

Walk in Holiness

Ephesians 4:17–32

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1. The Old Walk (4:17–19)

- “Now” (4:17) → resumes Paul’s original exhortation in v. 1 to “walk in a manner worthy of your calling.”
- “I . . . testify in the Lord” (4:17) → not a legal testimony but a solemn exhortation in connection with Lord (cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Thess. 4:1, etc.)
- “no longer as the Gentiles walk” (4:17)
 - ◆ Paul was well aware of the spiritual issues with the Jews especially as it related to religious hypocrisy and legalism (Rom. 10:2–3), something to which he personally identified (Phil. 3:4–6). The ultimate spiritual condition was no different from that of the Gentiles, i.e., spiritual death and condemnation.
 - ◆ The Gentiles, however, had distinct lifestyle resulting from their spiritual and moral practices, and out of this lifestyle that Ephesians were called when they became believers (Eph. 2:11–12).
 - ◆ “What is most remarkable here is that believers who were formerly ‘Gentiles in the flesh’ (2:11) are now no longer ‘Gentiles,’ as it were, whom Jews like Paul would have shunned . . . Being in Christ makes these Gentiles a part of a new human race in the new creation” (Baugh).
 - ◆ Thus, Paul is calling the Ephesians to walk in contradistinction from their former Gentile lifestyle. As Christians, they are to walk neither like the Jews nor the Gentiles, but in a manner consistent with their new identity as believers and members of the new humanity, i.e., the church (2:15).

a. Rooted in the Old Nature (4:17–19a)

❑ Futile mind

- ▶ “futility” → lacking use, purpose or value. It describes a state of purposeless and frustration because of an inability to realize something’s intended purpose (cf. Rom. 8:20; 2 Pet. 2:18).
- ▶ “minds” → “the sum total of [a person’s] whole mental and moral state of being” (BDAG); a person’s ability to think and reason intellectually and morally.
- ▶ The Gentile’s entire way of thinking is marked by futility. Their intellectual and moral thinking goes nowhere and produces nothing of value because it is incapable of realizing the purpose for which he as intended, i.e., to comprehend God and his revelation.
- ▶ Cf. Romans 1:21 where it says, “they became futile in their thinking.”
- ▶ Also consider how Paul echoes the language of Ecclesiastes 1:2: “Futility of futilities, all is futility.”

❑ Darkened understanding

- ▶ “understanding” → the faculty of thinking, comprehending, and reasoning. See Matthew 22:37 where Jesus tells his listeners to “love the Lord your God...with all your *mind*.”
- ▶ Gentiles have had their reasoning darkened or clouded over. They are left unable to reason to moral and spiritual clarity, and this results in the futility of their minds.
- ▶ Cf. Romans 1:21 where it says, “their foolish hearts were darkened.”

❑ Spiritual alienation

- ▶ In Ephesians 2:1, the unbeliever is described as “dead in trespasses and sins in which [he] once walked”. Here, spiritual deadness is seen as being “alienated from the life produced by God.”
- ▶ Gentiles walk in the futility of their minds not only because their reasoning faculties have been darkened but also because they lack spiritual life, having been cut off from the life that God gives.
- ▶ Cf. Eph. 2:12; Col. 1:21

❑ Willful ignorance

- ▶ “ignorance” → *agnoia* > agnostic. This is ignorance in terms of knowing God and his will (cf. 1 Pet. 1:14).

- ▶ However, this is not innocent ignorance. This ignorance is a spiritual condition resulting from a willful rejection of divine knowledge readily available.
 - The Jews acted “in ignorance” when they killed Jesus, yet they had the prophecies from the Lord predicting the coming of Messiah (Acts 3:17).
 - The Gentiles worshipped idols in ignorance, but they had the creation which pointed to a divine Creator distinct from the idols they fashioned with their own hands (Acts 17:22–30).
 - Cf. Romans 1:18–25 where it indicts mankind for their failure to acknowledge God despite clearly perceiving his divine attributes and sovereign power displayed in creation. Ignorance, then, is a result of man knowing the truth (v. 21), suppressing that truth in unrighteousness (v. 18), and exchanging the truth for a lie (v. 24).
- ▶ Willful ignorance results in the unbeliever’s separation from divine life, which forms one of the causes for his walking in the futility of his mind.

