

The Value of Forbearance

Steve Durham—March 7, 2015

Good afternoon to everyone! We need to think about what God's love is and actually put it into practice. We need to ask God to teach us more and more in depth, what true 'agape' is, what love is. We say that and it just kind of rolls off and we don't really think about it.

Today I want to talk about another facet of God's love, so that we can understand it a little better. I mentioned that when I was a young man I was pretty tough and I was that way because I believe that my dad never said that he loved me. He was not very demonstrative at all; old school.

When God called me He put me into a family, first of all, with a very loving wife and a family that was very demonstrative: hugging, kissing, everybody was friends. They very much showed the love of God. So, I began to get the idea that there was another side to the love of God that meant that you hugged and said 'Hi' to people and really cared about them.

A couple of times in my life I've asked God specifically to help me understand the love of God. Every time I do something happens, I get a trial of some sort, but then at the end I think, okay, I understand that a little better.

Recently I had a situation that I want to talk about, not specifically, but about love. It seems like in the last two or three years I've had nothing but trouble with some customers—not all, but a few—that have really drawn my attention to having to learn *forbearance*.

We don't hear a lot about forbearance, but it's an integral part of God's love. Without forbearance you really can't have these other things. It's part of the glue that makes God's love work, it makes it flow in and out of us.

We all know that Christ was asked, Matthew 22:36: "Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?" And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'.... [all of your being, all of yourself] ... This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (vs 36-40). Everything hangs on these two commandments.

I want to talk about this attribute of forbearance, which is part of God's Holy righteous character, which we're to be developing. It is a fruit of the Spirit, part of His character, and is not used by

many of us very often. If we were, we would have fewer and fewer conflicts than we have. We're going to have them; Christ said that offences are going to occur.

If we started right now and forgot about the past and moved forward we would have offences and problems getting along with one another, it just happens. We're human and that happens, but we want to minimize that as we grow in love, to love our neighbor. It's a very important thing that Christ lays out for us; very important for spiritual growth.

Forbearance is available to us through the Holy Spirit. It's part of God's character, part of the fruits of the Spirit. As we follow its lead in our lives and allow forbearance to be part of our character, it's going to help us to love our brothers better, in and out of the Church of God, everywhere: the guy driving down the road that makes us upset. All the situations that we come into at work, in the grocery store, with our neighbor next door and you're upset with him—whatever the situation is.

I want to read to you a true story. I believe it will help us to see the value of forbearance in our lives and how we can implement it. It's a great timely and valuable lesson for us today, especially as we come to Passover and Unleavened Bread when we're supposed to be focusing on examining ourselves and how we deal with our neighbor. This is very valuable.

As we endeavor to grow in grace and knowledge and come to the fullness of the measure and stature of Jesus Christ, Who is our example, to have His mind (Philip. 2:5).

You may have heard this before, but it's a true story, and it's very poignant and helpful in helping us uncover what forbearance is. Actually, it's the lack of forbearance in this story that we're going to see. We're also going to see how we can use it.

The True Story of Arbutus and Sea Gull by Louise Dickinson Rich

My grandmother had an enemy named Mrs. Wilcox. Grandma and Mrs. Wilcox moved, as brides, into next-door houses on the main street of the tiny town in which they were to live out their lives. I don't know what started the war between them—and I don't think that by the time I came along, over thirty years later, they remembered themselves what started it.

This was no polite sparring match; this was total war. ...

Nothing in town escaped repercussion. The 300-year-old church, which had lived through the Revolution, the Civil War, and the Spanish War, almost went down when Grandma and Mrs. Wilcox fought the Battle of the Ladies' Aid. Grandma won that engagement, but it was a hollow victory. Mrs. Wilcox, since she couldn't be president, resigned [from the Aid] in a huff. What's the fun of running a thing if you can't force your enemy to eat crow? Mrs. Wilcox won the Battle of the Public Library, getting her niece, Gertrude, appointed librarian instead of Aunt Phyllis. The day Gertrude took over was the day Grandma stopped reading library books. They became 'filthy germy things' overnight. The Battle of the High School was a draw. The principal got a better job and left before Mrs. Wilcox succeeded in having him ousted or Grandma in having him given life tenure of office.

When as children we visited my grandmother, part of the fun was making faces at Mrs. Wilcox's grandchildren. One banner day we put a snake into the Wilcox rain barrel. My grandmother made token protests, but we sensed tacit sympathy.

