

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE CONTINUE OUR LOOK ~ AT COL. ~ 3: ~ 12-17.

▶▶ Once again, ~ in this paragraph ~ Paul exhorts believers ~ to embrace and practice ~ godliness ~ in ~ every area of our lives ~ in place of ~ ungodliness.

▶▶ In contrast ~ to ungodliness, ~ godliness ~ in every area of our lives ~ is ~ well-matched with ~ and appropriate for ~ our new nature.

▷▷ And therefore, ~ we are to replace ~ ungodliness ~ with godliness.

↳↳ This ~ is Paul's overall point ~ in this paragraph. ⇨⇨ 12a presents & governs topic.

▶▶ And everything else ~ is an expansion ~ on this command.

AND IN HIS EXPANSION ~ PAUL DOES ~ TWO THINGS.

▶▶ 1st, ~ he gives us the reason ~ this replacement ~ must take place. ⇨⇨ Verse 12b.

▷▷ As we observed, ~ because ~ we are ~ chosen by God, ~ made holy by him, ~ and ~ dearly loved by him, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ we ~ are to embrace and practice ~ that ~ which is ~ compatible with ~ and suitable for ~ such a status.

▷▷ And godliness, ~ in every area of our lives, ~ is the ~ only thing ~ that fits the bill.

↳↳ In no ~ way, ~ shape, ~ or ~ form ~ does ungodliness ~ fit the bill. ¶¶ 1/15

▶▶ And 2nd, ~ in his expansion ~ in *verses* ~ 12c ← 17, ~ Paul gives some examples ~ of what godliness ~ looks like.

▷▷ Once more, ~ tpid, ~ illustrations ~ of what we are ~ to embrace and practice.

▷▷ And this is where we find ourselves, ~ going through the list of these examples.

↪↪ This a.m., ~ we'll examine ~ the next three. ⇨⇨ Vv. 13-14. 👁👁 Context, believers.

WE SEE TWO EXAMPLES ~ OF WHAT GODLINESS LOOKS LIKE ~ IN VERSE 13.

1st, ~ PAUL CALL US ~ TO ~ BEAR WITH ONE ANOTHER.

▶▶ The idea here, ~ is to ~ tolerate ~ one another's shortcomings.

▷▷ Translate: ~ ~ Be tolerant ~ with one another.

▶▶ Now, ~ a distinction ~ must be made ~ between ~ the tolerance that Paul is getting at ~ and ~ how the world ~ views tolerance.

▷▷ The world ~ condones ~ all sorts ~ of perverse behavior.

↪↪ Paul is definitely ~ not ~ talking about this.

▶▶ Neither ~ is Paul calling us ~ to condone sin. ⇨⇨ 1 Cor. 5

▶▶ We practice Christian tolerance ~ when ~ we empathize with others ~ and ~ seek to understand ~ why people act the way they do, ~ 77

↪↪ as opposed ~ to criticizing ~ and looking down on them. ⇨⇨ In view here. 11 2/15

▶▶ And the tense of the verb ~ shows this ~ to be ~ a continual thing.

▷▷ We are to ~ continually ~ exercise Christian tolerance ~ toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.

↪↪ Putting up with our fellow believers' faults ~ on a temporary basis ~ is not a valid option for us.

▶▶ Paul is calling us to ~ continually ~ put up with each other.

▷▷ This means, ~ for instance, ~ persistently ~ putting up ~ with the things in other believers ~ that would naturally produce ~ reactions such as ~ anger or resentment.

▷▷ We are to make allowances ~ for each other's ~ faults, ~ errors, ~ differences, ~ annoyances, ~ and sometimes grating personality quirks.

▶▶ It takes ~ only one conflict ~ to seriously undermine ~ a congregation's unity, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as demonstrated ~ by the enmity ~ between Euodia and Syntyche in Philippi (Phil 4).

▶▶ Paul says, ~ continually ~ put up ~ with each other.

▷▷ This is an example ~ of what godliness looks like.

