

Six Ways To Promote Harmony

by Wayne Goff

1. Remember that we are all subject to failings of one kind or another, Romans 3:23.
2. To bear with, and not magnify, each other's infirmities, Galatians 6:1-2.
3. To pray for one another in public and particularly in private, James 5:16.
4. To watch against shyness of each other and put the best construction on any action that has the appearance of opposition or resentment.
5. To observe the just rules of Solomon -- that is, to leave off contention before it is meddled with, Proverbs 17:4.
6. If a member has offended, to consider how God-like it is to forgive, and how unlike a Christian it is to seek revenge.

--Lambert, *Bulletin Builders*, p. 28

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). He also said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). It is only when we have been wronged that this can be done. Mercy is "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm" (Oxford American Dictionary). If we expect God's mercy in eternity, then we must extend it to those who have harmed us in this life.

In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus reminded us that our spirit of forgiveness should be boundless because God has forgiven us our own insurmountable debt of sin. The servant who owed his master 10,000 talents was about to have everything he owned sold -- including his wife and children! But when that indebted servant begged for mercy, his master forgave him his debt and released him from it. Sadly, that same forgiven servant turned around and imprisoned a fellow servant for the much smaller debt of 100 denarii. With almost the exact words, the fellow servant begged for mercy but received none. Instead, he was cast into prison! When the Master heard of this act, he immediately reinstated the debt of 10,000 talents and imprisoned that wicked servant. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (v. 35).

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