Don't think for a minute that this was a one-sided campaign. Mrs. Wilcox had grandchildren, too. Grandma didn't get off scot free. Never a windy washday went by that the clothesline didn't mysteriously break, with the clothes falling in the dirt.

I don't know how Grandma could have borne her troubles so long if it hadn't been for the household page of her daily Boston newspaper. This household page was a wonderful institution. Besides the usual cooking hints and cleaning advice, it had a department composed of letters from readers to each other. The idea was that if you had a problem—or even only some steam to blow off—you wrote a letter to the paper, signing some fancy name like Arbutus. That was Grandma's pen name. Then some of the other ladies who had the same problem wrote back and told you what they had done about it, signing themselves One Who Knows or Xanthippe or whatever. Very often, the problem disposed of, you kept on for years writing to each other through the column of the paper, telling each other about your children and your canning and your new

dining-room suite. That's what happened to Grandma. She and a woman called Sea Gull corresponded for a quarter of a century. Sea Gull was Grandma's true friend.

We're going to come back to this, but we're going to go on with *forbearance*. True friends, through the column of bitter enemies, they were able to have true friends over here where they didn't talk, but when you met someone—neighbor—you were not able to have true friends; you were actually an enemy.

- Does that happen in our lives?
- Do we have people like that?

Hopefully we don't, but through our lives at some point we've had enemies, people we could not get along with. At other times maybe we would send them an e-mail and get to corresponding, as long as you don't have to deal with them face-to-face they become pretty good friends. I know all of us have something like that happen.

So, what was missing with Mrs. Wilcox and Grandma? It's a shame that the two neighbors had to go on for years as bitter enemies. They could have been close friends like the phantom penpal she had named Sea Gull. Remember, this is a true story.

With Passover approaching and Unleavened Bread, we are commanded, encouraged and admonished to examine ourselves and prepare. At the foot-washing we serve and give of ourselves to other people. But what was missing was *forbearance* between these two. If one of them had used *forbearance*—just one of them—they would have a completely different outcome. We're going to see how that works and how *forbearance* enhances and how it is part of the love of God, and how it helps us to love our neighbor. They would have gained as friends and enjoyed their friendship throughout their lives, instead of being bitter enemies.

I'm going to talk about *forbearance* and how it helps us to love our neighbor.

James 4 sort of sets the framework of *forbearance*, and it lays out some of *the elements of forbearance* that we're going to look at on the negative side and the positive side. It's a very place to start, James is very good, and we'll use this as a framework to study *forbearance*, and let God's Word teach us about *forbearance*!

James 4:1: "What is the cause of quarrels and fighting among you? Is it not mainly from **your own lusts that are warring within your members?**" Lusts, self-centeredness: that's where war and fighting comes from. The big **I**, the ego!

Verse 2: "You lust, and have not; you kill, and are jealous, and are not able to obtain; you fight

and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask.” You’re not asking properly. You’re not in the right attitude.

Verse 3: “*Then* you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives... [wrong attitude] ...that you may consume *it* on your own lusts. *You* adulterers and adulteresses, don’t you know that the friendship of the world is enmity *with* God? Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (vs 3-4).

Being friends with the world, the way of the world is the opposite, it’s the profane. The other side is the Holy, and being with God’s Holy Spirit, doing what He says, following and seeking Him, and growing in grace and knowledge. “...Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Verse 5: “Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy’?... [of course, it does] ...But He gives greater grace. This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud...’” (vs 5-6). How many times have we seen that? We see a proud, arrogant, egotistical, self-righteous individual and you know they’re headed for a fall. God’s going to *resist the proud!*

“...but He gives grace to *the* humble.’... [two opposite extremes] ...Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God... [seek God] ...and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners... [Psa. 51—cleanse my heart; give me a clean heart] ...and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!” (vs 6-8). You can’t do that! You can’t serve two masters!

Verse 9: “Be grieved and mourn and weep... [part of being meek] ...let your laughter be turned into grieving, and *your* joy into mourning.” In other words, be sober about following God and drawing close to God. Be sober about our calling.

Verse 10: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. Brethren, do not talk against one another...” (vs 10-11). Don’t gossip, malign, backbite, put another person down, don’t judge them. If you see someone and you make a judgment and you don’t even know about that person. How can you make a judgment about a person when you don’t know them?

Are you the *heart-knowing* God? *We’re not!* So, hold back on the judgment; don’t even go there. You can maybe make an evaluation, but don’t make a condemnation. Don’t condemn that person. You might evaluate the fact that they picked something up, but don’t add to that a condemnation.