▶▶ And to help us in this area, ~ always remember ~ how the Lord ~ puts up ~ with our shortcomings.

▷▷ David writes ~ in Ps. 103: ~ 8, ~ The Lord ~ is merciful and gracious, ~ slow ~ to anger ~ and abounding ~ in steadfast love.

↪↪ And Paul tells us in Eph. 5 ~ to be ~ imitators of God. ¶¶ 3/15

NOW THE 2nd EXAMPLE ~ IN VERSE 13 ~ OF WHAT GODLINESS LOOKS LIKE.

▶▶ if one has a complaint against another, ~~ forgiving each other; ~~ as the Lord has forgiven you, ~~ so you also ~ must forgive.

▶▶ The Greek word for "complaint" here ~ means ~~ "cause for complaint," ~~ "ground for blame," ~~ "grievance."

▷▷ The idea here ~ is this.

↪↪ If any of you ~ has cause for complaint ~ against another believer ~ forgive them.

▷▷ Paul is presenting ~ a situation ~ in which a believer ~ is at fault ~ and deserving of blame or censure.

↪↪ Instead, ~ we are to ~ forgive them, ~ Paul says.

▶▶ That grounds for complaint ~ will arise among members of a congregation ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is here regarded ~ as at least ~ a distinct possibility, ~ if not ~ a probability.

▷▷ We can express it this way.

↪↪ "If, ~ as may well happen, ~ anyone has a grievance against someone else, ~ forgive."

▷▷ We human beings ~ will invariably ~ hurt and offend each other.

▷▷ Any time ~ you get more than one human being together ~ there is the real danger of this. ¶¶ 4/15

▶▶ The Greek verb for ~ forgiving ~ is a specific term ~ conveying the idea ~ of "gracious" ~ forgiveness.

▷▷ The implication ~ is that ~ we will forgive ~ even ~ when the individual ~ does not deserve our pardon.

▷▷ As mentioned previously, ~ part of the word-family ~ that also includes ~ the term for "grace."

↳↳ Serve as a reminder of God's grace.

▶▶ Notice the absence here, ~ in what Paul says, ~ of the normal human response: ~~ 77

▷▷ "But he or she ~ deserves ~ blame ~ or ~ my severe disapproval of what they've done."

▷▷ Our attention ~ is to be focused ~ not ~ on what the offender ~ has done to us, ~ but rather ~ on what we ~ can do for them.

▷▷ We will often have ~ a legitimate basis ~ for a grievance against another believer.

↳↳ But Paul enjoins us ~ to ignore our rights ~ and care that much more ~ for the other person.

▷▷ Paul: a model. ⇔⇔ 1 Cor. 9. ⇔⇔ Surrendered his rights as an apostle.

▷▷ And we should consider this.

↳↳ Insisting on our rights ~ instead of forgiving the offending party ~ will put ~ an obstacle ~ in the way of the gospel of Christ.

→→ Must never. 77 5/15

▶▶ Now, ~ as in the case of putting up with each other, ~ the verb tense for forgiving ~ shows us ~ ~ that this ~ is to be a continuous thing.

↳↳ We don't have the option of ~ sporadic, ~ selective, ~ or restricted ~ forgiveness.

→→ Our forgiveness of other believers ~ is to be ~ continual, ~ comprehensive, ~ and ~ limitless.

↳↳ This should remind us of Jesus' words to Peter. ~ ~ [Matt. 18:21-22 \(CSB\)](#).

→→²¹ Then Peter approached him and asked, ~ "Lord, ~ how many times ~ shall I forgive my brother or sister ~ who sins against me? ~ ~ As many as ~ seven ~ times?" ~ ~²² "I tell you, ~ not ~ as many as seven," ~ Jesus replied, ~ "but ~ seventy ~ times seven.

→→ Jesus is not saying ~ that we should keep track ~ and when a fellow believer sins against us ~ the 491st time, ~ ↴↴

↳↳ we don't have to forgive them any longer.

