaven when we exercise the supernatural grace of forgiving those who have in some way offended us and who owe us a "debt". The old adage is appropriate "Like Father, like son" for we are sons of our Father and are to accurately reflect His character, especially His forgiveness, to a lost, skeptical, cynical world which desperately needs to see God's love in action vis-à-vis forgiveness freely given to those who are undeserving! (cp Mt 5:16-note)

Just as ([2531](#)) (**kathos** from **kata** = down + **hos** = as) is a marker of cause or reason and here designates the grounds on which believers are enabled and (should be) motivated to forgive others. It conveys the sense of "in the same way as", "just like", "according as", "to the degree that". Meditation on this truth should serve as a strong motive to supernaturally stimulate us to forgive others.

In Christ - The idea can be expressed as "through Christ", conveying the sense of Christ's finished work being the means ("instrumentality") through which the Father can now forgive sinners. Some take "in Christ" as alluding to our union or oneness with Christ and so render this phrase "in your union with Christ." **UBS** adds that "Most translations, which simply have "God in Christ," seem to take it in the sense that God is present in Christ, that is, he is active, working, forgiving, in Christ's person." (Ibid)

Wuest interprets **in Christ** as meaning that...

It is the God who forgives in the sphere of Christ in that His forgiveness is made possible from the point of the law, through the atonement. (Ibid)

Christ ([5547](#)) (**Christos** from **chrío** = to anoint, rub with oil, consecrate to an office) is the Anointed One, the Messiah, Christos being the Greek equivalent of the transliterated Hebrew word Messiah. As a Jew learned the Torah, now the Christian learns Christ!

Pardon from an offended God!
Pardon for sins of deepest dye!
Pardon bestowed through Jesus' blood!
Pardon that brings the rebel nigh!

Who is a pard'ning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

O may this glorious, matchless love,
This Godlike miracle of grace,
Teach mortal tongues, like those above,
To raise this song of lofty praise:

Who is a pard'ning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

--Samuel Davies

Has Forgiven ([5483](#)) (**charizomai** [**word study**] from **charis** = grace) speaks of the exhibition of God's grace in providing undeserved help to those who were unworthy to receive it. Note that charizomai is in the **aorist tense** which signifies God's forgiveness of sinners in Christ is full, final and finished. This is the standard of forgiveness by which believers are to model their forgiveness of those who injure them in thought, word or deed.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - I say to the glory of God and in utter humility that whenever I see myself before God and realize even something of what my blessed Lord has done for me, I am ready to forgive anybody anything...If we really know Christ as our Saviour our hearts are broken and cannot be hard, and we cannot refuse forgiveness

Lehman Strauss comments that "Perhaps the one who wronged you does not deserve your forgiveness. Neither did you deserve God's forgiveness. ([The Conduct and Duty of the Church Ephesians 4-6](#))

William MacDonald explains that charizomai expresses...

A readiness to pardon offenses, to overlook personal wrongs against oneself, and to harbor no desire for retaliation. The greatest example of One who forgives is God Himself. The basis of His forgiveness is the work of Christ at Calvary. And we are the unworthy objects. God could not forgive sin without proper satisfaction being made. In His love He provided the satisfaction which His righteousness demanded. In Christ, that is, in His Person and work, God found a righteous basis on which He could forgive us. Since He forgave us when we were in debt "millions of dollars," we ought to forgive others when they owe us "a few dollars" (Matt. 18:23–28. JBP). **Lenski** counsels

The moment a man wrongs me I must forgive him. Then my soul is free. If I hold the wrong against him I sin against God and against him and jeopardize my forgiveness with God. Whether the man repents, makes amends, asks my pardon or not, makes no difference. I have instantly forgiven him. He must face God with the wrong he has done; but that is his affair and God's and not mine save that I should help him according to Mt. 18:15, etc. But whether this succeeds or not and before this even begins, I must forgive him. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

S Lewis Johnson comments on **forgiveness** writing...

we should remember that we are to forgive one another, because God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Anyone who has been cleared of a crushing debt, should not exact payment of pittance of others. And so the Apostle reminds believers that they ought to forgive one another because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us.

Just think about it. **Are there people that you find it difficult to forgive?** Are there people that you have, for a long time found it difficult to forgive? Some little thing that they've done, or some big thing that they've done – you think it's big. And you allow this to go on for days and days and weeks months, and in some cases, even years. And this is lying in the back of your life for months, days, years.

Now would you just for a moment measure the wrong that has been done to you by – and what it would cost to forgive –against the wrongs you have done to the Lord God, and the forgiveness that has been your experience? Forgiving one another as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

Well, listen, I've been forgiven a crushing, eternal debt. So, the little wrongs that someone may have committed against me, sometimes they're not really wrongs, but I think they are. Those little wrongs that have been done to me, how small they are in light of what I have been forgiven. Forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

Many people bury the hatchet, but they leave part of it showing. In fact, I think you really could say, about a lot of people, when they speak about others – I'm speaking about the Christian church – you're hatchet's showing. ([Pdf](#))

R C Lenski - Let us put this plainly since even pastors misunderstand it. The moment a man wrongs me I must forgive him. Then my soul is free. If I hold the wrong against him I sin against God and against him and jeopardize my forgiveness with God. Whether the man repents, makes amends, asks my pardon or not, makes no difference. I have instantly forgiven him. He must face God with the wrong he has done; but that is his affair and God's and not mine save that in the case he is a brother I should help him according to Mt 18:15, etc. But whether this succeeds or not and before this even begins I must forgive him. (Lenski, R. C. H. (1937). The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians. Columbus, O.: Lutheran Book Concern)

When missionaries in northern Alaska were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos, they discovered there was no word in that language for **forgiveness**. After much patient listening, however, they discovered a word that means, "not being able to think about it anymore." That word was used throughout the translation to represent forgiveness, because God's promise to repentant sinners is, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34).

J Ligon Duncan has a good word on this section...

We're going to do it (forgive) because we have realized that that is exactly what God has done to us. He has been kind to us when we have not deserved to be kind to. He has been forgiving of us when we did not deserve forgiveness. And so you see, the Apostle Paul is saying 'This is the key, friends.' It is only when you realize that you are the recipient of a kindness that you did not deserve, it is only when you realize that you are the recipient of a forgiveness that you did not deserve, that you are then suddenly freed from the power of your bitterness to realize that God has been better to you than you dared dream; and that in His love and kindness and goodness to you, He has set you free to be kind to those who don't deserve to be kind to in this life, and to forgive those who have deeply offended you and who don't deserve to be forgiven. He's freed you! How? By simply telling you to do it? No. By showing you His love and kindness and forgiveness first, and showing it to you in such a lavish way that it literally changes your life.

You know, Jesus tells a story of a woman just like that. Back in Luke again, it's in Luke 7. It's the story of that immoral woman, a woman with a terrible reputation in the community, and she shows up at the house where Jesus is staying one day, and she begins to anoint His feet. And the Pharisees that are there are indignant: 'If this man were really a prophet, he'd know what kind of a woman was touching his feet!' And you remember Jesus turns to them and He says 'Let me tell you a story.' And He tells them a story, and the punch line is found in Luke 7:47. And He says 'You know what? This woman loves much because she has been forgiven much, and you love little because you have been forgiven little.'

In other words, Jesus is attacking their attitude. They didn't think they needed forgiveness, and consequently they didn't love Him like they ought to. But this woman knew that she needed forgiveness, and she had received the gracious forgiveness of Jesus Christ, and she loved Him with all her heart. It had radically changed her life.

And you see, Paul's point, as Jesus' point, is simply this: that those who have been forgiven much are able to love and forgive much. Those who realize that they have been forgiven much by God in Christ are thus disposed to love much and are prepared to forgive. So the secret of not living this life of bitterness and instead living this life of kindness and forgiveness, is realizing the grace of God to us in Jesus Christ.