❑ **Hardened heart**

- ▶ “hearts” → the control center of the individual; the source from which one’s thoughts, words, actions, and intentions derive.
- ▶ The Gentiles are described as having hardened hearts, a condition identical to that of the Jews (John 12:40; Rom. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:14).
- ▶ A hard heart is impenetrable to divine revelation and instruction. In the flow of Paul’s argument, it is the originating cause of the unbeliever’s lifestyle that results in willful ignorance, spiritual alienation, darkened understanding, and thus futile thinking.

❑ **Moral apathy**

- ▶ “callous” → dull, numb, dead to feeling, but here in a moral sense of being insensitive or numb toward God and his ways.
- ▶ The Gentile condition, beginning with futile thinking and ending at hardened hearts, results in an apathy toward God and morality. Their immoral practices do not stir up any guilt or shame as they should. They are spiritually and morally anesthetized to what is right and wrong.
- ▶ Cf. 1 Timothy 4:2

b. Manifested in the Old Behaviors (4:19b)

❑ **Unrestrained desires**

- ▶ “They . . . have given themselves up” → meaning “to hand over” or “deliver over” something, used of the Jews delivering over Jesus to the

Romans for execution (Acts 3:13). In this case, the unbeliever is both the subject and the object, the initiator and the victim of his own action.

- ▶ Cf. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28 where God is said to “give up” unbelievers to their own sinful passions as a judgment on them. That which the sinner most desired becomes his own punishment.
- ▶ “sensuality” → licentiousness, undue freedom, i.e., a complete lack of restraint or moral boundaries. It goes beyond sexual lust (Mark 7:22; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19) to encompass drunkenness (Rom. 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:3) or any form of unrestrained desire (2 Pet. 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4).
- ▶ The Gentile (= unbeliever) has given himself over to unrestrained desires, with no intention of limiting or constraining himself regardless of social or moral sensibilities. He is self-delivered to “the practice of sin without concern as to what God or people think” (Hoehner, 590).

❑ **Moral impurity**

- ▶ “impurity” → refers to that which is unclean, foul, or impure, whether something physical like a wound or moral like sexual sin (Rom. 1:24; Gal. 5:19) or other general acts (Rom. 6:19; 2 Cor 12:21; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:3; 4:7).
- ▶ Here it refers to the entirety of the person. In every area of life, the unbeliever is defiled by moral impurity which he “practices” to the point at which it becomes his most natural occupation.

❑ **Unsatisfied avarice**

- ▶ “greedy” → covetousness; i.e., to want more of something regardless of whether it is needed.
- ▶ Greed is the underlying motivation behind the unbeliever’s conduct. He wants more of that which he desires, and since he has given himself over to unrestrained desires, he occupies himself with every kind of impurity—whatever he believes will bring him satisfaction, regardless of what God or others think.

Relationship between Ephesians 4 and Romans 1

Ephesians 4	Romans 1
Futile minds (v. 17)	Futile thinking (v. 21)
Darkened understanding (v. 18)	Darkened hearts (v. 21)
Spiritual alienation (v. 18)	Wrath of God revealed (v. 18)
Willful ignorance (v. 18)	What can be known about God is plain (v. 19) His invisible attributes clearly perceived (v. 20) Without excuse (v. 20) Knew God but did not honor him as God (v. 21) Claiming to be wise, they became fools (v. 22) Exchanged the truth about God for a lie (v. 25)
Moral apathy (v. 19)	They knew God's righteous decree (v. 32)
Given themselves up (v. 19)	God gave them up (v. 24, 26, 28)
Unrestrained desires (v. 19)	Dishonorable passions (v. 26) Gave up natural relations for unnatural (v. 26) Consumed with passion for one another (v. 27)
Moral impurity (v. 19)	Lusts of their hearts to impurity (v. 24) Filled with all manner of unrighteousness (v. 29)
Unsatisfied avarice (v. 19)	Covetousness (v. 29)

2. The Work of the Gospel (4:20–24)

- ▣ The “Gentile walk” (v. 17) is completely antithetical to the tenets of the Christian gospel. The gospel has introduced a fundamental change in the identity of the believer, and this change is completely at odds with the believer’s former way of life.
- ▣ **“learned Christ”** → this phrase summarizes the overall effect and ultimate goal of gospel preaching. It is not enough to merely assent to facts about Christ. The goal of gospel preaching and the outcome of gospel conversion is personal knowledge of Christ. See the language of 1 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:6.
- ▣ **“heard about him...and were taught in him”** → an expansion and summary of what it means to “learn Christ.”

