

1 **THE CODE FOR FORGIVENESS**

Ephesians 4:31-5:2

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• ³¹ *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.* ³² *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.* ¹ *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.* ² *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

3 **THE DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS**

- Webster: 1) to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; pardon; 2) to overlook (an offense); 3) to cancel (a debt).
- Divine definition
 - "Forgiving is not aphiemi, the word usually used when God forgives our sins
 - charizomai which means a) "'to be gracious,' or 'to give freely.' b) It is used in the sense of 'forgive.'

4 **THE DEMAND FOR FORGIVENESS**

- Finality of God's forgiveness demands it
 - Aorist tense
 - Completed action
 - Forgiveness that came to us once for all through the death of Christ.

5 **Colossians 2:13-14**

• "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. ¹⁴ *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*"

6 **Festering demands that we forgive**

- The picture painted: v. 31: *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*
 - Bitterness (pikria)(kudu):
 - A smoldering resentment, a brooding grudge-filled attitude. Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

7 **The picture painted - 2**

- Wrath (thumos)(nauhen): Has to do with wild rage, the passion of the moment.
- Anger (orge)(fennu): "A more internal smoldering, a subtle and deep feeling."
- Clamor (krauge)(rangnau): "The shout or outcry of strife and reflects the public outburst that reveals loss of control."
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8 **The picture painted - 3**

- Slander, (blasphemia = English blasphemy (hweibang) "The ongoing defamation of

someone that rises from a bitter heart.”

- Malice (kakia)(edu): The general term for evil that is the root of all vices

9 **The process described**

- Begins small, but as it festers like an infection, it gets larger and larger.
- Sometimes the person we're angry and bitter against doesn't even know they've offended us.
- It grows until it dominates our thinking.

10 **Freedom demands that we forgive**

- An unforgiving spirit is the worst kind of bondage for a Christian.
- A wonderful freedom when we can release that person from the debt
- In the process of releasing them through forgiveness, we are ourselves released from our terrible bondage.

11 **THE DEPICTION OF FORGIVENESS**

- The Size of our debt
 - Our sin produced separation from God and eternal death.
 - ILLUSTRATION: Young boy and grandfather
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12 **DEPICTION OF FORGIVENESS - 2**

- The Substitute Who paid our debt,
 - 5:2: *² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*
- The Sacrifice that pleases God, 5:2
 - a holy and righteous God
 - We can never merit salvation.
 - Only when we are in Christ, covered by His blood can we ever hope to please God.

13 **DEPARTMENT OF FORGIVENESS**

- 7th Grade Report Card
- The Examples:
 - God the Father--the greatest evidence of love is undeserved forgiveness, John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10
 - Jesus Christ, the Son
 - Christ on the cross, "Father forgive them."
 - He died for his enemies.
- He paid in full our debt of sin.

14 **The Exhortation**

- ³² *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*
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15 **Follow the example**

- v. 1, *be imitators of God "be followers" (KJV) (Memetai)*
- v. 32, *"forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."*
 - The most convincing proof of our love is also forgiveness
 - What does the world think
 - Because Christ paid the penalty we have no right to hold any sin against any person, even a non-believer.

16 **The depth of our love**

- I Peter 4:8: *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*
 - fervent refers to something stretched out to the limit
 - Illustration: Luke 7:36-47
 - The Christian's constant prayer: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."
 - How is your forgiveness code?