

# After the Honeymoon

28 - Rise Up & Walk: Ephesians  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 17 March 2019

**Text:** Ephesians 4:1-6

**Theme:** The Father's will is that we would have deep abiding relationships—relationships that go beyond the honeymoon phase.

**Intro:** Relationships usually have a honeymoon period—a time where you seem to see only the good. But it's after the honeymoon that tests a relationship. When God called out his people, he called us out to be one. He wants us to have deep abiding relationships—relationships that go beyond the honeymoon phase. People usually find it hard to get along for a long period of time. After a while, people tend to aggravate one another. This causes some personalities to retreat into themselves and others to go from one relationship to another. Today, I want to give you some practical wisdom regarding relationships, especially our relationship to one another in the body of Christ. This practical advice will help you to live God's call.

## 1) Have realistic expectations of one another (Eph. 4:1-2).

- Jesus is the **carpenter** who **builds** the **four walls of humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance** in our lives.
  - These **four structural qualities** guard unity—they are the only way we can **stay together**.
  - **Today**, we will focus on the last two qualities: **patience and tolerance**. Last week, in 'The Four Walls' message, we focused on the first two.
- The **cross** is the **standard** and **hallmark** of a Christian's life.
  - God wants us to **see everything through the cross**.
  - The **cross** shows us that **every person is a sinner**—even the best of people (Rom. 3:23).
    - But Jesus was saying, "**Father, forgive them**; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).
  - And it is only **through the cross** that you can **live in unity** with your brothers and sisters.
    - It's **not** through your **own strength and wisdom**. It's through the power of the cross and being crucified with Christ.
    - This means **constant and continually forgiveness**.
    - It's being **one with the cross** that causes you to possess **humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance**.
- **The cross** teaches us to have **realistic expectations** of one another.
  - I've learned the hard way throughout the years that people are **not as mature** as you think they are.
    - **Gifts, zeal and age** are not the same as **spiritual maturity**.
- Have **patience** as people are in **the process of growth**.
  - The word patience in our passage is **μακροθυμία** (makrothumía). It simply means the **ability to suffer long**.
    - You see, the word **patience** in the **Greek** reminds us of **the cross and Christ's sufferings**.
    - There is **no love without suffering**.
      - **Art Katz** used to say, "Fellowship is a suffering before it's a glory."
  - Listen to what **Spurgeon** says: "You cannot stop people's tongues, and therefore the best thing is to stop your own ears and never mind what is spoken. There is a world of idle chit-chat abroad, and he who takes note of it will have enough to do. He will find that even those who live with him are not always singing his praises, and that when he has displeased his most faithful servants, they have, in the heat of the moment, spoken fierce words which it would be better for him not to have heard. Who has not, under temporary irritation, said that of another which he has afterwards regretted? It is the part of the generous to treat passionate words as if they had never been uttered. When a man is in an angry mood it is wise to walk away from him, and leave off strife before it be meddled with; and if we are compelled to hear hasty language, we must endeavor to obliterate it from the memory, and

say with David, "But I, as a deaf man, heard not. I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." Tacitus describes a wise man as saying to one that railed at him, 'You are lord of your tongue, but I am also master of my ears'--you may say what you please, but I will only hear what I choose."

## 2) Expect more of God and less of people (Eph. 4:2).

- Usually we expect much from people and not much from God.
- The last word in our passage is tolerance. It's the Greek word *anéchomai*. It comes from ἀνέχω *anéchō*; fut. *anéchō*, from *aná* (303), in, and *échō* (2192), to have. **It means to hold in or back, restrain, stop.** (In the NT, only in the mid., *anéchomai*).
- It's "**spoken of persons, to bear with, have patience with in regard to the errors or weaknesses of anyone** (Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 2 Cor. 11:1, 19; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; Sept.: Is. 46:4; 63:15)".
- It teaches that we need to **bear with the sins and weaknesses** of our brothers and sisters.
  - Listen, there is **no way people can meet** all your **expectations**. They will **hurt** you and **disappoint you**.
    - But **remember** this: **you also have** hurt and disappointed others more than you have realized.
    - Our **focus** should **never be on one another**—lest we make human beings into gods and idols. Our focus is on our Lord and Savior, **Jesus Christ**.
      - **Expect more from Jesus and less from people.**
- Realize that **though** we are **saved, we still sin**.
  - Your brothers and sisters **will sin against you and let you down**.
  - This does not mean that **the Father gives up on them, neither should you**.
- **Running away from one another is not an option. Helping one another** is the only way.
- While we are not above God's law, we are not under God's law either. Through grace, God is writing his law on our hearts.
  - We are **not meant to be enforcers of the law with one another**.
  - When we **focus on I'm right and you're wrong**, we minister the **law rather than grace**.
  - The **law** condemns, but **grace** helps.
    - When someone falls down the law tells them all the reasons why they fell. Grace bends down to pick them up. The law has it's important and place, but it cannot save someone.
- **Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)**
- There is nothing that kills relationships more than **a judgmental and critical spirit**.
- Summing up this point, operate in **grace** with one another, rather than **law**.

