

# Tolerance vs. Condemnation

***Tolerance is making allowances for those who lack wisdom or maturity and praying that they will see and follow God's ways.***

- Parallel Biblical word: longsuffering (patience), forbearance or fortitude
- Tolerance presupposes a standard of conduct by which all other behavior is measured.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)***

- There is an absolute standard for weights and measurements that is a constant reference for fairness and achievement in the world.

*We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. **2 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV)***

- Refusal to acknowledge or correct wrong decisions is not tolerance, but simple-mindedness.

## **Tolerance for Believers**

*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)***

*so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. **1 Corinthians 12:25-27 (NIV)***

- Tolerance is showing people that we are more concerned about communicating Christ's love than correcting wrong ideas or behavior.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **1 Corinthians 13:4 (NIV)***

*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

### **1 Corinthians 6:15-17 (NIV)**

- God's standard, Church discipline, shunning

*But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.* **1 Corinthians 5:11 (NIV)**

- Every believer is affected by what one believer does, the Bible gives a series of "one another" commands in order to...

*to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* **Ephesians 4:12-13**

### **Tolerance Toward Unbelievers**

- A believer is to have a greater tolerance for unbelievers than he has for fellow believers

*I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.* **1 Corinthians 5:9-10 (NIV)**

*What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."*

### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (NIV)**

- Tolerance is motivated by remembering how patient God has been with us in our failures.

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.* **Psalms 103:8-14 (NIV)**

“Compassion will cure more sins than condemnation”—Henry Ward Beecher

## **Romans 13:1-7      Submitting to Authorities**

### **How to Show Tolerance**

- Tolerance is looking beyond the wrong ideas and behavior of a people and seeing the needs and struggles in their lives. One who is tolerant is more concerned about showing love to people than convincing them of the error of their ways.
- To tolerate people means to not argue with them. This is consistent with the instruction of Scripture.

*And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 2 Timothy 2:24 (NIV)*

- We are also to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, which produce unprofitable debate.
- There is an important distinction between tolerance of immaturity and our responsibility to reprove evil.

*Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

### **Ephesians 5:11 (NIV)**

“How far you will go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because some day in life you will have been all of these.”—George Washington Carver

- Tolerance is not changing God's standards but living them out in such a way that others will want to follow them.

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)*

- Never mistake God's tolerance for a sinner as tolerance for sin.

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

### **2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)**

## The Need and Purpose of Tolerance

- One of the consistent traits of human nature is to be intolerant of the faults in other people that are similar to our own weaknesses. Therefore, the need for tolerance in others should be viewed as God's motivation for us to examine ourselves in that same area and correct any deficiencies, so that we can clearly and lovingly see how to help others.

### 1. Israel's rejection of the Promised Land

- When the nation of Israel re-fused to enter the Promised Land, God determined to destroy them. However, Moses appealed to God to be longsuffering and have tolerance. God listened to Moses but stated that all those who rebelled would die and that only their children would see the land. (See Numbers 14:11-30.)

### 2. David's sin with Bathsheba

- When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then killed her husband in an attempt to cover it up, God forgave David when he repented. David praised God for His tolerance.

*But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Psalm 86:15 (NIV)*

- However, the temporal consequences of David's sin were still to come.

### 2 Samuel 12:9-14

### 3. Nineveh's corruption by wickedness

- The great city of Nineveh is remembered for its corruption and cruelty. Therefore, God determined to destroy it. When Jonah warned the people that judgment would come in forty days, they all repented in sackcloth and ashes.
- God heard their cry and withheld destruction for over one hundred years.

### Jonah 3:4-9

*On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth.*

*Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."* **Jonah 3:4-9**

- God postpones the consequences of sin in order to motivate those who are breaking His laws to repent and turn back to His ways.
- A parent wanting to learn tolerance needs only to consider God's care of His children.

*As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;* **Psalm 103:13 (NIV)**

To keep one's voice sweet, one's face bright, one's will steady, one's patience unperturbed, in the arena of the home, in the light of one's own family, is no light task."—Margaret Sangster

- Tolerance is taking others by the hand and leading them to maturity.
- Irritations are opportunities to demonstrate tolerance.

*remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.* **James 5:20 (NIV)**