



August 2023

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love (Ephesians 4:2, KJV)

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2, NIV)

...pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing difference and quick at mending fences (Ephesians 4:2, The Message, by Eugene Peterson)

When we “forbear” or “bear with” or pour ourselves out” for others, among other things it means we do not act or react against someone, or say something negative about them, when we have the right (or think we have the right) to do so.

Forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out for others is, in my opinion, one of the biggest lessons we can learn from the pandemic that began in 2019. This pandemic seemed to accelerate divisive, ill-tempered and downright nasty, cruel behaviors.

Forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out means putting up with foibles, faults, differences and conflicting opinions of others, not to mention their shortcomings. It is a lesson that CAN be learned from the COVID pandemic and the negativity it leaves in its wake.

Forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out is a Christ-centered call to tolerate the weaknesses of others and not to allow differences to get the better of our relationships with others. It means, at times, swallowing our pride and giving up the right to “be right.”

But many have allowed the upheaval and the emotions produced by the COVID pandemic to take them in a completely opposite direction. They are seemingly more judgmental, more critical, more filled with condemnation and less tolerant than ever—such divisive and alienating behaviors are seen on both sides of the political spectrum—Republican and Democrat.

In our world today, we are constantly bombarded with messages like “you don’t have to put up with that!” When someone hurts or offends us, when they say or do something that troubles us, our culture urges us to do something about it. Stand up! Respond! Retaliate! Repay!

In a real and eternal way. God puts up with us. Always. Forever. He stands up... FOR us... not against us! God does not tolerate or compromise with immorality—but he puts up with, forgives and has mercy on us. The gospel of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament tells us, among other directives, *to love one another, serve one another, help one another, encourage one another, be patient with one another, and bear with one another.*

Sadly, today, as few other times in our lives, it seems confused, frustrated and anxious people in our world are all too quick and willing to point fingers at what they see as shortcomings and inadequacies in others. It’s called the blame game, and it has reached new heights of bullying and shaming during these past few years in our hopelessly polarized political world.

Forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out is all about surrendering our pride, our ego and our vanity, and seeking him—it's about new life in Christ, serving others as he serves us and as he lives in us, producing his life of service, self-sacrifice, humility and vulnerability in us.

Forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out is all about the grace of God being lavishly poured out on us, without discrimination, whether we “deserve” it or not (which we never do, of course). On our part, **life in Christ**, as a Christ-follower, is about serving others in Jesus' name so that we pass on that same lavish grace, without discrimination, in the lives of others.

Life in Christ is not a detached life in which we observe, judge and condemn those who disagree with us. **Life in Christ** is about humility and vulnerability—the very humility and vulnerability of our risen Lord who lives within us. **Life in Christ** is no strings attached. When we accept his invitation to follow him, we are all in, totally committed to serving him.

Life in Christ is not a spectator sport, but rather it is humility, vulnerability, self-sacrifice and service in the trenches, in life where it is lived, however uncomfortable and difficult and frustrating real life is (have you noticed?).

When we live in Christ, and he in us, we have no time to compare ourselves with others and feel better or justified by doing so. When we live in Christ, and he in us, his humility, vulnerability and willingness to serve permeate our very being in much the same way as blood flows through our veins. When we live in Christ, and he in us, we serve others in his name, asking no questions about whether they are worthy of our time and love, just as Jesus asks no such questions about us.

As we live in Christ and he in us, we grow and mature in him, even during times of heartache and suffering, and perhaps especially during times of heartache and suffering. As we reflect on the COVID pandemic, our thoughts focus on healthcare professionals—doctors, nurses and first responders. We think of urgent care, emergency and intensive care professionals.

The spiritual lessons are real and somewhat obvious. We are all in need of urgent care—indeed of intensive care. We are all infected by a spiritual virus, which takes us away from God, and we need healing from the Great Physician.

Waiting rooms and hospital wards do not discriminate—we wait and we are treated together—rich and poor, white, black and brown. Young and old, employed and unemployed, homeowners and renters, male and female—we are all in need of help, care and healing. Distinctions of race, class and pride slip away when we are faced with death. God's grace motivates us to pull for everyone else.

In intensive care, vanity and pretense melt away. By God's grace, we begin to realize that loving others is what life is all about, and more than that, for Christ-followers, loving others and serving others in his name with humility and vulnerability, is what life in Christ is all about.

Marriage is another physical relationship that shines a spotlight on the critical importance of *forbearing, bearing with and pouring oneself out* for others—for one's spouse and for children, when they become part of the family unit. We learn what irritates our spouse and try to avoid it. We learn what pleases them and we accentuate those behaviors. Ideally, as parents, we are patient and tolerant and loving of our children.