→→ No!

↳↳ Rather, ~ this statement ~ that Jesus made ~ means ~ not ~ to keep track ~ of numbers at all.

↳↳ IOW, ~ Jesus ~ is putting ~ no limits ~ on forgiveness.

→→ This, ~ my . . . , ~ is one of our marching orders.

NEXT IN VERSE 13, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE REASON ~ we are to be forgiving ~ toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. ↴↴ 6/15

▶▶ As the Lord has forgiven you, ~ so you ~ also must forgive.

▷▷ This could also be translated this way, ~ which makes it even more clear.

↪↪ the Lord ~ forgave you, ~ so you ~ must forgive others.

▶▶ At conversion, ~ the Lord ~ forgave us ~ freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly.

▷▷ No matter how much ~ a person has done against us, ~ it does not come close ~ to what ~ we had done ~ against God.

↪↪ Yet, ~ through Jesus, ~ God the Father ~ has ~ freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly ~ forgiven all those who

▶▶ And, ~ like his love, ~ his forgiveness ~ doesn't end at conversion.

▷▷ It continues unabated.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ there are ~ no limits ~ on God's forgiveness of us.

▷▷ No expiration date.

▷▷ 1 Jn. ~ 1: ~ 9 says, ~ "If we confess our sins, ~ he ~ is faithful and just ~ to forgive us our sins ~ and ~ to cleanse us ~ from all unrighteousness." ⇨⇨ Doesn't Say

▶▶ While we're at this verse, ~ we should point out ~ that John says ~ that God will forgive and cleanse us ~ for two reasons.

▷▷ 1st, ~ because ~ he is faithful ~ to His promise to forgive. ⇩⇩ 7/15

↪↪ In Heb. 8:12, ~ God says, ~ "For I will be merciful ~ toward their iniquities, ~~ and I will remember their sins ~ no more."

↪↪ And Rom. 5:10 says, ~ "For if ~ while we were enemies ` we were reconciled to God ~ by the death of his Son, ~~ much more, ~ now that we are reconciled, ~ shall we be saved ~ by his life."

▷▷ 2nd, ~ God will forgive and cleanse us ~ because ~ he is just.

↪↪ I.e., ~ He can forgive and cleanse us ~ because Jesus satisfied his justice ~ in His death for our sins.

↪↪ Having given His Son ~ to die for our sins, ~ God will forgive and cleanse believers ~ when they confess their sins.

→→ 2 Chron. 30:9b, ~ "For the LORD your God ~ is gracious and merciful ~ and will not ~ turn away his face from you, ~~ if ~ you return to him."

▷▷ God the Father is faithful and just.

▷▷ Therefore He will keep His word.

▷▷ He will do exactly what He says.

▷▷ Think about it.

↪↪ He would be ~ unfaithful and unjust ~ if He did not ~ forgive and cleanse us from our sins ~ after we confessed them.

→→ And He is ~ never ~ unfaithful ~ or unjust. 📖 8/15

▶▶ When we sin, ~ we can ~ fully trust and be assured ~ that, ~ when we genuinely repent of our sins, ~ we will receive forgiveness.

▷▷ No one ~ who has Jesus as his/her Advocate ~ will ever ~ be turned down or turned away ~ from God's throne.

↪↪ Rom. 8:32.

→→ "He ~ who did not spare ~ his own Son ~ but gave him up ~ for us all, ~ how ~ will he not also with him ~ graciously ~ give us ~ all things?"

↪↪ And Heb. 4:16.

→→ Let us then with confidence ~ draw near ~ to the throne of grace, ~ that we may ~ receive mercy ~ and find grace to help ~ in time of need.

▶▶ Getting back to the reason ~ ~ we are to be forgiving ~ toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.

▷▷ God the Father freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly forgives us.

↪↪ And as His children, ~ we are to imitate ~ His behavior, ~ as Paul tells us in Ephesians.