## 3) Give room for growth in one another (Eph. 4:13-16).

- The only way someone **grows** spiritual is if we give them **room for growth**.
- The **body** needs **rest** to **repair**.
  - We also need **periodic rests** from one another to repair.
    - This applies to husbands and wives, friends and God's people.
    - I not referring to long periods of removing ourselves, but short periods. **For example, a wife may need a day to herself without her husband and kids.**
- Real relationships require suffering.
  - We suffer with each other. We suffer for each other. We suffer because of one another.
  - We suffer because of what others do. We suffer because we love.
  - We don't want to suffer and that's why we retreat from one another.
- Growth will mean pain.
- Ignore half the things people say. Live with one blind eye and one deaf ear (Spurgeon).
- Treat people as God treats you—with patience.
- **Giving room for growth is not celebrating other people's sins.**
  - You may need to correct someone. But if you do need to correct someone, make sure you do it from God's grace, love and Spirit and not your own bitterness.

## 4) Forgive, forgive, forgive.

- **Matthew 18:15-20 & 18:21-35**
- Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

- Pray, pray, pray.
- If you brother sins against you.
- Choose to live by **mercy** and not by **judgment**
- Don't forget how much and how **frequently** God has **forgiven you**.
- Right after these passages, come Jesus' teaching on divorce.
  - Now, I don't want you to condemn yourself for the past. I want you to apply these principles to today.
  - "Because of your hardness of heart..."
  - Divorce is an issue of the heart.
- **Forgiveness** is an issue of your **heart**. It's **applying** the **cross** to your **life**.

**Conclusion:** Have the Father's heart for one another and you will guard the unity of the Spirit.

Break up in two groups: all the men and all the women.

## WORD STUDIES

### 3) Patience/Long-suffering

3115. μακροθυμία makrothumía; gen. makrothumías, fem. noun from makrothuméō (3114), to be long-suffering. **Forbearance, long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to action. The quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so** (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 6:12; James 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:15; Sept.: Prov. 25:15; Is. 57:15; Jer. 15:15). In Heb. 6:15, makrothuméō (3114) is used of Abraham's patient faith in God under the pressure of trying circumstances (James 5:7, 8). Makrothumía is patience in respect to persons while hupomoné (5281), endurance, is putting up with things or circumstances. Both words are often found together (2 Cor. 6:4, 6; 2 Tim. 3:10). Makrothumía is associated with mercy (éleos [1656]) and is used of God.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Watch out for self-righteousness.

### 4) Tolerance/Restraint

430. ἀνέχω anéchō; fut. anéxō, from aná (303), in, and échō (2192), to have. **To hold up or back from falling, e.g., the rain (Sept.: Amos 4:7). To hold in or back, restrain, stop.** In the NT, only in the mid., anéchomai; fut. anéxomai; imperf. aneichómēn, or with double augment in ēneichómēn in TR (2 Cor. 11:1, 4); 2d aor. ēneschómēn (cf. Acts 18:14). To hold oneself upright, to bear up, hold out, endure.

(I) Spoken of things, to endure, bear patiently, with the gen. as afflictions (2 Thess. 1:4). See Sept.: Is. 42:14. Used in an absolute sense (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:20).

(II) **Spoken of persons, to bear with, have patience with in regard to the errors or weaknesses of anyone** (Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 2 Cor. 11:1, 19; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; Sept.: Is. 46:4; 63:15).

(III) By implication, to admit, receive, i.e., to listen to, with the gen., spoken of persons as in Acts 18:14. In 2 Cor. 11:4, of doctrine. See 2 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:22; Sept.: Job 6:26.

Deriv.: anektóteros (414), more tolerable; anexíkakos (420), forbearing; anoché (463), forbearance, tolerance.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). The complete word study dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

### Misc Personal Notes

Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile.

God's call is only possible for us to fulfil together. Our call is a call to be together with God's people. The fullness of God can only be seen and manifested in unity with one another.

True growth into Christ-likeness can only happen together with God's called out ones, his people.

But here is the problem.

Both of these responses are very unhealthy. But moreover, they don't reflect God's call for his people to be wholly different from the world.

How is it possible for us to walk in unity and grow into the fullness of Christ?

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Unity is a miracle.

Today, I want to give you practical wisdom about how you can live in patience and tolerance of one another. This will help you with your marriage, friendships, family, and most of all, with God's people.

How can a diverse and sinful people live in harmony with one another?

Everything I have to say comes from meditating on these words: patience and tolerance in love. *Makrothumia* and *anechomai*.