Should Believers Forgive Themselves?
Scripture: Colossians 3
Code: BQ031412

bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (3:13)

Bearing with one another means “to endure, to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not retaliate.” It characterized Paul, who told the Corinthians, “when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure” (1 Cor. 4:12). It did not characterize the Corinthians, who were actually taking each other to court. Paul exclaims, “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:7). Believers are to exhibit forbearance (Eph. 4:2). Such were the Thessalonians, of whom Paul wrote, “We ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure [*anexomai*, the same term used here in 3:13]” (2 Thess. 1:4).

Believers are to be marked not only by endurance, but also by **forgiving each other**. The Greek *charizomenoi* literally means “to be gracious” and the text uses a reflexive pronoun, so it literally reads, “forgiving yourselves.” The church as a whole is to be a gracious, mutually forgiving fellowship. By including the phrase just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you Paul makes Christ the model of forgiveness. Because He has forgiven us, so also must we forgive others (Eph. 4:32; cf. Matt. 18:21–35). The phrase **whoever has a complaint against anyone** refers to times when someone is at fault because of sin, error, or debt. The Lord Jesus is our pattern for forgiveness, because He forgave all our sins, errors, and debts. He is also the model for the rest of the virtues discussed in this section.

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