And if you haven't realized the greatness of this grace, I can tell you, my friends, you can't do what the Apostle Paul is asking you to do this morning. In that area of your deepest wounding in this life, there has just got to be more than some pundit's standing up and telling you 'Stop being bitter. Start being kind and forgiving.' There's got to be more. There's got to be a prevailing, supernatural, overwhelming experience of the forgiveness and love of God in your life in Christ Jesus. But when that prevailing, powerful, supernatural, experience of the love of God, the forgiveness of God, the kindness of God in Christ comes, it sets us free to stop being turned in on ourselves and nurse our bitterness, and to deny ourselves and give ourselves away in love and forgiveness.

And that's what the Apostle Paul is saying today. He's saying that we're to be kind and forgiving to one another, precisely because we realize how kind and forgiving God our Father has been to us in Jesus Christ. (Read his full sermon message [Bitterness, Forgiveness, and Being Like God](#) or listen to it on [Mp3](#)) (Bold added)

Chuck Swindoll (quoted by Ligon Duncan) had these insightful words on attitude...

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude to me is more important than facts, it's more important than the past, it's more important than education, it's more important than money,

circumstances, failures, successes. It's more important than what other people think or say or do. It's more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, or a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string that we have, and that is our attitude. I'm convinced that life is ten percent of what happens to me and ninety percent of how I react to it.

Wayne Barber...

Let's look at the wellspring that we have in Christ. What a difference! Again he puts the source at the end of the verse. Look at what he says.

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

All the **forgiveness** that we are able to show towards others is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ. You have the "wellspring of life" on one side. You have the cesspool of death on the other side. You have a choice of which garment you are going to put on. It is a constant thing every single day of our life.

Paul says, "Be kind to one another."

The word "**kindness**" (See related word chrestotes) is the word that means to furnish what is needed. In other words, the **kindness** here means I am useful to others. My **kindness** is going to express itself in the need that I perceive as I am around others. This kindness is not just an attitude inside. It is an expression of that attitude. I may see somebody hurting, or you may see them. I am not responsible for everybody and neither are you. You are responsible for what is in the sphere of your relationships and I am responsible for what is in the sphere of my relationships. When I begin to discern that somebody close to me is hurting, then immediately the kindness of Jesus turns on and is going to reach out to that person to do something. Whatever is useful and needful is what kindness is all about. That is Christ working in us, being considerate of one another, concerned for one another.

TENDER-HEARTED

The next word he uses there is the word **tender-hearted**. What a tender word. The word means to be full of compassion and pity. You know, the best people to help somebody else are people who have been there themselves. Paul says,

"Comfort wherein you have been comforted."

It is amazing how God will orchestrate your life and bring people into your walk who are going through the very thing you have just gone through two years back. It is amazing how God does that. Somehow He begins through His own working in our spirit, to create within us a compassion for other people because we have been there and we know what they are headed for or we know what they are going through. The compassion of Jesus then begins to reach out to that person.

FORGIVING

Well, the last quality is **forgiving one another**. I think it involves a choice one makes to forgive. Now remember, injury is still the issue. Somebody has injured you and the old garment says,

Be bitter and loud and angry. Blow up and be slanderous and abuse them with what you say about them.

The new garment says,

No. You make a choice. Forgive them.

The word for "**forgiveness**" is **charizomai [word study]**. It means to release them from a debt they owe and which they can never repay to you. They have offended you to the point they could never come back and "repay" you for what they have done to you. But, you choose in Jesus (**Ed**: In the power supplied by the Spirit of Christ, cp Eph 3:16-note) to release them from that obligation.

Paul finishes up and qualifies it,

just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

You may ask,

You mean to tell me you work yourself into a position that you finally deserve God's forgiveness in your life?

No. I am overwhelmed that God even deals with me. I mean daily I am overwhelmed. Some of the things I think and some of the things I do sometimes I wonder...

"God, why do you even fool with me?"

In Psalm 8:4 David said...

What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him?

Folks, listen, when we realize how much He has forgiven us, we can turn around and, out of that wellspring of His person and His Spirit's strengthening in our inner man, choose to release someone who has offended us.

The next thing we are going to sense in our life is a tender-hearted compassion. Then we are going to sense a kindness that is going to start looking out to see how we can meet that need in our brother or sister's lives.

Now I ask you a question. Which garment would you rather have people wear? I know which one I want everybody to put on, the one that forgives and is kind. But you see, I can't make choices for you. I can only make choices for me. So tomorrow when we get up, we have one of two garments to put on. One of them is rooted in the cesspool of self. The other is rooted in the wellspring of Christ. That is when the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21 comes back in, to be strengthened with power. What is the word "power?" (**dunamis**) **It is the ability to do what you couldn't do outside of Him in the inner man.** You accommodate Him by your willingness to choose and obey what His Word has to say. Then your relationships begin to be what they ought to be. (**Ephesians 4:31-32: A Brand New Way of Life - 5**)

John Henry Jowett has the following devotional entitled "**Grudges**" (based on Lev 19:18) in which he alludes to the importance of forgiveness...

HOW searching is that demand upon the soul (referring to Lev 19:18)! My **forgiveness** of my brother is to be complete. No sullenness is to remain, no sulky temper which so easily gives birth to thunder and lightning. There is to be no painful aloofness, no assumption of a superiority which rains contempt upon the offender. When I **forgive**, I am not to carry any powder forward on the journey. I am to empty out all my explosives, all my ammunition of anger and revenge. I am not to "**bear any grudge.**"

I cannot meet this demand. It is altogether beyond me. I might utter words of **forgiveness**, but I cannot reveal a clear, bright, blue sky without a touch of storm brewing anywhere. But the Lord of grace can do it for me. He can change my weather. He can create a new climate. He can "renew a right spirit within me," (Ps 51:10KJV Ed comment: And I must be enabled by the Spirit Who alone can give the desire and power to forgive the way God forgave me! Php 2:13NLT) and in that holy atmosphere nothing shall live which seeks to poison and destroy. Grudges shall die "like cloud-spots in the dawn." Revenge, that awful creation of the unclean, feverish soul, shall give place to goodwill, the strong genial presence which makes its home in the new heart. (Devotional - February 13)

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS - A life filled with anger — a church full of angry people — is **apain to the Spirit** (Ep 4:30-note). He will not work, indeed cannot, for he abides by his own laws. The great evangelist D. L. Moody related a story which demonstrates this truth:

I remember one town that Mr. Sankey and I visited. For a week it seemed as if we were beating the air; there was no power in the meetings. At last, one day, I said that perhaps there was someone cultivating the **unforgiving spirit**. The chairman of our committee, who was sitting next to me, got up and left the meeting right in view of the audience. The arrow had hit the mark, and gone home to the heart of the chairman of the committee. He had had trouble with someone for about six months. He at once hunted up this man and asked him to forgive him. He came to me with tears in his eyes, and said: "I thank God you ever came here." That night the inquiry room was thronged.

We must deal with our anger for the sake of our own souls and the life of the Church. [Hughes, R. K.: Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ. Crossway Books](#)

Sam Storms has some interesting thoughts on myths and truths related to forgiveness...

There is considerable confusion among Christians as to the nature of forgiveness. I want to list five myths about forgiveness, followed by five truths.

First, myths about forgiveness:

1) Forgiveness is not forgetting.

Why? Because: (a) God does not forget, notwithstanding what you think Jer. 31:34 is saying. This is a metaphor, a word picture, designed to emphasize God's gracious determination not to hold us liable for our sins. (b) It is intellectually and mentally impossible to forget. Try to forget and you can be assured you will remember! (c) It is experientially devastating. Once having successfully "forgotten an offense," any occasion that provokes the memory of it can lead to guilt and shame and depression for having failed so miserably to forget. One becomes unwilling ever to forgive, knowing that they will in all likelihood remember.

2) Forgiveness does not entail the absence of feeling pain.

(a) The only way to stop hurting is to stop feeling and the only way to stop feeling is to die emotionally.

