

Ephesians 4:31,32

AND FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

- I. Necessary putting off.
 - A. The virtuous activities require that we put off the vices of bad attitudes.
 - B. “Bitterness” is a root producing bitter gall, something inedible or poisonous.
 - 1. It is persistent sourness in a soul, so cannot get along with another.
 - 2. Bitterness often results from dwelling on wrongs/hurts done to us, both real and perceived.
 - C. “Wrath and anger” flow out of bitterness.
 - 1. “Wrath” is strong, passionate heat (temper, angry outburst).
 - 2. “Anger” is a settled indignation, a disposition, stored up.
 - D. “Clamor and evil speaking” and “malice” flow from, are the expressions of wrath and anger.
 - E. “All” these evils are to be put away as loathsome, for their presence grieves the Holy Spirit of God (30).
- II. We are to put on the contrasting, positive virtues.
 - A. The positive virtues are a reflection of the righteousness God gives along with the forgiveness of our sins.
 - 1. If we work only on getting rid of the negative, we still are not conformed to the image of God’s Son.
 - 2. “Become” (instead of “be”) in the sense of a process of cultivating because they do not happen automatically.
 - B. The root/base virtue is forgiving (and loving, 5:1).
 - 1. “Forgiving” is to be gracious, to give freely for a wrong done and not treat one according to their sin.
 - 2. To forgive is the promise to deal with them as they do not deserve, the promise not to think about the wrong done to us.
 - 3. Our forgiving is unconditional, and it includes our lovingly seeking their repentance.
 - C. Become “kind,” i.e., useful and pleasant, obliging and benevolent, over against harsh and bitter.
 - 1. The one who cultivates kindness desires to give, to help, to be valuable and benevolent to others.
 - 2. Charity is kind (I Cor. 13:4), looking for things to encourage and to praise and for ways to help.
 - D. Become “tender-hearted,” i.e., have bowels of compassion, be compassionate.
- III. The reason and the motive (the only one) for these positive virtues is God’s forgiving us for Christ’s sake.
 - A. The way God has forgiven us is “for Christ’s sake.”
 - 1. God’s forgiving has no basis in us, but only and completely in Christ.
 - 2. God unconditionally forgives us entirely of His own free grace, as a pure gift.
 - B. “Even as” means we are to reflect/imitate God’s attitude and action toward us.
 - 1. The only ones able to obey this command are those who know God’s rich mercy, great love, exceedingly rich grace (2:4,7).
 - 2. What God has done for me so freely, unconditionally and undeservedly I cannot refuse to another.