

Understanding Thankfulness, 3:1-17

By Bob Young

In the biblical text, there is an often unseen theme: 1:12-13; 2:7; 3:12-17; 4:2

In Colossians, gratitude is the often unseen capstone.

Christian Living: Three Dimensions, 3:1-11

- One sees Christ and seeks Christ...
- One defines the Christian life in negatives and things to avoid....
- One puts to death....puts off....for you have been clothed (v. 10)

Positive Christian living, 3:12-16a

Cloth yourselves/be clothed...

- dressed for success; the right clothes and the right uniform give authority
- Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience
- How do I do this? Bearing, forgiving, loving (gifting, gracing, charizomai)

Forgiveness means at least three things.

-1- It means that we are not to bring up to the person whom we have forgiven the thing we forgave. We are to treat him as though it did not happen. We are not to constantly harass with reminders of evil things from in the past. Some marriages stumble greatly at this point because the partners not only get hysterical, they get historical! They go back over the past, ready to trot it out and rehash it once more. That shows that it has never truly been forgiven in the first place. God does not do that. How terrible it would be if he did---if we had constantly to face reminders from him of the awful things of our past!

-2- Forgiveness means that we do not tell anybody else about the matter that is forgiven. We do not gossip about it. It is not that we actually erase it from memory---we may think of it from time to time---but we are not to dwell on it. We are not to allow it to take over again, to awaken feelings of resentment and unfairness and play it all over again. We can do that because we ourselves have been forgiven. Let us remember how graciously God has set aside our own failures.

-3- Forgiveness means you do not remind yourself of what has been forgiven! Even in your private thoughts you never allow the offense to come up and to color your attitude toward the one you have forgiven. If it does come up, you must put it away and remind yourself that you too need to be forgiven. You do not want people mulling over your sins and dredging them up all the time. No, forgiveness means to put it aside because that is what Christ has done for us.

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. 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, "Remember, if I get better this doesn't count!"

The final word: gratitude, 3:16-17

- 1 Let the peace of Christ rule (control, umpire, be the deciding factor)
Reason: You were called in one body
Result: And be thankful (eucharistoi)
- 2 Let the word of Christ dwell (inhabit, take up residence)
How: Teaching and exhorting one another in wisdom
Result: Singing with thankfulness (chariti)
- 3 Do everything in the name (authority) of Christ, thanking... (eucharisteo)