→→ We ~ are to forgive ~ our brothers and sisters in Christ ~ freely, ~ graciously, ~ willingly, ~ and continually ~ no matter what ~ they have done ~ or do ~ to us.

THERE IS ONE ILLUSTRATION ~ OF WHAT WE ARE TO EMBRACE & PRACTICE ~ IN VERSE 14.

LOVE. ↵↵ 9/15

▶▶ And above all these ~ [things] ~ put on love ~ [And above all these ~ love], ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ which binds everything together ~ in perfect harmony ~ [or, ~ unity].

▶▶ A literal translation is ~ "bond of perfection."

▷▷ Attributive genitive

↳↳ "perfect bond."

▶▶ The Greek word for ~ "bond" ~ means ~ that which brings ~ various entities ~ into ~ a unified relationship, ~ ~ to unite.

▶▶ And thus ~ the translation bringing out the meaning ~ of what Paul is saying.

▷▷ And above all these ~ put on love, ~ which binds everything together ~ in perfect harmony/unity.

▶▶ "these" points back ~ to the five virtues listed in verse 13 ~ which we are to embrace and practice.

▶▶ So to expand on what Paul is saying.

▷▷ And above all these virtues I just listed ~ put on love, ~ which binds everything together ~ in perfect harmony/unity.

▶▶ So, ~ we are to embrace and practice ~ love for our fellow believers.

IN EPH. ~ 5: ~ 2a, ~ PAUL TELLS US HOW ~ WE ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

▶▶ And walk in love, ~ as Christ loved us. ¶¶ 10/15

▶▶ Jesus teaches us this ~ in His upper room discourse.

▷▷ Jn. ~ 13: ~ 34, ~ "A new commandment I give to you, ~ that you love one another: ~ just as I ~ have loved you, ~ you also ~ are to love one another."

▷▷ Jn. ~ 15: ~ 12, ~ "This is my commandment, ~ that you love one another ~ as I have loved you."

▶▶ So . . . , ~ we are not to love each other with just any kind of love.

▷▷ We are to love each other the way Jesus loves us. ~ I.e., ~ we are to have Christ-like love for one another.

AND HOW DOES JESUS LOVE US?

▶▶ Comprehensively, ~ unconditionally, ~ and sacrificially.

1st, ~ COMPREHENSIVELY.

▶▶ He loves everyone of his blood-bought people.

▷▷ Not just some.

2nd, ~ UNCONDITIONALLY. ⇔⇔ NO CONDITIONS

▶▶ And consider this.

▷▷ Jer. 17:9, ~ The heart ~ is deceitful ~ above all things, ~ and ~ desperately sick ~ [i.e., ~ incurably bad]; ~ who can understand it?

▷▷ Jesus ~ looks into depths ~ of the heart of humans ~ & loves us ~ anyway. ↯ 11/15

AND 3rd, ~ JESUS LOVES US ~ SACRIFICIALLY.

▶▶ Eph. ~ 5: ~ 2b.

▷▷ He "gave himself up for us, ~ a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

▷▷ Simply put, ~ "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" ~ means that ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Jesus' sacrifice on the cross ~ for our sins ~ was acceptable ~ to God the Father.

▷▷ In Jn. ~ 15: ~ 13, ~ Jesus said, ~ "Greater love ~ has no one than this, ~ that someone lay down his life ~ for his friends."

↳↳ He called us His friends ~ and loved us so much ~ that He ~ ¶¶

→→ willingly and unselfishly ~ sacrificed Himself for us on the cross, ~ so that we might have ~ eternal life.

AND WE . . . ~ ARE TO REFLECT THAT LOVE, ~ CHRIST-LIKE LOVE, ~ to our fellow believers.

▶▶ I.e., ~ comprehensive, ~ unconditional, ~ and sacrificial love.

▶▶ Our ~ thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior toward one another ~ are to be characterized ~ by this love.