(b) This myth is one of the primary reasons people refuse to forgive. They know they can't stop feeling the sting of the sin and they don't want to be hypocrites.

3) Forgiveness does not mean you cease longing for justice.

Vengeance is not a bad thing. If it were, God would be guilty of a sin (see Ro 12:19-note). It's simply that He's better at it than we are. Leave it to Him. Forgiveness does not mean you ignore that a wrong was done or deny that sin was committed. It simply means you decide to let God be the avenger. One reason people refuse to forgive is that they believe to do so would be to minimize the offense . . . "and that's not fair!"

4) Forgiveness does not mean you make it easy for the offender to hurt you again

He or she may hurt you again. That is their choice. But you must set boundaries on your relationship with them. True love never aids and abets the sin of another. True forgiveness is not incompatible with holding a person accountable for their actions and calling them to repent. Forgiveness does not mean you become a doormat for someone else's sin.

5) Forgiveness is rarely a one-time, climactic event.

It is often a life-long process. It may well begin with an act, but it often requires reaffirmation.

Second, truths about forgiveness.

Paul says we are to forgive "as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). The "as" points to two things: we are to forgive "because God forgave us" and "as or in the same way He forgave us." So how did God forgive us?

1) He forgave us by absorbing in himself the destructive and painful consequences of our sin against him.

Forgiveness is therefore the decision to live with the painful consequences of another person's sin. You are going to have to do so anyway, so you might as well do it without the bitterness and rancor and hatred.

2) God forgave us in Christ by canceling the debt we owed him.

We are no longer held liable for our sins or in any way made to pay for them. To forgive someone thus means you promise not to bring it up to the offender, to others, or to yourself, as a way of using it against them.

3) Forgiving others as God has forgiven us means you resolve to revoke revenge

It means you refuse to let the anger and pain energize an agenda to exact payment, be it emotional, relational, physical, or financial. You cancel the debt by refusing to use past suffering to justify present sin.

4) Forgiving others as God has forgiven us means a determination to do them good rather than evil.

See Ro12:20, 21-note.

5) God forgave us in Christ by reconciling us to himself, by restoring the relationship our sin had severed.

True forgiveness pursues restoration. True forgiveness longs to love again. However, relationship is built on trust, and trust is not built in a day. Also, restoration and reconciliation are not always possible. Said Paul: "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Ro 12:18-note). ([Ephesians 4:17-32](#)) (**Ed comment:** While reconciliation is the ideal, forgiveness takes only one person, while reconciliation takes two parties. Thus we can personally forgive and yet may not see realization of reconciliation.)

BURYING THE HATCHET - Old Joe was dying. For years he had been at odds with Bill, formerly one of his best friends. Wanting to straighten things out, he sent word for Bill to come and see him. When Bill arrived, Joe told him that he was afraid to go into eternity with such a bad feeling between them. Then, very reluctantly and with great effort, Joe apologized for things he had said and done. He also assured Bill that he **forgave him** for his offenses. Everything seemed fine until Bill turned to go. As he walked out of the room, Joe called out after him, "But, remember, if I get better, this doesn't count!"

We may smile at this story. Yet what a clear picture this gives of the way we sometimes treat one another. The forgiveness we profess is often superficial (Ed: Not from the heart, Mt 18:35, Ezek 36:26, 27). It may be prompted by fear, or to gain some selfish advantage, or to clear our conscience--not out of genuine love for God (cf Lk 7:41, 42) and the one who has wronged us. Yes, we may say we forgive, but when the least little friction arises, we are quick to resurrect past grievances (cf God's forgiveness - Isa 38:7, 44:22, Mic 7:19). In short, **we like to "bury the hatchet" with the handle sticking out.** That way we can easily pick it up again and use it to our advantage. How different is the forgiveness Jesus talked about! (Mt 18:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22).

If our sinless Lord is willing to forgive us--with all our faults--how can we withhold pardon from those who have sinned against us? True Christlike forgiveness buries the hatchet completely.

Those who say they will forgive but can't forget,
simply bury the hatchet but leave the handle out for immediate use.

--D. L. Moody

Every man should have a fair-sized cemetery
in which to bury the faults of his friends.

--Henry Ward Beecher

Christ the Lord our debt has paid—
All our sins on Him were laid;
We like Him should try to live,
Always ready to forgive! —Bosch

**To resent and remember brings strife;
To forgive and forget brings peace.**

For Further Thought - What happens to your fellowship with God when you hold a grudge? (Mt 6:15-note). **Can you think of someone you need to forgive?**

For Further Thought - **What happens to your fellowship with God when you hold a grudge?** (see Mt 6:15-note). **Can you think of someone you need to forgive? If not would you be willing to pray David's heart searching plea in Ps 139:23, 24?** Forgiveness (releasing the "debt" the other party owes you) will "cost" you -- you will have to deny self (Mk 8:34), to deny "your rights" (Php 2:4-note), something that you can only do after you have presented your body (everything - spirit, soul, mind, emotions, will, etc) to God as a holy sacrifice, for then His Spirit will enable you by grace to freely forgive for the glory of your Father in heaven.

Garth Brooks has a song which says **"We buried the hatchet, but left the handle sticking out"** One great obstacle of stumbling is non-forgiveness. The hatchet might seem to be buried, but people continue to grab hold of the handle when they want to use it against another. Jesus said if a brother repents, forgive him-that is, bury the hatchet and its handle. How many times, you might ask? As often as the brother repents, we are to forgive (Lk 17:3, 4- where "forgive" = **aphiemi [word study]** meaning release it, cancel the debt, let it go!). Don't grab hold of buried hatchet handles, for they become stumbling blocks to forgiveness.

WHEN FORGIVENESS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE - Corrie ten Boom, author of *The Hiding Place*, was taken captive and spent time in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. While in prison, Corrie saw incredible abuse, so inhumane that it drove the prisoners to incredible depths, including intentionally allowing lice to breed on their bodies because the more lice they had, the less likely it would be that the guards would molest them! And Corrie even witnessed the death of her own dear sister.

After the war, God sent Corrie ten Boom on a mission of mercy through the war-torn cities to encourage residents to choose **forgiveness** over **bitterness**. She would motivate her audiences by sharing some of the atrocities she had experienced, implying that if she could forgive such horrors, so could her listeners. One night speaking, she immediately recognized the man who came walking down the aisle as a particularly cruel guard in one of the concentration camps. The man did not recognize her however. As he approached Corrie he said...

Fraulein, you don't know me, but I was a guard in one of those camps. After the war, God saved me. I wish I could go back and undo those years. I can't, but I've just been prompted by God to come tonight and ask you, **would you please forgive me?**

Then he extended his hand to her. Can you imagine the horrible thoughts and memories that raced through Corrie's mind as she recognized his face and then even worse, heard his incredible plea for forgiveness? How could she? Corrie said her arms froze at her side and she was literally unable to move. The flashbacks in her mind replaying the atrocities, the death of her sister, the abuse. And then God's Spirit said to her,

Corrie, what have you been telling everyone else to do? As an act of your will, will you choose to forgive?

Corrie went on to explain what happened next...

I reached out my hand, and I put it in his, and I said, 'You're forgiven.'

She later reported that at that moment...

It was like a dam broke loose—all the bitterness and resentment—and God set me free.

Indeed Jesus said that if we abide in His Word, we would know the truth and that the truth would set us free.(Jn 8:31, 32) But "abiding" (continuing) in His Word is not simply **hearing** His Word or even just **knowing** His Word, but most critically includes **obeying** His Word. When we know the truth about what God says about **forgiveness** and make the conscious choice (impelled and empowered by His Spirit and His amazing grace sufficient for our every weakness, 2Co 12:9-note, 2Co 12:10-note), we will be set free by the Son and when He frees us we are free indeed. Remember that this freedom is not the right to do as you would, but the power to obey as you ought. (Jn 8:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36)

Later Corrie said...

You never so touch the ocean of God's love as when you forgive and love your enemies.