Not every person who is married learns to *forbear, bear with and pour themselves out*, but newly married couples quickly learn their spouse is all-too-willing to teach them this lesson!

While looking for a book on one of my bookshelves, one of the titles reminded me of a story called “Honeymoon Prayers”—

A couple got married and spent their first night at the bride’s home. She told her husband that she had grown up with the habit of praying before she went to bed, and that she wanted to start her married life by having her husband join her. He said, “Not me. I have never prayed a single prayer in all my life.”

“I don’t care,” she insisted. “You will pray tonight.”

He joined her in prayer.

The next day while arriving in the kitchen for breakfast the new husband experienced another custom in his bride’s family. Every morning the family gathered around the table in what they called a “family circle.” Each member of the family offered an inspirational thought, a biblical verse or a request for prayers for a challenge they were facing that day.

As each person took their turn the new husband decided he would have a little fun when it was his turn to speak. “I did something last night I never did before” he announced solemnly. Of course, he had everyone’s attention.

His bride quickly interrupted him and said, “Yes, and if you don’t mind your manners, I’ll tell everyone how awkward you were doing it.”

The new husband and wife were just beginning their lives together, and doing so with some good-natured kidding, while at the same time beginning to realize that marriage is best when it involves give and take, compromise and a willingness to either be, or be perceived as silly, or just wrong.

They both wanted things their way. They both wanted to be seen as right. Hopefully, as the story of their marriage continued, as they matured, this fun story about this new couple was just the beginning as they learned to *forbear, bear with, and pour themselves out* for each other.

My dear friends, my precious brothers and sisters in Christ, let us “*run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...*” (Hebrews 12:1-2). May we continue to focus on Jesus, him, the center and core of our faith, “*for in him we live and move and have our being*” (Acts 17:28). He and he alone is “*the way, the truth and the life*” (John 14:6).

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from Canada, and THANK YOU for your part in all that we do!

I appreciate all the messages going deeper into the thoughts of our fantastic God—new ways of thinking about grace, mercy and forgiveness. Keep up this fine work, and thank you for all that you do!

CWR/PTM Prayer List—August 2023

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

I'm 95 years young. Please pray for me to have better health, more energy and for me to feel better. Please also pray about my granddaughter's job situation.—California

I look forward to receiving my PTM package each month—keep up the good work! I am thankful to be a part of this work, and I pray for everyone involved in PTM and your families every day. God bless all of you.—Alabama

Please pray for continued healing, strength and protection for me and my family. Thank you for your prayers.—Delaware

Thank you for your prayers for my heart valve surgery, which went well. I am doing better. But I developed fluid in both ears and I need your prayers for that.—Louisiana

Please pray for healing for my friend. She needs to be able to eat and drink again regularly. She has a blockage that needs to be healed. Thanks for caring and thank you to everyone for your prayers.—Idaho

Please pray for a good friend who is going through chemo treatments right now. May God bless him with healing, comfort and continued strength.—California

Please pray for our family's health and safety, and that we will grow into a closer relationship with Jesus.—South Korea

Please pray for all those suffering in war-torn lands like Ukraine, as well as earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria.—Minnesota

Please pray for my nephew who had thyroid cancer and is recovering from surgery.—Michigan

Please pray that my cat-scan will not show cancer in my liver or intestines, and please pray for God's healing.—Maine

Please pray for my cousin—both of his parents recently died following complications from COVID. He was living with them, and now he's facing some difficult decisions, along with the grief of losing both parents in a short time.—North Carolina

Please pray for the people in Ohio who will have to deal with toxic chemicals in their water and soil for years to come after the train derailment.—Texas

Please pray for a dear friend who recently lost his brother after a lengthy illness. Please pray for comfort, encouragement and peace for the entire family.—Missouri

I'm single and live on my own. I have difficulty with attendance at work due to depression. Please pray that my doctor will renew my medical excuse and that I can keep my job.—Wisconsin

I have shingles and I also recently had a kidney stone attack, both of which are very painful. Please pray that God will take this pain away and heal me.—Georgia

Please pray for my husband, who is in a toxic work environment. He's been praying about it and sending out applications but he keeps getting rejection letters. Please pray for his encouragement and for a fresh job opportunity for him.—Virginia

Please continue to remember us "elderly folks" as we struggle financially and with health difficulties. Living month-to-month can be a stressful and tough struggle.—Tennessee

Please pray for my mom. She lost her hearing and she struggles with memory loss, body aches and high blood pressure. Thank you for your prayers and for all the encouragement you provide.—California

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.