

# **Forbearance, Tolerance**

## **Having an Ability to Endure Something**

This is an outline that focuses on a group of three New Testament words, which are often translated into English in ways such as these: *forbearance*, *tolerance*, *perseverance*, *to endure*, *to bear with or put up with* (something), etc. Understanding the New Testament Greek words themselves is *not* a requirement for benefitting from what God says on this topic! But for those who are interested, they are described at the end of the outline.

Check the context of each verse, for a better understanding of what is being said. The verses in parentheses are a suggestion of what could be examined.

### **1. About God's Tolerance / Forbearance**

- a. It is one of the "riches" God gives to us - riches which are intended to lead us toward repentance (and salvation) - Romans 2:4 (v. 3-8).
- b. It is one of the reasons that God delayed the punishment that people deserve (because of their sins) - Romans 3:25 (v. 21-26). [See the context. Jesus became our atoning sacrifice and took the punishment we deserve. Those who put their trust in him will not have to experience the punishment themselves. In anticipation of this, God "tolerated" the people's sins, rather than instantly pouring out his righteous judgment against them.]

### **2. About Tolerating / Enduring / Bearing With People**

- a. The basic principle: We are to bear with one another.
  - i. As an expression love - Ephesians 4:2 (v. 1-3).
  - ii. Following Jesus' example - Colossians 3:13 (v. 12-17) - here connected with forgiving people when they sin against us.
- b. It will not always be easy; it can be quite wearisome.
  - i. An example of Jesus bearing with people - Matthew 17:17 (v. 14-21); Mark 9:19 (v. 14-29); Luke 9:41 (v. 38-43a).
  - ii. (These verses are an example of Jesus being wearied by people who were an "unbelieving and perverse generation." His words express this weariness, but also imply a rebuke.)
- c. Sometimes it may be necessary to *not* put up with people.
  - i. An example of Gallio *not* bearing with people - Acts 18:14 (v. 12-17). He thought it was unreasonable to "put up with" them (= to listen to their complaint).
  - ii. (The context suggests that, in that situation, *not* bearing with them was the *right* way to respond.)

### 3. About "Tolerating" (Accepting) the Truth and Those Who Proclaim the Truth

- a. We should "tolerate" what is true - Hebrews 13:22 (v. 22).
- b. Don't follow the Corinthians' bad example!
  - i. They were willing to tolerate false teachers and their abuse - 2 Corinthians 11:4 (v. 3-5); 11:19-20 (v. 16-21).
  - ii. They should have been willing to "tolerate" what Paul said! - 2 Corinthians 11:1 (10:18-11:2). Since they were already putting-up with the false teacher's foolishness, they ought to put-up with Paul's "foolishness"!
- c. When people *refuse to* tolerate the truth, how should we respond?
  - i. When they reject (refuse to tolerate) our message, there are times that we should go elsewhere - to people who will accept it - Matthew 10:15 (v. 14-15); Mark 6:11 (v. 10-11; KJV - patterned after the Matthew passage). [There may be exceptions to this rule, but this is at least a principle to consider. There are other times that we should remain and "endure" the opposition, in spite of the people's response. Many of the prophets did this.]
  - ii. We should remember that this unwillingness to tolerate the truth is a symptom of the "last days" - 2 Timothy 4:3 (v. 1-5). [It will most likely get worse, as the "last days" come to a close.]
  - iii. [See Section 5 for the end-result of those who reject the truth.]

### 4. About Tolerating / Enduring Persecution - God's People May Have to Do So

- a. Persecution may occur, especially when other people aren't willing to "tolerate" the truth - Section 3.
- b. Paul's example: he and his coworkers endured persecution - 1 Corinthians 4:12 (v. 6-16).
- c. The Thessalonians' example: they were enduring trials - 2 Thessalonians 1:4 (v. 3-10).

### 5. About Tolerating / Enduring Punishment

- a. The "pagans" who *haven't* been exposed to the truth will find their judgment to be more bearable (tolerable) than those who *are* exposed to the truth and who reject it - Matthew 10:15 (v. 14-15); 11:22, 24 (v. 20-24); Luke 10:12, 14 (v. 10-16).

### 6. [THIS SECTION IS OPTIONAL] Definitions of the New Testament Greek Words (and verses where they are used)

- a. *anektotos*, more tolerable - Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; Mark 6:11 [KJV, patterned after Matthew 10:14-15]; Luke 10:12, 14.
- b. *anecho*, to hold up, bear with - Matthew 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; Acts 18:14; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:1, 4, 19-20; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:3; Hebrews 13:22.
- c. *anochē*, a delaying, forbearance - Romans 2:4; 3:25.