

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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The Healing **Power of** **Forgiveness**

By Tom Edwards

The ability to forgive others can serve as a healthy catharsis for the soul. Many an individual's physical well-being has been greatly impaired due to the lack of this gracious virtue; for hate and an unforgiving spirit can lead to numerous physical maladies.

There seems to be more of a concern manifested these days about health in general, but often one overlooks the importance of possessing the proper attitude towards life which also plays a major role in one's physical condition. Poor mental health can lead to a wide variety of physical ailments that have been psychosomatically induced. Perhaps ulcers would be a classic example of this. The one who feels all "tied up in knots" over some

grudge because of an injustice heartlessly inflicted is aware of the mind's influence over the body.

How much better it is for one to be set free from all entanglements of a bitter or begrudging spirit. Jesus emphasized the need to forgive others in **Matthew 6:15** and shows it to be a prerequisite towards our own salvation. Here He states: "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." We often speak about the necessary steps that lead to redemption, but how often do we include the need to forgive others as being one of the requirements? It was certainly a condition stipulated by God Himself.

How can we who are Christians not forgive others, especially in view of all which God has forgiven us? This, indeed, should be the basis for our own merciful

disposition towards those who have treated us wrongfully. Paul conveyed this very thought in **Ephesians 4:32** by stating, "And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you."

The story has been told about a man whose health was good. He was sturdy and strong; his heart functioned well, and his blood pressure was at a good level. Then his father died, and he got into a long legal dispute with his sister about their father's will. The case went to court, and the sister won. From that time forward, the man became obsessed with the lawsuit and his sister. His animosity towards her continued to grow each day. Soon he began having trouble with his heart and his blood pressure. Next his kidneys started bothering him; and, within just a few short months, he died due to a multiplicity of complications. The doctor, in commenting on his case, said, "It seems obvious that he died from bodily injuries wrought by powerful emotion." It appears that this

man killed himself with ill-will --literally committed suicide.

God's word can teach us each to forgive. It will also show us many reasons why we should. Let us turn to His word today and allow the truth to set us free.

The Goal Of Longsuffering

By Steve Klein

A housewife sits alone in the kitchen late at night. Her husband comes in after midnight. Drunk again. He is sour and abusive. It upsets her to see him this way. Her hope and prayer is that he can get help, turn his life around, and be the good man she knows he can be. In the morning she'll be up early to fix his coffee -- strong and black. And maybe she'll plead quietly with him to attend an AA meeting. Or maybe she'll just sit in silence and weep.

A parent is at the end of his rope. His teenager has broken curfew again. So many nights, waiting up late, wondering if this could be the night an automobile accident occurs, or the night his child falls in with evil companions,

or the night fornication is committed. Wondering where the child could be. Then, the child comes in. Maybe there's a quiet talk about the importance of getting home on time. Maybe there are heated words, lame excuses, revoked privileges and another sleepless night for all.

Why does the housewife put up with it? Why doesn't the parent just take away the keys permanently!?! What motivates their longsuffering? Is it not love for the one who is doing wrong and hope that the person will change?

In **2 Peter 2:3**, we learn that "The Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." God is longsuffering toward us, not because He is "overlooking" our sins and shortcomings, but because He wants us to repent -- to change our minds and our lives! God's forbearance and longsuffering are designed to "lead to repentance" (**Romans 2:4**). When we continue in sin, we are

showing great disrespect for God's goodness.

Like God, Christians are to be longsuffering (**Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2**), but few of us probably have a very clear idea about what longsuffering is and why we should practice it. Longsuffering is not overlooking sin and error or pretending that they don't exist. It does not involve failure to rebuke and reprove sin, for these things are to be done "with all longsuffering" (**2 Timothy 4:2**). Nor is longsuffering some kind of Chinese water torture that God has devised to see how much pain His children are willing to endure for no good reason. Longsuffering has a goal, a purpose. The reason we show longsuffering to others is the same reason God shows it to us -- We are patient in dealing with the sins and faults of others because we love them and we want them to change for the better.

Even when we know what longsuffering is and why we are to show it, it is seldom easy to do so. Paul prayed that the Colossians would be "strengthened with

all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (**Colossians 1:11**). Indeed, we all need to pray for God's strength that we might be longsuffering with others, in the home, on the job, at school, at play, and in the church.

Thanksgiving!

By Steve Niemeier

Hard to believe but the "Holiday Season" is about to start. Thanksgiving Holiday is this Thursday! Where did the year go?

As we make our plans and gather with family and friends this coming long holiday weekend what will we be thankful for?

It is possible that we will express out thanks for the many blessings that God has blessed us with. Yet, what are they? The song "Count Your Blessings" is a powerful song. In it the words "count your blessings – name them one by one" ring in my ears over and over again. Especially as I get older.

**Have any of us ever
stopped and named our
blessings one by one?**

**Invite Night – Tonight!
"Do You Have An Achy
Breaky Heart?"**

**Our Next Gospel Meeting
March 3-8, 2013 David Lanius**