- ▶ “Hearing about” Christ happens through gospel proclamation (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 1:15).
- ▶ “Being taught” in Christ happens through daily training and instruction, both personally through Bible study and formally through gifted teachers in the church.
- **“the truth is in Jesus”** → truth is located in the historical person of Jesus. He is the embodiment of truth (cf. John 14:6) and in complete contrast to the falsehood that characterizes the unbeliever (vv. 17–19).
- Verses 20–21 could be summarized this way: “Since you certainly heard about Christ through gospel preaching and were taught in him as part of ongoing discipleship and sanctification, then you did not learn Christ as the conduct which marks unbelievers!”
- What follows is an outlining of the work of the gospel in the believer’s life, from his past conversion, his ongoing renewal, and his new identity in Christ.

a. The Old Man Has Been Put Off (4:22)

- At conversion, the unregenerate person [“the old man”], characterized by the old lifestyle and being continually corrupted by deceitful desires, was put off and crucified with Christ.
- **“to put off”** → lit. used to describe taking off articles of clothing (cf. Acts 7:58). Here it is used in a figurative sense of ridding oneself of the “old man” (see below). There are two ways to understand the verbs of vv. 22–24:
 - ▶ **Imperatives:** “that you *should put off* the old man...and *be renewed*...and put on the new man”
 - ▶ **Indicatives:** “that you *have put off* the old man...and *are being renewed*...and *have put on* the new man”
- **“your old self”** → lit., “the old man,” referring to the unregenerate self. This isn’t speaking of a person’s former nature nor to one’s former lifestyle, but rather the person’s identity in the person of Adam, i.e., who he or she was before conversion.
 - ▶ See **Romans 6:6**, where the “old self” is crucified with Christ so that the “body of sin” might be brought not nothing and so the person is no longer enslaved to sin.
 - ▶ See **Colossians 3:9** where the “old self” was put off. Here the old self is integrally connected with “its practices.”
 - ▶ “‘Our old man’ is not our Adamic, or sin, ‘nature,’ which is judged and dethroned on the cross and to which is ‘added’ in the believer another

‘nature,’ ‘the new man.’ Rather, the ‘old man’ is what we were ‘in Adam,’ the ‘man’ of the old era, who lives under the tyranny of sin and death” (Moo, *Romans*, 390).

- ▶ “What was crucified with Christ as not part of me called my old nature, but the whole of me as I was before I was converted” (Stott, *Man Made New*, 45).

- ❑ The “old man” is characterized by **“the former manner of life,”** i.e., the Gentile walk of vv. 17–19.
- ❑ The “old man” is **“being corrupted”** in connection with **“deceitful desires,”** i.e., desires which are characterized and sourced in falsehood and lies promising life and satisfaction.

b. The Mind Is Being Renewed (4:23)

- ❑ Having stripped off the “old man,” the believer is having his mind repeatedly and continually renewed by God.
- ❑ **“be renewed”** → better, “and are being renewed,” meaning this is something continually happening in the believer’s life.
- ❑ **“in the spirit of your minds”** → or better, “in the spirit, meaning, your minds.” This is not the Holy Spirit, but the human spirit, and synonymous with the mind.
 - ▶ Renewal of the mind is how the believer is transformed and no longer conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2)
 - ▶ The inner self is being renewed day by day even though the outer self is wasting away (2 Cor. 4:16)
 - ▶ Renewal takes place “in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:10).
 - ▶ Renewal takes place by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)
- ❑ “Renewal of the ‘spirit of your minds’ gets to the core of the transformational effect of regeneration and justification in the life of the genuine believer” (Baugh).
- ❑ The behaviors and practices of the unbeliever are linked to a corrupted mindset (vv. 17–19). Therefore, as the believer has put off his unregenerate self at conversion, his mind is being renewed to think differently. This necessarily results in a different set of behaviors and practices (vv. 25–31).

