

Bearing With One Another

Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Ephesians 4:2 — “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

A husband and wife — such is the imperfection of human nature — can find enough in each other to embitter life if they choose to magnify imperfections and to become irritated at trifles; and there is no friendship that may not be marred in this way, if we will allow it. Hence, if we would have life move on smoothly, we must learn to bear and forbear. We must indulge the friend that we love in the little peculiarities of saying and doing things which may be important to him, but which may be of little moment to us. Like children, we must suffer each one to build his playhouse in his own way, and not quarrel with him because he does not think our way the best.

All usefulness, and all comfort, may be prevented by an unkind, a sour, a crabbed temper of mind — a mind that can bear with no difference of opinion or temperament. A spirit of fault-finding; all unsatisfied temper; a constant irritability; little inequalities in the look, the temper, or the manner; a brow cloudy and dissatisfied — your husband or your wife cannot tell why — will more than neutralize all the good you can do, and render life anything but a blessing. It is in such gentle and quiet virtues as meekness and forbearance that the happiness and usefulness of life consist, far more than in brilliant eloquence, in splendid talent, or illustrious deeds that shall send the name to future times. It is the bubbling spring which flows gently; the little rivulet which glides through the meadow, and which runs along day and night by the farm-house, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood or the roaring cataract. Niagara excites our wonder; and we stand amazed at the power and greatness of God there, as he “pours it from his hollow hand.” But one Niagara is enough for a continent or a world; while that same world needs thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains, and gently-flowing rivulets, that shall water every farm, and every meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on, every day and every night, with their gentle and quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not by great deeds only, like those of Howard — not by great sufferings only, like those of the martyrs — that good is to be done; it is by the daily and quiet virtues of life — the Christian temper, the meek forbearance, the spirit of forgiveness in the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the friend, the neighbor — that good is to be done; and in this all may be useful.

Editor's Note: The above thoughts from Barnes' Commentary are worthy of your consideration. How often do we wait to do some great thing, while we can do so much good through a meek and gentle spirit! And how many good people have been driven away from the Lord and His church by the overbearing personalities of those who know they have the truth!? We are to worship God in spirit and in truth — be sure you have the truth **and** the spirit of God!

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