Verse 11: “Brethren, do not talk against one

another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* Law, and is judging the Law. But if you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge.” Don’t do that.

In this are several attitudes: several things to stay away from and several things we want to put on. That’s part of *forbearance*.

What is forbearance? *We just frameworked it! Forbearance is a characteristic of God, a fruit of the Spirit.* It’s essential for loving our neighbor.

Psalm 86:15: “But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger [longsuffering/forbearance], and abounding in steadfast love... [and mercy] ...and Truth.” God’s throne is a throne of mercy and comfort (2-Cor. 1:3).

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love...” God *is* love (1-John 4:8, 16); that’s what He’s made of; that’s what love is: *God*. And all these other things flow from that. Grace is a manifestation of God’s love to us. From grace comes all of these other attributes, traits and fruits:

“...joy, peace, longsuffering [forbearance], kindness, goodness, faith, meekness...” (v 22-23). You’re going to see a lot of these terms, words and traits that are found in the beatitudes when Christ gave His first sermon to the disciples.

“...self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh... [James said to stay out of the world] ...with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit” (vs 24-25). ‘Worship in Spirit and Truth.’ That’s how we think and where we should be, not in the physical; we should be thinking in the spirit. We should have in mind:

Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus”—and that should lead us through the Holy Spirit:

- the Spirit from Christ
- the Spirit from the Father

That’s where we live, that’s where we are and that’s where we work.

Galatians 5:25: “If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit We should not become vainglorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another” (vs 25-26).

Maybe this is one of the things that Arbutus and Sea Gull had a problem with. Maybe there was some *vainglory* going on there. Maybe ‘my kids are better than your kids. You see Johnny over here, wasn’t he great?’

You've got a problem! You've got some vainglory going on and provoked someone. We're told not to provoke our kids. Provoke not another person, a brother, and don't be jealous and envious toward another that always brings up problems and helps us not to be able to love our neighbor and cause offenses, which Christ said would happen in the world.

Definitions of forbearance: ***to hold back***. In the mortgage industry if you've been given a forbearance, what you have is a delay of foreclosure, holding back foreclosure on your house. It's a special agreement between the lender and the borrower to delay the foreclosure process; ***to hold back***. To refrain from the enforcement of something that is due to you, that's your right.

You're holding back something that you can go ahead and do because it is your right to do that, but you're not going to do it. It's okay, it's your right to do it, but you're not going to do it. Such as a debt; that's your right, or an obligation, duty.

The quality of someone who is patient and able to deal with a difficult person or situation without becoming angry. Now, there's where 'the rubber meets the road'—isn't it?

How many times do we get angry? It says in Ephesians 'don't let the sun go down on your anger.' It doesn't say not to get angry, just don't let the 'sun go down on your anger.' We want to minimize our anger, but you also have to hold back. Forbearance will help you hold back acting on it. Keep that thought in your mind as we go through these other Scriptures.

A key to developing forbearance: ***get out of the way!*** Me, my ego, myself get out of the way. It's my right to do it, but I'm not going to act on it. I hold back. I get my ego out of the way. I get my vanity and pride out of the way. ***The first thing we must do in learning to forbear is to get the ego and pride out of the way!*** Look inside yourself. If you have a problem with someone else and something happens, look to yourself and say:

- What would Jesus Christ do?
- Jesus Christ is in me, what would He do?
- What did I do that I shouldn't have done?
- What should I have done?
- What would Christ do? *And do that!*

Think about:

- Where am I wrong?
- Where should I check myself out?

Not the other person. Don't worry about the other person; God is going to take care of the other person. Pray about it and put that other person or that situation in God's hands and work on yourself. Think about the problem begins with you. *That's*

forbearance! Not going after the other person, but holding back.

Turn loose of the self and ego and let God's Spirit lead and guide you in His way, in our actions and our words. That begins with ourselves. Look within ourselves for the problem, not in others. Very critical! If we would do that every time something happens, we wouldn't have a problem. The other person might go away fuming and upset, but you're forbearing and your responsibility is with yourself.

Same way with forgiveness: If the other person doesn't want to forgive you, you still have to be in an attitude of forgiveness. That person might come back and say, 'I was thinking about that and I'm really sorry.' *I'm not going to let you forgive me, because I'm mad at you now.* No! That's not the way God want us to do. We're always ready to forgive and always be forbearing with our brother.

Matthew 7:3: "Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye'; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye" (vs 3-5). Look to yourself first! These are Christ's words.