c. The New Man Has Been Put On (4:24)

- ❑ At conversion, the “new man” was put on in place of the old man. There is no dualism in the Christian life. The believer doesn’t battle between two persons in him, his old self and his new self. The old self has been completely removed and crucified with Christ and has been replaced by the new self.
- ❑ The new self was **“created after the likeness of God,”** lit., “according to God.” See Colossians 3:10 where Paul says the new self “is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”
- ❑ In Ephesians 2:10, the believer is created in Christ Jesus for good works. Here, Paul expands on that by noting that the new self is created **“in true righteousness and holiness,”** meaning that just as the old man is integrally connected with the “former manner of life” (v. 22), so the new man is integrally connected with the new conduct to be discussed in vv. 25–32.
- ❑ See also **2 Corinthians 5:17** and **Galatians 6:15**

Relationship between the Old Self and the New Self

Old Self (unregenerate man)	New Self (regenerate man)
Belongs to the former manner of life	Belongs to the new manner of life
Is being corrupted through deceitful desires	Was created in God’s likeness in true righteousness and holiness
Was put off at conversion	Was put on at conversion

3. The New Walk (4:25–32)

- ❑ New identity in Christ must lead to new practices and behaviors
- ❑ While the “old man” was put off, the practices of the old man linger and must be put off and replaced by practices aligning with the believer’s “new man”
- ❑ The “old man” was being corrupted through deceitful desires (4:22). The “new man” was created in God’s image (4:24). The practices which flow from that “new man” must therefore reflect Godly behaviors and practices.
- ❑ Overall structure of vv. 25–32 (with one exception, in v. 26 where the pattern is reversed):
 - ▶ Negative command (stop doing this...)
 - ▶ Positive command (start doing this...)
 - ▶ Reason (because of this...)
- ❑ **Note:** Even though each of these injunctions may be broadly applied to how believers should relate to everyone, the immediate context clearly has in mind how believers are to treat *one another in the body of Christ*. Paul’s primary focus continues to be on *body* dynamics. Cf. John 13:35.

a. Speak truth rather than falsehood (4:25)

- ❑ **Negative: “having put away falsehood”** → lit., “having put off the lie.”
 - ▶ “The lie” probably refers simply to “falsehood” in general, since “truth” is to be spoken instead.
 - ▶ However, it is possible to connect “the lie” specifically with the “old man” (v. 22). Just as the old man was “put off” [ἀποτίθημι] in the past at conversion, so the believer speaks the truth “having [already] put off [ἀποτίθημι] ‘the lie’” = the old man. Further, we might link “the lie” [τὸ ψεῦδος] with Paul’s statement in Romans 1:25 that man “exchanged the truth about God with the lie [τῷ ψεύδει],” a link which carries some weight considering the unique parallels already explored between Eph. 4:17–19 and Rom. 1:18–32.
- ❑ **Positive: “let each one of you speak truth to his neighbor”** → direct quotation from Zechariah 8:16.
 - ▶ There, the prophet, having spoken of the blessings to come in the messianic kingdom (8:1–8) and having adjured them to continue in the present construction of the post-exilic temple (8:9–13), then encourages God’s people to live in light of what God *will do* (8:14–17).

- ▶ Here, Paul uses these same words to encourage Christians to live in light of what God *has done*. The days of living in deceit and falsehood concluded when the “old man” was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6).

□ **Reason: “for we are members one of another”** → A disease in one part of the body affects the whole. Similarly, deception and lies are harmful not just to individuals but to the entire body. In contrast, truth permeates the body like a salve, bringing life and vitality and growth.

b. Be Angry but don’t sin (4:26–27)

□ **Positive: “Be angry”** → Since man is created in God’s image, it’s appropriate to reflect God’s emotions and attributes, including anger. Anger at its root is a response to a perceived injustice. It’s just as significant for someone to never be angry as for him to always be angry. Anger in response to sin is not a bad thing.

□ **Negative: “and do not sin”** → The key is the appropriate use and control of anger. Anger becomes sinful when (1) it is against the wrong thing [one’s perception of an injustice may not reflect the truth], (2) it leads to resentment, bitterness, and division, or (2) when personal vengeance is taken rather entrusted to the Lord.