ARE YOU STILL RINGING THE BELL? - Corrie ten Boom told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so couldn't sleep. Finally Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. "His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor," Corrie wrote, "to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks." "Up in the church tower," he said, nodding out the window, "is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down." "And so it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force -- which was my willingness in the matter -- had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts."

The Cycle Of Forgiveness - Perhaps you've seen the Vietnam War picture of Kim Phuc, a 9-year-old girl running naked in terror from her village, hoping to escape the horror of napalm that was burning her skin. The day was June 8, 1972. The pilot of the South Vietnamese plane was carrying out orders to bomb enemy troop positions in the village of Trang Bang.

Twenty-four years later, Kim Phuc was invited to Washington in 1996 to speak at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to place a wreath of flowers to honor the US troops who had given their lives during the war. Kim had said previously that if she could talk to the pilot who dropped the napalm on her, she would forgive him. The person who introduced Kim stated, "An innocent victim of war, she holds no anger at the United States. She feels no anger at the government of Vietnam. She feels no anger at the man who dropped the napalm on her."

How could she forgive those who were responsible for causing her so much pain, for scarring her for life? Kim had become a Christian. She understood forgiveness--how to give it and how to receive it (Col 3:13-note). She had been forgiven by Jesus for her own sin, and she was allowing the cycle of forgiveness to continue. How about us? — Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus came our debt to pay,
Saved our soul in grace one day;
So in love we all should live,
Ready always to forgive. --Bosch

**When it seems you can't forgive,
remember how much you've been forgiven.**

Are You Good At Forgiving? - Is it possible to measure a Christian's spiritual maturity? Certainly we cannot judge it by the length or even the content of one's prayers. Too much public praying is done for its effect on the "listeners" instead of the "Listener." (Amen!) Even the generosity of one's giving is not an infallible test of spirituality, for it too may be for personal recognition or easing of a guilty conscience.

**Perhaps the surest test
is the ability to forgive.**

Is it hard to forgive a person who has offended us? When we look to Jesus as our example, how are we doing? The more we become like Him, the easier it will be to forgive others. When we think of how much He has forgiven us, we should be willing in turn to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32-[note](#)).

British pastor and evangelist John Wesley (1703-1791) was traveling with General James Oglethorpe, who was angry with one of his subordinates. The man came to the general and humbly asked for forgiveness, but he was gruffly told,

"I never forgive!"

Wesley looked the general in the eye and said,

"Then I hope, sir, that you never sin."

Would you want God to forgive you in the same way you forgive others? Think about it.—M. R. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

I found a little remedy
To ease the life we live
And make each day a happier one:
It is the word "forgive"
—Anon.

**When it seems you can't forgive,
remember how much you've been forgiven.**

Illustration - The Forgiveness Flower - A girl was asked what forgiveness is. She gave the following beautiful answer: "It is the odor the flowers give off when they are trampled upon." For the merciful Christian (Jas 2:13, Mt 5:7-note), this odor reaches far, far away, even up to the judgment seat of Christ (2Cor 5:10) so that the Christian need not shrink back when he gets there. One day when Stan Mooneyham was walking along a trail in East Africa with some friends, he became aware of a delightful odor that filled the air. He looked up in the trees and around at the bushes in an effort to discover where it was coming from. Then his friends told him to look down at the small blue flower growing along the path. Each time they crushed the tiny blossoms under their feet, more of its sweet perfume was released into the air. Then his friends said, "We call it the forgiveness flower." This forgiveness flower does not wait until we ask forgiveness for crushing it. It does not release its fragrance in measured doses or hold us to a reciprocal arrangement. It does not ask for an apology; it merely lives up to its name and forgives-freely, fully, richly. What a touching example of outrageous forgiveness!

**From [Sermon Illustrations](#)
Forgiveness**

Not long before she died in 1988, in a moment of surprising candor in television, Marghanita Laski, one of our best-known secular humanists and novelists, said, "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."

John Stott in *The Contemporary Christian*.

In "The Christian Leader," Don Ratzlaff retells a story Vernon Grounds came across in Ernest Gordon's *Miracle on the River Kwai*.

The Scottish soldiers, forced by their Japanese captors to labor on a jungle railroad, had degenerated to barbarous behavior, but one afternoon something happened. A shovel was missing. The officer in charge became enraged. He demanded that the missing shovel be produced, or else. When nobody in the squadron budged, the officer got his gun and threatened to kill them all on the spot . . . It was obvious the officer meant what he had said. Then, finally, one man stepped forward. The officer put away his gun, picked up a shovel, and beat the man to death. When it was over, the survivors picked up the bloody corpse and carried it with them to the second tool check. This time, no shovel was missing. Indeed, there had been a miscount at the first check point. The word spread like wildfire through the whole camp. An innocent man had been willing to die to save the others! . . . The incident had a profound effect. . . The men began to treat each other like brothers. When the victorious Allies swept in, the survivors, human skeletons, lined up in front of their captors (and instead of attacking their captors) insisted: "No more hatred. No more killing. Now what we need is forgiveness." Sacrificial love has transforming power.

Don Ratzlaff, "The Christian Leader".

In his book, *Lee: The Last Years*, Charles Bracelen Flood reports that after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited a Kentucky lady who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Federal artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North or at least sympathizing with her loss. After a brief silence, Lee said, "Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it." It is better to forgive the injustices of the past than to allow them to remain, let bitterness take root and poison the rest of our life.

Michael Williams.

When the first missionaries came to Alberta, Canada, they were savagely opposed by a young chief of the Cree Indians named Maskepetoon. But he responded to the gospel and accepted Christ. Shortly afterward, a member of the Blackfoot tribe killed his father. Maskepetoon rode into the village where the murderer lived and demanded that he be brought before him. Confronting the guilty man, he said, "You have killed my father, so now you must be my father. You shall ride my best horse and wear my best clothes." In utter amazement and remorse his enemy exclaimed, "My son, now you have killed me!" He meant, of course, that the hate in his own heart had been completely erased by the forgiveness and kindness of the Indian chief.

Today in the Word, November 10, 1993.

In May 1924, a shocked nation learned two young men from Chicago, Richard Leopold and Nathan Loeb, had killed 14-year-old Bobbie Franks. What made the crime so shocking, and made Leopold and Loeb household names, was the reason for the killing. The two became obsessed with the idea of committing the "perfect murder," and simply picked young Franks as their victim. They were sentenced to life imprisonment, but Leopold was killed in a prison brawl in 1936. Claiming he wanted "a chance to find redemption for myself and to help others," Nathan Loeb became a hospital technician at his parole in 1958. He died in 1971.

Today in the Word, October 3, 1992.

A childhood accident caused poet Elizabeth Barrett to lead a life of semi-invalidism before she married Robert Browning in 1846. There's more to the story. In her youth, Elizabeth had been watched over by her tyrannical father. When she and Robert were married, their wedding was held in secret because of her father's disapproval. After the wedding the Brownings sailed for Italy, where they lived for the rest of their lives. But even though her parents had disowned her, Elizabeth never gave up on the relationship. Almost weekly she wrote them letters. Not once did they reply. After 10 years, she received a large box in the mail. Inside, Elizabeth found all of her letters; not one had been opened! Today those letters are among the most beautiful in classical English literature. Had her parents only read a few of them, their relationship with Elizabeth might have been restored.

Daily Walk, May 30, 1992.

In the 14th century, Robert Bruce of Scotland was leading his men in a battle to gain independence from England. Near the end of the conflict, the English wanted to capture Bruce to keep him from the Scottish crown. So they put his own bloodhounds on his trail. When the bloodhounds got close, Bruce could hear their baying. His attendant said, "We are done for. They are on your trail, and they will reveal your hiding place." Bruce replied, "It's all right." Then he headed for a stream that flowed through the forest. He plunged in and waded upstream a short distance. When he came out on the other bank, he was in the depths of the forest. Within minutes, the hounds, tracing their master's steps, came to the bank. They went no farther. The English soldiers urged them on, but the trail was broken. The stream had carried the scent away. A short time later, the crown of Scotland rested on the head of Robert Bruce. The memory of our sins, prodded on by Satan, can be like those baying dogs--but a stream flows, red with the blood of God's own Son. By grace through faith we are safe. No sin-hound can touch us. The trail is broken by the precious blood of Christ. "The

purpose of the cross," someone observed, "is to repair the irreparable."