We all know that, but when something happens that's the furthest thing from our mind. We're ready to fight! We're ready to get upset! 'That guy cut me off; who does he think he is?' Today you better not say anything. You better not go after that guy.

Christ is telling us an attitude to wear, to take on, to be. Something He wanted His disciples and us to be: Matthew 18:1: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is *the* greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?'" There's some pride and vanity! Who is going to be on top? Who is going to be in this hierarchical structure? Who is going to be the main dog? 'Next to You, of course, I don't want to take your place. You're still going to be Christ, but who is going to be next?'

Verse 2: "And after calling a little child to *Him*, Jesus set him in their midst, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, there is no way that you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven'" (vs 2-3). You're not even going to be there! You've got to have this attitude; you've got to take this on; you've got to have this mindset.

Verse 4: "Therefore, whoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." That's the greatest! That's the opposite:

- of the way we think
- of the way the world operates
- of the way a hierarchy operates
- of the way a corporate structure operates

It's just the opposite of the way the world around us is! Christ was a servant; He was the Chief Servant, the 'chief child' if you will, a child-like attitude. He was God in the flesh, knowing the hearts and minds—the thoughts—of the people.

The attitude of the foot-washing is coming up and we know what that attitude is all about. That's what Christ is talking about. We have to look within ourselves is what he's saying. When we have a disagreement or falling out with a brother, ask yourself: What would Christ do? Christ is in you! Christ is in that brother! Shake hands with that person and you're shaking hands with Jesus Christ. What would you do? What did Christ do when He was on the earth? Ask that question: What am I not doing! Examine yourself! What am I doing? Why did that happen?

I just had something happen that I had no clue. I did not know that that person was upset with me for several months. Then I found out and I had a choice. I could have said that 'I have a right to tell you you're wrong, because you waited too long and I didn't do anything.' Well, that's not right! That's not forbearance.

The attitude of forbearance is to rectify and take care of the problem, and nullify the problem. Do whatever you can to make it right in that person's mind and eyes, from their perspective, looking from their shoes. Try to make it right and 'gain your brother.' That's the step. How can I do this better?

The main obstacle to failed relationships is ourselves! Not the other person; God will take care of them in His own way and time. Pray about it! Thank Him! Ask God to bless that person, be with them and help them, because we're all sons of God and we will all be there in the resurrection with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God.

We're going to look next-door, over here and we're going to see people and say, 'What are they doing here?' No you're not! You're not going to do that!

A person who is forbearing is humble. True humility comes from God's Spirit, from conversion. You can't put it on. No! It comes from the heart! A lot of times people don't know what you're thinking.

It's a submissive, yielding, humble and contrite spirit (Isa. 66) That's what God looks to. *Poor in spirit!* The very first thing that Christ said in the beatitudes is *poor in spirit*. What does that mean? *You know that you need God first and*

foremost!

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me." He strengthens you! You need God. Then the next thing is *meek*. Not retaliating! Not taking it on! Not standing up for yourself and go do battle to try and control the situation. Moses was meek, 'the meekest man on earth.' He was a general in the Egyptians army, but he didn't retaliate! He didn't go after and fight this guy 'because I can.'

Ephesians 4:2: "With all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." This is our responsibility to our brother:

- forbearing one another
- be longsuffering with one another
- be meek with that person
- have a lowly attitude

That doesn't sound like somebody that is saying, 'Hey, you wronged me and you owe me an apology.' That's not the right attitude; that's not the way to do it. A person who is forbearing is meek.

Colossians 3:12: "Put on then, as *the* elect of God..." Your calling; God the Father has personally took time and looked you over and said 'I'm going to pick that person. Then He begins to draw you and work with you personally. That is the Sovereign of the entire universe! ***He has called you personally and Christ died and opened up the Holy of Holies and the veil was rent in two and you can go to God the Father personally on your knees and talk to Him!*** God stops and listens any time you want to talk to Him.

"...Holy and beloved... [that's what we are] ...deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* longsuffering..." (v 12). They go together; work together. Don't hold a grudge. A person who is forbearing doesn't hold a grudge.

Leviticus 19:18: "You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I *am* the LORD." Don't avenge, God will take care of it. Don't hold a grudge, God will take care of it. Love your neighbor, that's our job. This is what Christ gave to Israel.

Romans 12:19—Paul was inspired to say: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves..." Don't take it upon yourself and go after. A person who had forbearance doesn't do that. There's a reason why they don't: They're very comfortable with their relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. They don't have to try and control a situation, or go after this person for vengeance or hold a grudge, because they have confidence in their relationship with God and Jesus Christ.