- ▶ This is a direct quotation of Psalm 4:4, where David admonishes his adversaries who “love vain words,” “seek after lies,” and attempt to turn David’s honor to into shame (4:2). He reminds them that God faithfully hears David’s prayers for help and warns them to “be angry and do not sin.”

- ▶ “The Psalmist advises his adversaries to keep their rage within themselves, to maintain control of their actions and their evil words” (Craigie, *Psalms* 1–50, 81).

- ▶ Paul’s encouragement picks up on this idea of self-control, just as they are to be “gentle” toward one another (4:2), i.e., always angry at the right thing and never at the wrong thing.

□ **Means: “do not let the sun go down on your anger”** → this is a proverb found even outside the NT and emphasizes quick response to anger. Believers should deal quickly with anger and seek reconciliation with the parties involved. The more time elapses, the greater chance that bitterness and resentment will set in.

□ **Reason: “and give no opportunity to the devil”** → unresolved anger opens the door for Satan to work in the individual and, more significantly, in the church. Anger is a key source for disunity, especially when individuals try to usurp God’s place as executors of justice. Cf. Romans 12:17–21; James 1:20.

c. **Work hard rather than steal (4:28)**

- ❑ **Negative: “Let the thief no longer steal”** → The thief here most likely refers to the day laborer who at that time had no social welfare system to fall back on if he couldn’t find gainful employment. He was then left with seemingly no other choice but to steal (perhaps from his employer) to meet his needs and those of his dependents.
- ❑ **Positive: “but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands”** → The believer is to expend his energy by lit., “working what is good with his own hands.” Rather than using his hands in a way that injures others (by stealing from them), the Christian is to work with his hands and come about income through labors which produce beneficial results.
- ❑ **Reason: “so that he might have something to share with anyone in need”** → the motivation for labor is not earning an income for self-indulgence but so that one might be able to share the fruit of his labor with those who are in need. The believer is to live within the church in such a ways that he may “sense real needs and then share the fruit of diligent labor” (Hoehner, 627).
 - ▶ **Isn’t work a consequence of the fall?** “The exercise of dominion is a consequence of the image of God. Humanity is to gain an understanding and control of the creation, developing it to its ultimate potential for its own good and for God.... Note that the exercise of dominion was part of God’s original intention for humanity; it preceded the fall. Work, then, is not a curse, but part of God’s good plan. The basis for the work ethic is to be found in the very nature of what God created us to be” (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 535).
 - ▶ **What is the outcome of hard work?** (1) It provides for our material needs (1 Thess 4:11–12); (2) It provides something useful for us to do (as opposed to idleness; cf. 2 Thess. 3:6–12; 1 Tim. 5:13; Prov. 31:27); (3) It enables us to materially help others who are in need (Luke 3:11; Acts 2:45; 4:35; Rom. 12:8; 15:25–28; 1 Cor. 16:1–4).
 - ▶ **What should someone do who can’t find gainful employment?** The lesson for the believer involves a balance of personal responsibility and humble trust in the Lord. The believer must pursue work and seek for it. But he must also recognize that God has established the church as a way for those with real needs such as unemployment and financial trouble to have their needs met. He must trust that God will provide for him through the family of believers as he continues to seek out a way of “working what is good with his own hands” (Eph. 4:28) so that he may “walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one” (1 Thess. 4:12).

d. Use words that edify rather than corrupt (4:29–30)