E. Lutzer, *Putting Your Past Behind You, Here's Life*, 1990, p.42.

There's a Spanish story of a father and son who had become estranged. The son ran away, and the father set off to find him. He searched for months to no avail. Finally, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in a Madrid newspaper. The ad read: Dear Paco, meet me in front of this newspaper office at noon on Saturday. All is forgiven. I love you. Your Father. On Saturday 800 Pacos showed up, looking for forgiveness and love from their fathers.

Bits & Pieces, October 15, 1992, pp. 13.

Chuck Swindoll reports that a seminary student in Chicago faced a forgiveness test. Although he preferred to work in some kind of ministry, the only job he could find was driving a bus on Chicago's south side. One day a gang of tough teens got on board and refused to pay the fare. After a few days of this, the seminarian spotted a policeman on the corner, stopped the bus, and reported them. The officer made them pay, but then he got off. When the bus rounded a corner, the gang robbed the seminarian and beat him severely. He pressed charges and the gang was rounded up. They were found guilty. But as soon as the jail sentence was given, the young Christian saw their spiritual need and felt pity for them. So he asked the judge if he could serve their sentences for them. The gang members and the judge were dumbfounded. "It's because I forgive you," he explained. His request was denied, but he visited the young men in jail and led several of them to faith in Christ.

Chuck Swindoll.

"The man I ate dinner with tonight killed my brother." The words, spoken by a stylish woman at a PF banquet in Seattle, amazed me. She told how John H. had murdered her brother during a robbery, served 18 years at Walla Walla, then settled into life on a dairy farm, where she had met him in 1983, 20 years after his crime. Compelled by Christ's command to forgive, Ruth Youngsman had gone to her enemy and pronounced forgiveness. Then she had taken him to her father's deathbed, prompting reconciliation.

Some wouldn't call this a success story: John didn't dedicate his life to Christ. But at that PF banquet last fall, his voice cracked as he said, "Christians are the only people I know that you can kill their son, and they'll make you a part of their family. I don't know the Man Upstairs, but He sure is hounding me."

John's story is unfinished; he hasn't yet accepted Christ. But just as Christ died for us regardless of our actions or acceptance, so Ruth forgave him without qualification. Even more so, she became his friend.

Albert H. Quie, President of Prison Fellowship Ministries, *Jubilee*, p. 5.

Corrie ten Boom told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so couldn't sleep. Finally Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. "His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor," Corrie wrote, "to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks." "Up in the church tower," he said, nodding out the window, "is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down." "And so it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force -- which was my willingness in the matter -- had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts."

Corrie ten Boom.

A couple married for 15 years began having more than usual disagreements. They wanted to make their marriage work and agreed on an idea the wife had. For one month they planned to drop a slip in a "Fault" box. The boxes would provide a place to let the other know about daily irritations. The wife was diligent in her efforts and approach: "leaving the jelly top off the jar," "wet towels on the shower floor," "dirty socks not in hamper," on and on until the end of the month. After dinner, at the end of the month, they exchanged boxes. The husband reflected on what he had done wrong. Then the wife opened her box and began reading. They were all the same, the message on each slip was, "I love you!"

Unknown.

Marie de Medicis, the Italian-born wife of King Henri IV of France, became the regent for their son Louis after her husband's death in 1610. In later years her relationship with Louis soured and they lived in a state of ongoing hostility. Marie also felt a deep sense of betrayal when Cardinal Richelieu, whom she had helped in his rise to political power, deserted her and went over to her son's side. While on her deathbed Marie was visited by Fabio Chigi, who was papal nuncio of France. Marie vowed to forgive all of her enemies, including Cardinal Richelieu. "Madam," asked Chigi, "as a mark of reconciliation, will you send him the bracelet you wear on your arm?" "No," she replied firmly, "that would be too much."

True forgiveness is hard to extend because it demands that people let go of something they value -- not a piece of jewelry, but pride, perhaps, as sense of justice, or desire for revenge.

Daily Walk, May 27, 1992.

Rabbi David A. Nelson likes to tell the story of two brothers who went to their rabbi to settle a longstanding feud. The rabbi got the two to reconcile their differences and shake hands. As they were about to leave, he asked each one to make a wish for the other in honor of the Jewish New Year. The first brother turned to the other and said, "I wish you what you wish me." At that, the second brother threw up his hands and said, "See, Rabbi, he's starting up again!"

Rabbi David A. Nelson.

This headline appeared in the Grand Rapids Press: "Convict Tells of a Torture that Time Can't Change." The article described a newspaper reporter's interview with a man who had been convicted of killing his wife. Here's how the writer described the scene: "He leans forward from his chair. For a moment he says nothing. Finally he comments, matter-of-factly, 'I'll never be the same. I have no illusions about that. I still have to live with it.'" Since he was being considered for parole, the prisoner was asked by the reporter if he deserved to be let out. He responded by saying, "Out? I lost a wife, and I can't replace her. It'll always be on my mind, because no matter what, I still bear the final responsibility. There's no amount of time I could do that would change anything. I could do 100 years or 1,000 years; how do you set a number for something like that?"

Grand Rapids Press.

When Narvaez, the Spanish patriot, lay dying, his father-confessor asked him whether he had forgiven all his enemies. Narvaez looked astonished and said, "Father, I have no enemies, I have shot them all."

Unknown.

Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS), the flying department of Wycliffe Bible Translators--had flown thousands of hours over a 25 year span without one fatal accident before April 7, 1972. On that day, a Piper Aztec lost its right engine and crashed in Papua New Guinea, killing all seven persons aboard. The Aztec had just rolled out of the Wycliffe maintenance hangar the day before following a 100 hour inspection. The chief mechanic was stunned when he heard the news of the crash. Reviewing in his mind each step he had performed in inspecting that right engine, he suddenly recoiled in horror. He remembered that he had been interrupted while tightening a fuel line and had never returned to finish the job! That faulty connection had allowed raw fuel to spray out and catch fire while the Aztec was in flight. The mechanic's guilt at being responsible for the deaths of his companions crushed him. For days he did not know what to do. The other mechanics tried to help him, as did his own family. But when the family of Doug Hunt, the pilot who was killed in the accident, was preparing to return to their home in New Zealand, the mechanic knew he had to see them, talk with them and beg their forgiveness. He could barely get out the words as he sobbed in their presence. "That hand there," he said, looking at his right hand, "took Doug's life." Glennis Hunt, Doug's widow, embraced him. "Glennis sat by me and held the hand that took her husband's life," he later wrote, "and another JAARS pilot sat on my other side with a demonstration of love, comfort, and forgiveness. That was the most significant first step in the healing process."

Max Lucado, *God Came Near*, Multnomah Press, 1987, p. 101.

In *A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World*, Ron Lee Davis retells the true story of a priest in the Philippines, a much-loved man of God who carried the burden of a secret sin he had committed many years before. He had repented but still had no peace, no sense of God's forgiveness.

In his parish was a woman who deeply loved God and who claimed to have visions in which she spoke with Christ and he with her. The priest, however, was skeptical. To test her he said, "The next time you speak with Christ, I want you to ask him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary." The woman agreed. A few days later the priest asked, "Well, did Christ visit you in your dreams?"

"Yes, he did," she replied.

"And did you ask him what sin I committed in seminary?"

"Yes."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He said, 'I don't remember'"

What God forgives, He forgets.

David H. Bolton.

Karl Menninger, the famed psychiatrist, once said that if he could convince the patients in psychiatric hospitals that their sins were forgiven, 75 percent of them could walk out the next day!