“...rather, leave *this* to *God’s* wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine! I will recompense,” says *the* Lord.” God will take care of it. Forbearance agrees with your enemy or your adversary. Quickly do it! Try to rectify the situation immediately! Don’t let it linger and be prolonged, because then they have time to build up anger, bitterness, wrath and find ways to get back at you. Then it just gets bad! It snowballs and gets worse.

Matthew 5:25—Christ says: “Agree with your adversary quickly while you are in the way with him; lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison.” See how quickly it goes downhill? Very, very quickly!

So, have an attitude of knowing all this can happen. ‘You’re not going to see it the same way I am’ and it’s over. Take care of it. God will take care of you and make sure that you get remunerated from whatever you might have to put out. It will work out because you did what was right.

It’s the attitude of *going the extra mile*. Remember that the Romans had control of the area and they had a deal where if you were walking down the road and the officer or soldier said, ‘Carry my pack,’ you were obligated to carry it for a mile. Christ said have the attitude of carrying it for the *second mile!*

Verse 41, Christ said: “And *if* anyone shall compel you to go one mile, go with him two.” See the attitude, *forbearance!* Not ‘I don’t want to go a mile with you, you can’t make me go two.’ Well, he has a sword and he might make you go two. Just have the attitude that everything will work out better if you just go two miles with him. It will work out.

Do not have the attitude that ‘I am right!’ Forbearance is not having to be right. You might be right. Remember the definition is that even though you’re right, *hold back that which is your right*. But when you have an argument with somebody, how many times have you said, ‘I know I’m right, but you’re wrong.’ Forbearance doesn’t have that attitude. We’ve all had disagreements and you *knew* you were right. God’s Word says you’re right:

Proverbs 16:25: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.” Do you know what “...the ends thereof...” are? *The ends are the way of death!* You think you’re right, but the ways of man are the ways of death!

Proverbs 12:15: “The **way of a fool is right in his own eyes**, but he who listens to advice *is* wise.”

Proverbs 21:2: “Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes, but the LORD ponders the hearts.”

The LORD is the heart-knowing God! He knows our hearts. That’s why you can’t judge a situation. You can make an evaluation, but ‘you can’t say those people over there, they’re... That’s who they are.’ We don’t know that! Can you read their heart? *God ponders the heart! He knows the heart!*

Learn to respond instead of react! This is a very important lesson that 20 years ago I was told to make and I never got it until maybe 10 or even 5 years ago and put it into practice: respond, don’t react. What’s the difference between those two?

When somebody jumps out between two parked cars at night when you’re walking down a sidewalk. You do one of three things:

- you jump back
- you run
- you fight

That’s a reaction! That’s what happens to you; you do one of those three things immediately. Remember the way of man is our thoughts, the way we are, that’s not going to be good. Learn to pause and think and then respond to the situation.

You’ve got God’s Holy Spirit to lead you and process the things that God says about the situation before you act, speak or do anything, *or you’ll regret it!* If you say something it’s out there; you can’t get it back. Keep from saying and doing the wrong thing that’s irretrievable. Be led by the Spirit and think before you speak.

Proverbs 10:19: “In the multitude of words, sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips *is* wise.” That’s wisdom. Have you ever said something to someone and they don’t say anything. Why aren’t they saying something? *That’s wisdom!*

I remember in sixth grade a teacher wrote: ***Nobody knows how stupid you are until you open your mouth and remove all doubt!***

Proverbs 15:1: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.” If you don’t have something good to say, don’t say anything at all. That’s pretty good advice, actually.

Proverbs 29:20: “Do you see a man hasty in his words?... [they know what’s right and answer a matter before they hear it] ...*There is* more hope for a fool than for him.” That’s the wrong thing to do! That’s not forbearance! That’s not being led! That’s not thinking or responding; that’s reacting!

Forbearance means that ***you learn to control your tongue!*** We want to control everything, but the best thing to control is your tongue.

James 1:26: “If anyone among you considers himself to be religious... [we’ve seen people like that] ...and does not control his tongue, but deceives

his own heart, this one's religion *is* vain."

James 3:5: "In the same way also, the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire." Have you ever been around someone that all they do is talk about how great they are, what they did or how their kids are this that and the other? Always better than the next guy! They boast constantly. These are the type of people we need to have forbearance with, but this is not allowing the love of God flow and working out things with your neighbor; learning to love your neighbor.

