



47. Preserving Unity

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity,”

Colossians 3:12-14.

Believers should be compassionate, kind, gentle, patient to one another, and willing to forgive. However, willingness to forgive is not, is not, the same as indiscriminate tolerance of sin. Jesus said, *“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him,”* Luke 17:3. Jesus directed us to confront one another’s sin ... and to forgive when there is repentance. Jesus dealt with repentant sin-

ners with love instead of wrath. And His kind of love should control our behavior toward one another ... preserving the perfect bond of unity.

Preserving unity requires compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. But remember, unity is more than a sinless vacuum. It requires our active and loving participation. When sin compromises and jeopardizes our unity, it must be confronted. When you confront sin in a fellow believer, follow the three-steps of Matthew 18:15-17, one-on-one confrontation, then with one or two witnesses of the sin, then under the full church's authority. Don't bypass any step ... and proceed to the next step only if there's been no repentance. Remember that the goal of each step is to "*restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,*" Galatians 6:1. Our unity is important. It proves to the world that Jesus came from the Father, John 17:21. We must preserve our unity in love *and* in purity.