Today in the Word, March 1989, p. 8.

On the Lord's day a group of missionaries and believers in New Guinea were gathered together to observe the Lord's Supper. After one young man sat down, a missionary recognized that a sudden tremor had passed through the young man's body that indicated he was under a great nervous strain. Then in a moment all was quiet again. The missionary whispered, "What was it that troubled you?" "Ah," he said, "But the man who just came in killed and ate the body of my father. And now he has come in to remember the Lord with us. At first I didn't know whether I could endure it. But it is all right now. He is washed in the same precious blood." And so together they had Communion. It is a marvelous thing, the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Does the world know anything of this?

H.A. Ironside.

In a dream, Martin Luther found himself being attacked by Satan. The devil unrolled a long scroll containing a list of Luther's sins, and held it before him. On reaching the end of the scroll Luther asked the devil, "Is that all?" "No," came the reply, and a second scroll was thrust in front of him. Then, after a second came a third. But now the devil had no more. "You've forgotten something," Luther exclaimed triumphantly. "Quickly write on each of them, 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sins.'"

K. Koch, Occult Bondage and Deliverance, p. 10.

Forgiveness is a funny thing; it warms the heart and cools the sting.

William A. Ward.

Thomas A. Edison was working on a crazy contraption called a "light bulb" and it took a whole team of men 24 straight hours to put just one together. The story goes that when Edison was finished with one light bulb, he gave it to a young boy helper, who nervously carried it up the stairs. Step by step he cautiously watched his hands, obviously frightened of dropping such a priceless piece of work. You've probably guessed what happened by now; the poor young fellow dropped the bulb at the top of the stairs. It took the entire team of men twenty-four more hours to make another bulb. Finally, tired and ready for a break, Edison was ready to have his bulb carried up the stairs. He gave it to the same young boy who dropped the first one. That's true forgiveness.

James Newton, Uncommon Friends.

Button in a tourist shop: to err is human, to forgive is out of the question.

Opaquing fluid is the magical liquid that covers over your errors, your typos, your unfortunate slip-ups. You brush on the liquid and start all over again--hopefully this time with no unfortunate slip-ups. Opaquing fluid is forgiveness, an obliteration of a goof with no telltale traces that the goof happened at all.

John V Chervokas, How to Keep God Alive from 9 to 5.

The art of forgiving is a spiritual grace every Christian should develop. Because this is so difficult to put into practice, he offers the following suggestions:

- 1) Begin by assuring yourself that compared to Christ's suffering you haven't been seriously wronged at all.
- 2) Recall the many kind deeds that have been shown to you, perhaps even by the person who has harmed you.
- 3) List the benefits you have received from the Lord.

- 4) Thank Him for blessing you with His love and forgiveness each day.
- 5) Make an honest effort to pray for the one who has injured you.
- 6) Go even further by looking for an opportunity to help him.
- 7) If the offense is especially hard to forget, try to erase the memory by thinking gracious and generous thoughts.
- 8) Finally, before you fall asleep at night, repeat slowly and thoughtfully that phrase from the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Roy L. Smith.

Some people try to punish themselves for their sins. They do not stand on the promises of forgiveness and Christ' propitiation. "Many years ago, a father and his daughter were walking through the grass on the Canadian prairie. In the distance, they saw a prairie fire, and they realized that it would soon engulf them. The father knew there was only one way of escape: They would quickly begin a fire right where they were and burn a large patch of grass. When the huge fire drew near, they then would stand on the section that had already burned. When the flames did approach them, the girl was terrified but her father assured her, 'The flames can't get to us. We are standing where the fire has already been.'"

Erwin Lutzer, Failure, The Back Door to Success.

Richard Hoefler's book Will Daylight Come? includes A homey illustration of how sin enslaves and forgiveness frees. A little boy visiting his grandparents as given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target. As he came back to Grandma's back yard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead.

The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the dead duck in the woodpile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing. After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you, Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck! So Johnny did the dishes.

Later Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing. After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck. "I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you. I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you.

Steven Cole.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Japan invaded, conquered, and occupied Korea. Of all of their oppressors, Japan was the most ruthless. They overwhelmed the Koreans with a brutality that would sicken the strongest of stomachs. Their crimes against women and children were inhuman. Many Koreans live today with the physical and emotional scars from the Japanese occupation.

One group singled out for concentrated oppression was the Christians. When the Japanese army overpowered Korea one of the first things they did was board up the evangelical churches and eject most foreign missionaries. It has always fascinated me how people fail to learn from history. Conquering nations have consistently felt that shutting up churches would shut down Christianity. It didn't work in Rome when the church was established, and it hasn't worked since. Yet somehow the Japanese thought they would have a different success record. The conquerors started by refusing to allow churches to meet and jailing many of the key Christian spokesmen. The oppression intensified as the Japanese military increased its profile in the South Pacific. The "Land of the Rising Sun" spread its influence through a reign of savage brutality. Anguish filled the hearts of the oppressed -- and kindled hatred deep in their souls. One pastor persistently entreated his local Japanese police chief for permission to meet for services. His nagging was finally accommodated, and the police chief offered to unlock his church ... for one meeting.

It didn't take long for word to travel. Committed Christians starving for an opportunity for unhindered worship quickly made their plans. Long before dawn on that promised Sunday, Korean families throughout a wide area made their way to the church. They passed the staring eyes of their Japanese captors, but nothing was going to steal their joy. As they closed the doors behind them they shut out the cares of oppression and shut in a burning spirit anxious to glorify their Lord.

The Korean church has always had a reputation as a singing church. Their voices of praise could not be concealed inside the little wooden frame sanctuary. Song after song rang through the open windows into the bright Sunday morning. For a handful of peasants listening nearby, the last two songs this congregation sang seemed suspended in time. It was during a stanza of "Nearer My God to Thee" that the Japanese police chief waiting outside gave the orders. The people toward the back of the church could hear them when they barricaded the doors, but no one realized that they had doused the church with kerosene until they smelled the smoke.

The dried wooden skin of the small church quickly ignited. Fumes filled the structure as tongues of flame began to lick the baseboard on the interior walls.

There was an immediate rush for the windows. But momentary hope recoiled in horror as the men climbing out the windows came crashing back in -- their bodies ripped by a hail of bullets. The good pastor knew it was the end. With a calm that comes from confidence, he led his congregation in a hymn whose words served as a fitting farewell to earth and a loving salutation to heaven. The first few words were all the prompting the terrified worshipers needed. With smoke burning their eyes, they instantly joined as one to sing their hope and leave their legacy. Their song became a serenade to the horrified and helpless witnesses outside. Their words also tugged at the hearts of the cruel men who oversaw this flaming execution of the innocent.

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
and did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
for such a worm as I?

Just before the roof collapsed they sang the last verse, their words an eternal testimony to their faith.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
the debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away
'Tis all that I can do!

At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away --
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day.

The strains of music and wails of children were lost in a roar of flames. The elements that once formed bone and flesh mixed with the smoke and dissipated into the air. The bodies that once housed life fused with the charred rubble of a building that once housed a church. But the souls who left singing finished their chorus in the throne room of God. Clearing the incinerated remains was the easy part. Erasing the hate would take decades. For some of the relatives of the victims, this carnage was too much. Evil had stooped to a new low, and there seemed to be no way to curb their bitter loathing of the Japanese.

In the decades that followed, that bitterness was passed on to a new generation. The Japanese, although conquered, remained a hated enemy. The monument the Koreans built at the location of the fire not only memorialized the people who died, but stood as a mute reminder of their pain.

Inner rest? How could rest coexist with a bitterness deep as marrow in the bones? Suffering, of course, is a part of life. People hurt people. Almost all of us have experienced it at some time. Maybe you felt it when you came home to find that your spouse had abandoned you, or when your integrity was destroyed by a series of well-timed lies, or when your company was bled dry by a partner. It kills you inside. Bitterness clamps down on your soul like iron shackles.