▷▷ And Christ-like love ~ is to become ~ the deciding factor in our choices ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and the motivating power for our actions ~ in our relationships with our fellow believers. ¶¶ 12/15

BACK TO COLOSSIANS ~ CHAPTER 3 ~ AND CONTINUING OUR LOOK ~ AT VERSE 14.

▶▶ And above all these ~ put on love.

▷▷ Notice here ~ that Paul ~ highlights ~ the importance of love.

▶▶ Recall ~ back in [verse 9](#), ~ we said that lying ~ is an example of what belongs to our sin nature.

▷▷ But Paul didn't ~ simply include the word lying ~ in his lists.

↳↳ He separated it out ~ to focus attention on it.

▷▷ He does the same type of thing ~ here in [verse 14](#).

↳↳ He could have just added the term "love" ~ to the other virtues we are to embrace and practice.

↳↳ But he doesn't.

↳↳ He separates it out from the others ~ ¶¶

→→ to cause us ~ to focus on it ~ and ~ to understand the significance of love ~ for our fellow believers.

↳↳ He is emphasizing ~ the primacy of love ~ in the Christian life.

↳↳ Doesn't want us to ~ just breeze over this. ⇔⇔ **Grasp & ponder preeminence.**

▶▶ Paul ~ regularly wrote ~ about the importance of love. ¶¶ **13/15**

▷▷E.g., ~ in **1 Cor. 13**, ~ Paul said that ~ if ~ he had and could do ~ numerous things, ~~ but ~ didn't have love, ~ ↴↴

↳↳that ~ he would only be ~ a noisy gong ~ or a clanging cymbal; ~~ ↴↴

→→that ~ he would be ~ nothing; ~~ and that ~ he would have gained ~ nothing.

▷▷The primacy of love ~ is reflected in Paul's statement ~ that love ~ is the fulfillment of the law (**Rom 13; Gal. 5**).

▷▷And of course ~ prevalence of love ~ is clearly indicated ~ in Paul's statement, ~ ↴↴

↳↳So now ~ faith, ~ hope, ~ and love abide, ~ these three; ~~ but the greatest of these ~ is love (**1 Cor. 13**).

▷▷I commend all of these passages to you ~ for your personal study.

(vs. 14) **SO PAUL SAYS, ~ AND ABOVE ALL THESE ~ PUT ON LOVE, ~ WHICH BINDS everything together ~ in perfect unity.**

▶▶But ~ what does love unite?

▶▶There are two views ~ of Paul's meaning here.

▷▷Most likely based on the fact ~ that he did not make his meaning clear.

▶▶One view ~ is that ~ love, ~ like a belt, ~ holds the other virtues in **verse 13** together.

▷▷The idea ~ may be ~ that ~ if one has Christ-like love ~ then the other virtues ~ would be a part of that love. ↴↴ **14/15**

▶▶ The other view ~ is that love ~ binds the members of the church together ~ so that ~ they are led to perfect unity.

▷▷ Christ-like love would solve, ~ for instance, ~ problems of division among believers.

▶▶ There are good reasons ~ for both these views.

▶▶ But ~ I'm proposing ~ a third view. ⇔⇔ **And I'm not alone in this.**

▷▷ Paul's ambiguity ~ may very well have been ~ intentional.

▷▷ Both views ~ make good sense ~ and ~ happen to be true.

↪↪ When we truly have ~ Christ-like love for each other, ~ these other virtues ~ will ~ flow out of this love.

↪↪ Likewise, ~ true Christ-like love for each other ~ will ~ keep us unified.

▶▶ And when both these views are combined, ~ we can clearly see ~ the importance ~ of Christ-like love.

CONCLUSION.

MY . . . , ~ COMPASSIONATE HEARTS, ~ KINDNESS, ~ HUMILITY, ~ MEEKNESS, ~ patience, ~ being tolerant of one another, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ continually forgiving each other, ~ having Christ-like love, ~ and everything else ~ that accords with godliness ~ ¶¶

▷▷ these ~ we are to embrace and practice ~ in our Christian lives.

LET'S PRAY 15/15