Verse 6: "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of unrighteousness. So has the tongue been set among our members, *the one member that* defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna. But the tongue no human being is able to tame; *it is* an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison." That's true in the carnal sense, but God's Holy Spirit can tame the tongue, because it controls what goes in the mind.

Ask God to put His Word and mind in your mind and shut the door and keep everything else out. Make sure you don't listen to or see... Job said that he made a covenant with his eyes, that he wouldn't look at a maiden. He made a covenant with his eyes! Young people might think about that.

Also you ears! Don't let all these bad jokes and negative stuff come in: fear, doubt, worry. There can be a lot of things that work against God. Put a lock on it. ***Guard the door of your mind!*** Forbearance means that *you learn to control the tongue!*

1-Peter 3:10: "For the one who desires to love life, and to see good days, let him restrain his own tongue from evil, and not allow his lips to speak deceit." Christ said of Nathanael_[transcriber's correction], "There is an Israelite in whom there is no guile." This Israelite was not deceitful.

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" In this guy there was not guile—amazing! I would like to meet him.

1-John 3:18: "My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed... [action; show it] ...and in Truth." ***In Spirit and in Truth!***

Forbearance means to ***put your trust in God!*** Remember that I said that a person who is not reactionary, who does not act and try and put himself up as right, not trying to say his own case and plead his own case but just forbears and lets it go. He has trust in God and has a very good foundation. He knows what God will do and what God has done for him in the past. He has an experience of God stepping in and

intervening; stepping in and defending him, fighting his battles and giving him provision that work.

He had to forbear over here, but here comes something else he didn't think about and everything works. He has trust and experience with God. Have faith and trust in God and allow God to fight our battles. Let Him do it. Ask Him!

Three times Christ says to ask and the Father will give you whatever are the desires of your heart, as long as they are the right and good things (John 16-17). He'll give you the desires of your heart; just ask the Father. Ask God to fight your battles and He will. Don't try to control everything.

Proverbs 30:5: "Every Word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him." There was a minister who told me one time: *As long as you're speaking through the Bible, and they attack you, God is a shield!* They're attacking the Word of God; God will fight that battle and take care of that. I would hate to be that person. What you're doing is putting your trust in God to take care of that battle. You step away and walk away from it.

Psalms 37:5: "Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass." Trust in Him and it will happen. If you've not tried that, you need to start trying it. *Try it, you'll like it;* it will happen! Test God! Try Him!

If they bring a false witness against you... How many times has somebody lied about what you did? Lies are a big thing today. People get away with that a lot. The bigger the lie the more it's believed, it seems. They're talking about you, putting you down and the one who comes first with the lie seems to be the right one. God is going to take care of it!

Psalms 31:6: "I have hated those who take heed to lying vanities, but I trust in the LORD."

Proverbs 26:22: "The words of a talebearer... [one of the Ten Commandments talks about *bearing false witness*] ...*are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." When you get stabbed in the back it goes deep.

- control the tongue
- be a person who puts forbearance into practice
- gain your brother
- love your neighbor as yourself

That's probably what happened with Arbutus and Sea Gull; probably why they didn't get along. Some of these things:

- talebearer
- vanity
- ego
- jealousy

All these things took them and they couldn't get along. They didn't have God's Holy Spirit, *but we have God's Holy Spirit*. We still have tendencies that way; we have to fight that everyday. Paul said, 'The things I want to do, I can't do; the thing I don't want to do, I do.'

We're human, and God knows! He made us that way for a reason. He made us weak and needing Him; to be poor in spirit for a purpose, a reason. God protects and defends us when we're in trouble.

Psalm 7:1 "O LORD my God, in You have I taken refuge; save me from all who pursue me and deliver me." Pray that prayer the next time you're in trouble. Open the Psalms and pray what David prayed. David was always in trouble, and God helped him out of everything. He brought some trouble on himself later in life.

Matthew 5:10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness..." It doesn't seem to be right that we be persecuted for keeping the Truth for righteousness sake and trying to do what is right.

"...for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (v 10).

Romans 8:28: "...all things work together for good to those who love God... [to those who *believe*] ...to those who are called according to *His* purpose." It always works out.

2-Timothy 4:5: "But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships... [part of forbearance] ...do *the* work of an evangelist..."—talking to Timothy.

Sometimes you can avoid a problem, just remove yourself from the room. You see the problem coming in the backdoor, you go out the front and everything is taken care of. That's great forbearance because you don't have to deal with it. But sometimes you do have to deal with it, and that's what I'm talking about.