The Korean people who found it too hard to forgive could not enjoy the "peace that passes all understanding." Hatred choked their joy.

It wasn't until 1972 that any hope came. A group of Japanese pastors traveling through Korea came upon the memorial. When they read the details of the tragedy and the names of the spiritual brothers and sisters who had perished, they were overcome with shame. Their country had sinned, and even though none of them were personally involved (some were not even born at the time of the tragedy), they still felt a national guilt that could not be excused.

They returned to Japan committed to right a wrong. There was an immediate outpouring of love from their fellow believers. They raised ten million yen (\$25,000). The money was transferred through proper channels and a beautiful white church building was erected on the site of the tragedy. When the dedication service for the new building was held, a delegation from Japan joined the relatives and special guests. Although their generosity was acknowledged and their attempts at making peace appreciated, the memories were still there. Hatred preserves pain. It keeps the wounds open and the hurts fresh. The Koreans' bitterness had festered for decades. Christian brothers or not, these Japanese were descendants of a ruthless enemy.

The speeches were made, the details of the tragedy recalled, and the names of the dead honored. It was time to bring the service to a close. Someone in charge of the agenda thought it would be appropriate to conclude with the same two songs that were sung the day the church was burned. The song leader began the words to "Nearer My God to Thee." But something remarkable happened as

the voices mingled on the familiar melody. As the memories of the past mixed with the truth of the song, resistance started to melt. The inspiration that gave hope to a doomed collection of churchgoers in a past generation gave hope once more. The song leader closed the service with the hymn "At the Cross."

The normally stoic Japanese could not contain themselves. The tears that began to fill their eyes during the song suddenly gushed from deep inside. They turned to their Korean spiritual relatives and begged them to forgive. The guarded, calloused hearts of the Koreans were not quick to surrender. But the love of the Japanese believers -- unintimidated by decades of hatred -- tore at the Koreans' emotions.

At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away ...

One Korean turned toward a Japanese brother. Then another. And then the floodgates holding back a wave of emotion let go. The Koreans met their new Japanese friends in the middle. They clung to each other and wept. Japanese tears of repentance and Korean tears of forgiveness intermingled to bathe the site of an old nightmare.

Heaven had sent the gift of reconciliation to a little white church in Korea.

Tim Kimmel, *Little House on the Freeway*, pp. 56-61.

When we are wronged in some way, our natural inclination is to fight back, to get even. Needless to say, this reaction, though thoroughly human, is almost always in error. "Forgiveness," said Epictetus, "is better than revenge, for forgiveness is the sign of a gentle nature, but revenge is the sign of a savage nature."

A dramatic example is the experience of a Hungarian refugee -- to protect his privacy we'll call him Joseph Kudar. Kudar was a successful young lawyer in Hungary before the uprisings in that country in 1956. A strong believer in freedom for his country, he fought Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest with his friends. When the uprising failed, he was forced to flee the country.

When Kudar arrived in the U.S. he had no money, no job, no friends. He was, however, well educated; he spoke and wrote several languages, including English. For several months he tried to get a job in a law office, but because of his lack of familiarity with American law, he received only polite refusals.

Finally, it occurred to him that with his knowledge of language he might be able to get a job with an import-export company. He selected one such company and wrote a letter to the owner. Two weeks later he received an answer, but was hardly prepared for the vindictiveness of the man's reply. Among other things, it said that even if they did need someone, they wouldn't hire him because he couldn't even write good English. Crushed, Kudar's hurt quickly turned to anger. What right did this rude, arrogant man have to tell him he couldn't write the language! The man was obviously crude and uneducated -- his letter was chock-full of grammatical errors!

Kudar sat down and, in the white heat of anger, wrote a scathing reply, calculated to rip the man to shreds. When he'd finished, however, as he was reading it over, his anger began to drain away. Then he remembered the biblical admonition, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." No, he wouldn't mail the letter. Maybe the man was right. English was not his native tongue. Maybe he did need further study in it. Possibly this man had done him a favor by making him realize he did need to work harder on perfecting his English.

Kudar tore up the letter and wrote another. This time he apologized for the previous letter, explained his situation, and thanked the man for pointing out his need for further study. Two days later he received a phone call inviting him to New York for an interview. A week later he went to work for them as a correspondent. Later, Joseph Kudar became vice president and executive officer of the company, destined to succeed the man he had hated and sought revenge against for a fleeting moment -- and then resisted.

Bits & Pieces, March 31, 1994, pp. 12-15.

The hospital was unusually quiet that bleak January evening, quiet and still like the air before a storm. I stood in the nurses' station on the 7th floor and glanced at the clock. It was 9 p.m. I threw a stethoscope around my neck and headed for room 712, last room on the hall. Room 712 had a new patient. Mr. Williams. A man all alone. A man strangely silent about his family.

As I entered the room, Mr. Williams looked up eagerly, but dropped his eyes when he saw it was only me, his nurse. I pressed the stethoscope over his chest and listened. Strong, slow, even beating. Just what I wanted to hear. There seemed little indication he had suffered a slight heart attack a few hours earlier.

He looked up from his starched white bed. "Nurse, would you--" He hesitated, tears filling his eyes. Once before he had started to

ask me a question, but had changed his mind. I touched his hand, waiting. He brushed away a tear. "Would you call my daughter? Tell her I've had a heart attack. A slight one. You see, I live alone and she is the only family I have." His respiration suddenly speeded up. I turned his nasal oxygen up to eight liters a minute. "Of course I'll call her." I said, studying his face. He gripped the sheets and pulled himself forward, his face tense with urgency. "Will you call her right away--as soon as you can?" He was breathing fast--too fast. "I'll call her the very first thing," I said, patting his shoulder. I flipped off the light. He closed his eyes, such young blue eyes in his 50-year-old face. Room 712 was dark except for a faint night light under the sink. Oxygen gurgled in the green tubes above his bed. Reluctant to leave, I moved through the shadowy silence to the window. The panes were cold. Below a foggy mist curled through the hospital parking lot. "Nurse," he called, "could you get me a pencil and paper?" I dug a scrap of yellow paper and a pen from my pocket and set it on the bedside table.

I walked back to the nurses' station and sat in a squeaky swivel chair by the phone. Mr. Williams daughter was listed on his chart as the next of kin. I got her number from information and dialed. Her soft voice answered. "Janie, this is Sue Kidd, a registered nurse at the hospital. I'm calling about your father. He was admitted tonight with a slight heart attack and--" "No!" she screamed into the phone, startling me. "He's not dying is he?" "His condition is stable at the moment," I said, trying hard to sound convincing. Silence. I bit my lip. "You must not let him die!" she said. Her voice was so utterly compelling that my hand trembled on the phone. "He is getting the very best care." "But you don't understand," she pleaded. "My daddy and I haven't spoken in almost a year. We had a terrible argument on my 21st birthday, over my boyfriend. I ran out of the house. I--I haven't been back. All these months I've wanted to go to him for forgiveness. The last thing I said to him was, 'I hate you.'"

Her voice cracked and I heard her heave great agonizing sobs. I sat, listening, tears burning my eyes. A father and a daughter, so lost to each other. Then I was thinking of my father, many miles away. It has been so long since I had said, "I love you."

As Janie struggled to control her tears, I breathed a prayer. "Please, God, let this daughter find forgiveness." "I'm coming. Now! I'll be there in 30 minutes," she said. Click. She had hung up. I tried to busy myself with a stack of charts on the desk. I couldn't concentrate. Room 712. I knew I had to get back to 712. I hurried down the hall nearly in a run. I opened the door.

Mr. Williams lay unmoving. I reached for his pulse. There was none.