- ❑ **Negative [1]: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths”** → refers to any and every word which is unprofitable or not useful for spiritual growth. It’s broader than simply foul language (although the term may encompass that idea). It speaks of words that are useless, like food that has gone bad and is no longer good to eat (cf. Matt. 7:17; 23:33; 13:48; Jas. 3:2–8; Rom. 3:13–14).
- ❑ **Positive: “but only such as is good or building up, as fits the occasion”** → Christians should be marked by speech which is beneficial and profitable for what is needed for growth in other Christians and in the church body. Since the presence of the “new man” is indicative of a heart change, the words that flow from his mouth should reflect that change (cf. Matt. 12:33–37; Col. 3:16–17; 1 Thess. 5:11).
- ❑ **Reason [1]: “that it may give grace to those who hear”** → the goal of one’s speech is to give grace to others, as is modeled by Christ himself (cf. Luke 4:22).
 - ▶ “In Ephesians...the expression ‘give grace to’ has a specific theological meaning: it refers to a gift that enables the recipient to accomplish the task God has given them (3:2, 7, 8; 4:7). Since Paul has just spoken of building up another where the need exists, it seems probable that this purpose clause carries the thought even further and speaks of enabling needy people to function in the way God intended them to function in the body of Christ (cf 4:16)” (Thielman, 317).
- ❑ **Reason [2]: “and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...”** → a second reason for careful, edifying speech. Corrupting speech causes the Holy Spirit sorrow and grief.
 - ▶ The fact that he can be grieved by people is indicative of the Holy Spirit’s personhood. Inanimate objects or mere forces do not have emotion and cannot react this way to immoral behaviors. Only because the Holy Spirit is an actual *person* can he be grieved in the same way God the Father and God the Son respond to sin and immorality.
 - ▶ Paul notes that the Holy Spirit seals the believer as belonging to God (cf. Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22) and marking him until the day when redemption, which was initiated at the cross and resurrection, is fully accomplished at the second coming of Christ (cf. Phil. 1:10; 2:16).
 - ▶ **Isaiah 63:9–10** closely parallels this verse. The prophet spoke of how God’s people, whom God had redeemed, nevertheless “rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.” They lived *inconsistent* with their status as God’s people. Thus, with this text in the background, Paul exhorts his readers to live *consistently* with their status as God’s redeemed people. “What in Isaiah was a tragic account of how Israel had behaved toward the God

who had redeemed them has for Paul become an admonition not to follow in the path of God's ancient people" (Thielman, 318).

e. Act kindly rather than maliciously (4:31–32)

❑ **Negative: "Let all bitterness...be put away from you, along with all malice"** → the following terms deal with the believer's actions and their underlying moods and motivations. All of these must be removed in dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit.

- ▶ **"bitterness"** → refers to one's *attitude* which is marked by bitterness and resentment. The term is used to refer to something sharp or pointed, as well as to food or plants with bitter flavor or sharp, pungent aroma.
- ▶ **"wrath and anger"** → refers to one's *disposition*. The two terms are virtually synonyms and used interchangeably in the NT. "Wrath" (*thumos*) could indicate explosive anger, i.e., "rage," "hotheadedness," while "anger" (*orge*) seems to denote a deep-seated and churning anger which finally boils over.
- ▶ **"clamor and slander"** → refers to one's *speech*. "Clamor" refers to loud shouting such as in intense arguing or fighting, while "slander" (*blasphemia*) denotes speech that defames or abuses others.
- ▶ **"malice"** → refers to one's *motivation*. This is the key word of the verse, and the one which defines and colors all the other words. It means "bad" or "wicked," and refers to a vicious intention.

❑ **Positive: "Be kind...to one another"** →

- ▶ **"kind"** → meaning loving and benevolent. It appears in the NT in the context of Christ's easy yoke (Matt. 11:30), the pleasantness of old wine (Luke 5:39), the kindness of God toward ungrateful and evil men (Luke 6:35) and which leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4), the good morals which are corrupted by bad company (1 Cor. 15:33), and the kindness of the Lord which believers taste in salvation (1 Pet. 2:3). It describes the believer's expected *attitude* and *disposition* toward other Christians.
- ▶ **"tenderhearted"** → this word is related to that which often describes the bowels or internal organs and which was connected with a person's emotions. It is the term used of Jesus having "compassion" on the crowd because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36). It beckons believers to respond in humble understanding of one another's weaknesses.
- ▶ **"forgiving one another"** → better rendered, "showing grace to one another." This is the verb form the word for grace. It means to show one

another unmerited and undeserved favor. Of course, it involves forgiving each other (cf. Col. 2:13), but also goes far beyond it.

- **Reason: “as God in Christ forgave you”** → God’s grace toward us in Christ is both the supreme reason and the ultimate motivation for why we are to maintain a disposition of kindness, compassion, and grace toward believers in the church. How can we, who have “tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Pet. 2:3) and will experience the “immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7) not in turn show the same kindness, grace, and compassion to each other? Such is the only reasonable behavior or those who have put on the “new man” who is made in the image of God.