Developing forbearance is a transformation from a carnal life to a spirit-filled life!

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy... [with God's Holy Spirit] ...*and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service." That's why you were called. You're the temple of God. He put the Holy 'Spirit in you, and He owns that and has a vested interest in you making in. He doesn't want anyone to fail. He doesn't want anybody not to make it. Everybody is going to make that wants to make it.

Verse 2: "Do not conform yourselves to this

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God."

Verse 4: For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function; likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us" (vs 4-6).

Verse 9: "*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy, abhorring that which is evil *and* cleaving to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. *Let* each esteem the other more highly than himself" (vs 9-10)—preferring one another.

'You did a great job! That was fantastic!' *Even though you might have wanted that job.* 'You did a great job.'

- Why did you want that job?
- What was going on in your head that made you envious of that?
 - ✓ Give that person credit!
 - ✓ Give him honor and glory!
 - ✓ Give him accolades!

There's enough to go around. There are different glories. It talks about the stars and when we're changed to glory we'll have different rewards and things and some will get more than others. But everybody is going to be happy. Nobody is going to want the other person's job or their reward. We're all going to be so happy to be there. We're going to honor the other person and say, 'That was fantastic! That guy is great!' That's what forbearance is all about!

Verse 10: "*Be* kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. **Let each esteem the other more highly than himself.** *Be* not slack in business. *Be* fervent in spirit. *Be* timely in serving. *Be* rejoicing in hope. *Be* patient in tribulation. *Be* steadfastly continuing in prayer" (vs 10-12). That's how we stay in forbearance; staying in contact with God!

There's a lot to *forbearance!* God is forbearing with us! He could wipe us off the face of the earth. There was Sodom and Gomorrah. God waited, didn't He? If there were 50, 40, 30... God was forbearing. He was right and could have blown them away right away. Same thing with Noah. ***God is always right!***

2-Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not delaying the promise of *His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, **He is longsuffering [forbearing] toward us...** [He wants us to be the same to our neighbor] ...not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

1-Peter 3:20: “*Which* disobeyed in a past time, when once the longsuffering of God was waiting in *the* days of Noah...” Remember what happened with Noah. I’d like to ask him if he ever got impatient, did he ever think it wasn’t going to happen? *It was 120 years!* He hung in there, though!

“...*while the* ark was being prepared, in which a few—that is, eight souls—were saved through water” (v 20). God could have, and He would have been right, to bring the Flood sooner. He didn’t! There were so many situation where God has been forbearing with us, and He is today with us! He knows our frame and situation and He’s pulling for us, and He’s working with us. Just like Christ was the propitiation for us—a *never-ending atonement!*

Every time we break the Law and sin—*every time*—Christ is an eternal propitiation, a never-ending propitiation. That’s forbearance! Peter asked how many times he had to forgive someone, seven times seven? *No, Christ said, seventy times seven!*

- Let’s be forbearing here!
- Let’s put the love of God into practice and learn to love your neighbor!

Instead of gossiping and backbiting, ‘bear your brother’s burdens’ (Gal. 6)—*bear the burdens of one another!* To do that you have to understand what’s going on with that person. That’s another key to understanding or to be forbearing. If you understand where that person is coming from...

I was recently talking with someone and always wondered why they were a certain way. It really kind of irritated me a little bit, but I was holding off. God was teaching me to forbear. So, I found out that this person had been beaten brutally as a child, abused and lot of different things had gone on with that person. That’s why that person was manifesting these things as an adult in a different way.

You wouldn’t have guessed it. Once I understood that, it was simple for me to forbear. Understanding helps you to forbear and be longsuffering and patient while that person is working that out. God’s working with that person, so don’t you jump in there and give him more trouble. Give him a break and pray for him. Understand what that person is going through. There is a lot of that. We’re a dysfunctional society. There’s a lot of that going on.

Even with each one of us, we have things in our past that we’re fighting. Even though we don’t know we are, we’re still fighting it. God understands that. He knows our heart and He knows everything that went on in our lives. Don’t judge!

- ask God for forbearance
- ask Him for the love of God

Do you want to know how the love of God works in our lives better, ask Him and He’s going to give you some things that will help you understand. There will probably be trials, situations that you’ll have to work out. But in the end of that it’s going to be good, and you’ll learn and you’ll find a better understanding at the end of it as you look back.