"Code 99. Room 712. Code 99. Stat." The alert was shooting through the hospital within seconds after I called the switchboard through the intercom by the bed. Mr. Williams had had a cardiac arrest. With lightning speed I leveled the bed and bent over his mouth, breathing air into his lungs. I positioned my hands over his chest and compressed. One, two, three. I tried to count. At 15 I moved back to his mouth and breathed as deeply as I could. Where was help? Again I compressed and breathed. Compressed and breathed. He could not die! "O God," I prayed. "His daughter is coming. Don't let it end this way." The door burst open. Doctors and nurses poured into the room pushing emergency equipment. A doctor took over the manual compression of the heart. A tube was inserted through his mouth as an airway. Nurses plunged syringes of medicine into the intravenous tubing. I connected the heart monitor. Nothing. Not a beat. My own heart pounded. "God, don't let it end like this. Not in bitterness and hatred. His daughter is coming. Let her find peace." "Stand back," cried a doctor. I handed him the paddles for the electrical shock to the heart. He placed them on Mr. William's chest. Over and over we tried. But nothing. No response. Mr. Williams was dead. A nurse unplugged the oxygen. The gurgling stopped. One by one they left, grim and silent. How could this happen? How? I stood by his bed, stunned. A cold wind rattled the window, pelting the panes with snow. Outside--everywhere--seemed a bed of blackness, cold and dark. How could I face his daughter? When I left the room, I saw her against the wall by a water fountain. A doctor who had been inside 712 only moments before, stood at her side, talking to her, gripping her elbow. Then he moved on, leaving her slumped against the wall. Such pathetic hurt reflected from her face. Such wounded eyes. She knew. The doctor had told her that her father was gone.

I took her hand and led her into the nurses' lounge. We sat on little green stools, neither saying a word. She stared straight ahead at a pharmaceutical calendar, glass-faced, almost breakable-looking. "Janie, I'm so sorry," I said. It was pitifully inadequate. "I never hated him, you know. I loved him," she said. God, please help her, I thought.

Suddenly she whirled toward me. "I want to see him." My first thought was, Why put yourself through more pain? Seeing him will only make it worse. But I got up and wrapped my arm around her. We walked slowly down the corridor to 712. Outside the door I squeezed her hand, wishing she would change her mind about going inside. She pushed open the door. We moved to the bed, huddled together, taking small steps in unison. Janie leaned over the bed and buried her face in the sheets. I tried not to look at her, at this sad, sad good-bye. I backed against the bedside table. My hand fell upon a scrap of yellow paper. I picked it up. It read:

My dearest Janie, I forgive you. I pray you will also forgive me. I know that you love me. I love you too. Daddy

The note was shaking in my hands as I thrust it toward Janie. She read it once. Then twice. Her tormented face grew radiant. Peace began to glisten in her eyes. She hugged the scrap of paper to her breast. "Thank You, God," I whispered, looking up at the window. A few crystal stars blinked through the blackness. A snowflake hit the window and melted away, gone forever. Life seemed as fragile as a snowflake on the window. But thank You, God, that relationships, sometimes fragile as snowflakes, can be mended together

again--but there is not a moment to spare.

I crept from the room and hurried to the phone. I would call my father. I would say, "I love you."

Forgiveness is hard. Especially in a marriage tense with past troubles, tormented by fears of rejection and humiliation, and torn by suspicion and distrust. Forgiveness hurts. Especially when it must be extended to a husband or wife who doesn't deserve it, who hasn't earned it, who may misuse it. It hurts to forgive. Forgiveness costs. Especially in marriage when it means accepting instead of demanding repayment for the wrong done; where it means releasing the other instead of exacting revenge; where it means reaching out in love instead of relinquishing resentments. It costs to forgive...Stated psychologically, forgiveness takes place when the person who was offended and justly angered by the offender bears his own anger, and lets the other go free. Anger cannot be ignored, denied, or forgotten without doing treachery in hidden ways. It must be dealt with responsibly, honestly, in a decisive act of the will. Either the injured and justifiably angry person vents his feelings on the other in retaliation (That is an attempt at achieving justice as accuser, judge, and hangman all in one) or the injured person may choose to accept his angry feelings, bear the burden of them personally, find release through confession and prayer and set the other person free. This is forgiveness. David Augsburger, *Cherishable: Love and Marriage*, pp. 141-144.

There is one eternal principle which will be valid as long as the world lasts. The principle is -- Forgiveness is a costly thing. Human forgiveness is costly. A son or a daughter may go wrong; a father or a mother may forgive; but that forgiveness has brought tears ... There was a price of a broken heart to pay. Divine forgiveness is costly. God is love, but God is holiness. God, least of all, can break the great moral laws on which the universe is built. Sin must have its punishment or the very structure of life disintegrates. And God alone can pay the terrible price that is necessary before men can be forgiven. Forgiveness is never a case of saying: "It's all right; it doesn't matter." Forgiveness is the most costly thing in the world. William Barclay in *The Letter to Hebrews*.

We trample the blood of the Son of God if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only explanation for the forgiveness of God and for the unfathomable depth of His forgetting is the death of Jesus Christ. Our repentance is merely the outcome of our personal realization of the atonement which He has worked out for us. It does not matter who or what we are; there is absolute reinstatement into God by the death of Jesus Christ and by no other way, not because Jesus Christ pleads, but because He died. It is not earned, but accepted. All the pleading which deliberately refuses to recognize the Cross is of no avail; it is battering at a door other than the one that Jesus has opened. Our Lord does not pretend we are all right when we are all wrong. The atonement is a propitiation whereby God, through the death of Jesus, makes an unholy man holy. Oswald Chambers.

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior. Unknown.

Prayer

To forgive like thee, blessed Son of God! I take this as the law of my life. Thou who hast given the command, givest also the power. Thou who hadst love enough to forgive me, wilt also fill me with love and teach me to forgive others. Thou who didst give me the first blessings, in the joy of having my sins forgiven, wilt surely give me the second blessing, and deeper joy of forgiving others as thou hast forgiven me. Oh, fill me with the faith in the power of thy love in me, to make me like Thyself, to enable me to forgive the seventy times seven, and so to love and bless all around me.

O My Jesus, Thy example is my law: I must be like Thee. And Thy example is Mt gospel too. I can be as thou art. Thou art at once my law and my life. What Thou demandest of me by Thy example, Thou workest in me by Thy life. I shall forgive like Thee.

Lord, only lead me deeper into my dependence on Thee, into all sufficiency of Thy grace and the blessed keeping which comes from Thy indwelling. Then shall I believe and prove the all-prevailing power of love. I shall forgive even as Christ has forgiven me. Amen. Andrew Murray.

O Lord, remember not only the men and woman of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not remember all of the suffering they have inflicted upon us: Instead remember the fruits we have borne because of this suffering, our fellowship, our loyalty to one another, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart that has grown from this trouble. When our persecutors come to be judged by you, let all of these fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

Found in the clothing of a dead child at Ravensbruck concentration camp.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin? and made my sin their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
Swear by Thy self, that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou hast done,
I fear no more.

John Donne, 1623.

Humor A Sunday School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, "Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?" There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. "Sin," he said. Bits & Pieces, May, 1991.

Related Resources

Forgive/Forgiveness

- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15.
- Multiple illustrations and quotes related to forgiveness/unforgiveness
- Study the main NT words for forgive/forgiveness:
 - Forgiveness ([859](#)) aphesis
 - Forgive (send away from, cancel the debt, release, let go) ([863](#)) aphiemai
 - Forgive (grant, freely give, bestow) ([5483](#)) charizomai
 - [Forgiveness of Injuries \(Mt 18:21-22\) by John Angell James](#)
 - [Forgiveness of Sins by Henry Law - 17 Chapter Treatise!](#)
 - [Father, Forgive Them by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
 - [Forgiving the Unforgivable by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
 - [Forgiving the Unforgivable article by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)

Excellent 5 Part Sermon Series on Forgiveness by Dr Ray Pritchard:

1. [Forgiveness Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved](#)
2. [Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer](#)
3. [Judge Not!](#)
4. [Is Total Forgiveness Realistic](#)
5. [The Final Step-Blessing Your Enemies](#)