

Be Kind, Tender-hearted, Forgiving
Eph. 4:32

Introduction:

1. Recently I have been reading from John Maxwell's book *Winning With People*. I have read several of his books since our son Daniel introduced me to his materials by giving me a copy of *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*.
2. I had 19 of the 21 already, so I was quite impressed with the book. I did have a little problem with that idea of humility though. HA!
3. I recommend Maxwell's books to you if you are really interested in challenging yourself to lead people.
4. I would like to share a real life experience with you that he describes on pgs. 26-27 of *Winning With People*. "My New Pen Pal."
5. Such people as Tom present real challenges to us, the people of God for Eph. 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
6. Really what I would like to do is punch Tom in the nose, to beat him severely around the head and shoulders, to tell others just what a heel he is, to really put him in his place.
7. Sometimes the Tom's of the world are people we work with. Sometimes they are members of the same congregation. Sometimes we even find ourselves married to them.
8. But there that passage is in Eph. 4:31-32, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
9. And so tonight I would like to ask you to "Forgive me."

Discussion:

- I. Forgive me for hurting you, for I have been hurt. Don't add to my hurt by hurting me back.
 - A. "But that's what you deserve." You're right about that.
 1. "Well, he'll get his one day."
 2. "What goes around comes around."
 3. "It's good enough for him."
 4. All of these are expressions of unforgiveness. We are holding this person condemnable. Yes, he/she deserves it. But "we are to forgive just as God in Christ has forgiven us."
 - B. "Hurt people hurt people."
 1. The reason that I hurt you is because I'm feeling hurt. It is a lot more comfortable hurting other people than it is dealing with my pain.
 2. When I hurt you it is not about you. It is about me.
 3. I am feeling or believing something negative about myself.
 - C. If you hurt me back, you multiply my pain and exacerbate my problem.
 1. I really need your kindness. I need your tender-heartedness. I need your understanding. I need to feel loved (Eph. 5:1-2).

2. Please forgive me.

D. How did Maxwell respond to Tom? After 7 years of “love letters,” he began to look for Tom’s pain. He found that a preacher had once hurt Tom and Tom had determined, “Never to trust a preacher.” Maxwell began to work on helping Tom to trust him. It was a slow go, but they became friends.

II. Forgive me when I am angry, for I am feeling abused, unjustly treated. Don’t be angry with me for I only feel more abused.

A. I get angry when I don’t get my way.

1. My expectations of you are great. I may expect you to come to my house. If you don’t come I get angry. It’s easier for me to be angry than to realize that I am actually hurt by your inattention.
2. My hurt and anger are closely allied.
3. My anger goes off when I feel unfairly treated.
 - a. It may be something you did or said.
 - b. It may be something you did not do or did not say.
 - c. You are constantly in dangerous water here, because you may not mean any harm, but I interpret your action or inaction in a way that makes me feel unfairly treated.
4. I am particularly sensitive in this area when I think I have been particularly kind to you. Happens often between Christians. I go out of my way to be gracious to you and you do not give the response I expect. I get angry.

B. Don’t try to reason with me and give me all the good reasons why you did what you did. I am being unreasonable. If I was being reasonable I would not be angry. No explanation is good enough. I still didn’t get what I wanted. Just forgive me.

C. But all this is so complicated.

1. Perhaps you could forgive me if you were not hurt.
2. Perhaps you could forgive me if you were not angry.
3. Angry people make angry people angry. Hurt people make hurt people hurt.
4. But the Lord would break the cycle (Eph. 5:1-2).
 - a. He is hurt by our sin. He is angry about our sin.
 - b. But he gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, as a fragrant aroma.

D. Don’t be angry with me when I am angry, for I only feel more abused. Instead, love me and forgive me.

III. Forgive me when I am short-tempered. I am feeling overwhelmed and pressured. Don’t be short-tempered with me because I only feel more pressured.

- A. Teach me to be long-suffering by being long-suffering with me. Teach me to be long-suffering by easing my frustrations.
- B. Show me forbearance in love (Eph. 4:2). Let your forbearing spirit be known (Phil. 4:5).
- C. In the forbearance of God He passed over sins (Rom. 3:25).

D. Model yourself after him and thus help me overcome my sin.

Conclusion:

1. Teach me to be long-suffering by easing my frustrations.
2. Look for the good in me when I blur your vision.
3. Teach me to not hurt others, by healing my hurt.
4. Teach me not to be angry by being more than equitable (grace).
5. Don't give me what I deserve. Give me grace. Forgive me please for I need it desperately.