We know that loving our neighbor is foundational and is important to be a begotten son of God, and to help our brother to come into that same family. We are our brother’s keeper; we are to help where we can. To become like God, in His image and to be in His Family and get along with others is pleasing to God. It’s also necessary to be in His kingdom to not cause offense.

Matthew 13:41: “The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness.” Wow! Everything that offends is not going to be there! This is good stuff! This is a paradise, a utopia! This is the Kingdom of God!

We have to learn to not offend, *now*. We have to put sin out, *now*, so we can be there. If we’re seeking that, that’s what we have to do. That’s pretty good stuff.

Let’s go back to Arbutus and Sea Gull. We didn’t finish that story. We left them hanging. Let’s see what God says about the forbearance that was missing in their lives and their relationship. It’s sad! Arbutus and Sea Gull were bitter enemies. If they had applied forbearance something would have been different. They would have been true friends and would have had a harmonious outcome. They would have enjoyed one another and things would have been different. The kids would have been different and everything. We left the story there and it picks up here:

When I was about sixteen, Mrs. Wilcox died.

Remember, Mrs. Wilcox was Grandma’s friend, the neighbor.

In a small town, no matter how much you have hated your next-door neighbor, it is only common decency to run over and see what practical service you can do the bereaved. Grandma, neat in a percale apron to show that she meant what she said about being put to work, crossed the lawn to the Wilcox house, where the Wilcox daughters set her to cleaning the already-immaculate front parlor for the funeral. And there on the parlor table in the place of honor was a

huge scrapbook; and in the scrapbook, pasted neatly in parallel columns were Grandma's letters to Sea Gull over the years and Sea Gull's letters to her. Though neither woman had known it, Grandma's worst enemy had been her best friend. That was the only time I remember seeing my grandmother cry. I didn't know then exactly what she was crying about, but I do now. She was crying for all the wasted years, which could never be salvaged.

So, Arbutus and Sea Gull, it's over; they missed out on a lifetime of friendship. Something got in the way; who knows what? They weren't forbearing, and of course, they didn't have God's Spirit; they didn't know about forbearance.

They were sharing their lives, their joys, their ups and down, their kids and graduations and parties and all that. It got in the way of having a great friend, a beautiful relationship. They let their egos and their selfish pride get in the way of what could have been a beautiful friendship.

If they were able to have God's Holy Spirit they could have applied that fruit of the Spirit—*forbearance*—that would have helped them learn to get along and help them get along with their neighbors. They would have been true friends.

Today, right now, we have the opportunity to develop forbearance through the Holy Spirit within us, that characteristic of God that helps Holy righteous character develop. It helps be a son of God. It helps us be made in the image of God and have the mind of Christ to grow to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'

Forbearance is dealing with and getting along with our brothers today. That's critically important. That's where 'the rubber meets the road.' It's not about physical things, it's in the spirit plane of things: getting along with one another.

God's ways are perfect. We are to become perfect. It is sure and fulfilling, and it will be when we come to be the perfect man to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ that we will be able to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We are in training now to learn how and learn to live together in love. So, let's ask God to help us to ask, to help us to develop forbearance in our lives today.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:36-40

- 2) James 4:1-11
- 3) Psalm 86:15
- 4) Galatians 5:22-25
- 5) Philippians 2:5
- 6) Galatians 5:25-26
- 7) Matthew 7:3-5
- 8) Matthew 18:1-4
- 9) Philippians 4:13
- 10) Ephesians 4:2
- 11) Colossians 3:12
- 12) Leviticus 19:18
- 13) Romans 12:19
- 14) Matthew 5:25, 41
- 15) Proverbs 16:25
- 16) Proverbs 12:15
- 17) Proverbs 21:2
- 18) Proverbs 10:19
- 19) Proverbs 15:1
- 20) Proverbs 29:20
- 21) James 1:26
- 22) James 3:5-6, 8
- 23) 1 Peter 3:10
- 24) Jeremiah 17:9
- 25) 1 John 3:18
- 26) Proverbs 30:5
- 27) Psalm 37:5
- 28) Psalm 31:6
- 29) Proverbs 26:22
- 30) Psalm 7:1
- 31) Matthew 5:10
- 32) Romans 8:28
- 33) 2 Timothy 4:5
- 34) Romans 12:1-2, 4-6, 9-12
- 35) 2 Peter 3:9
- 36) 1 Peter 3:20
- 37) Matthew 13:41

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 51
- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- 1 John 4:8, 16
- Isaiah 66
- John 16; 17
- Galatians 6

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