

Thesis:

Sometimes the person we most want God to _____ from our lives is the person we _____ the most.

Why? because ...

... the way we treat difficult people reveals the true condition of our heart.

... difficult people cause us to grow in ways we couldn't on our own.

... the most distinguishing mark of Jesus' followers is their love for those they **would not** and **could not** love on their own.

How can we love the un-loveable?

We are to “bear with” difficult people

² *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.* ³ *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV)

The Meaning Of “Bearing With One Another”:

What Does “Bearing With” Others Look Like?

- **With humility** – See them and treat them as people of equal or superior value than yourself.

- **With gentleness** – Extend undeserved acts of kindness and acceptance that are foreign to you with this person.

- **With patience** – Refuse to allow your irritation and frustration to erupt into negative thoughts, feelings, and comments to or about them.

- **With forgiveness** – Release them from your internal desire to pay them back for the frustration, difficulty, and wounds they inflicted upon you.

¹² Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)

Why Is “Bearing With” Difficult People So Important?

1. It increases my appreciation of God’s love toward me.
2. It demonstrates God’s love toward them.
3. It changes me where I need it most.
4. It communicates the reality and authenticity of Christ to the world.

Conclusion:

Sometimes the person I most want God to remove from my life is the very person I need the most!

Action Steps:

1. Identify the most difficult person in your life right now.
2. Begin praying everyday for this person for the next two weeks.
3. Stop consciously avoiding them and start seeing them like Christ does.
(see Colossians 3:12)
4. Serve them in some specific way this week.
5. Discuss these action steps with your friends, family, growth group, Bible study, and/or ministry team.