

the grace to put to nought every strand of the web of bitterness that has been woven in the heart. Leave nothing for pride to cling to -- get rid of it all.

This sounds so simplistic, but anyone who has struggled with bitterness knows how difficult it can be. Once it is forsaken, there must be the determination to reject any attempt to revive it in the future. This can only be accomplished if the right thing is introduced to take the place of the bitterness.

Kindness, compassion, and forgiveness are the Scriptural replacements for bitterness (Eph. 4:31). To forgive in this case is the translation of *χαριζόμενοι* which has the wider meaning of dealing graciously with a person. The manner in which this is to be done is described as "just as in Christ God forgave you." This phrase eliminates all justification for retaining bitterness.

Col. 3:12-14 is a parallel passage to Eph. 4:31-32.

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

In this passage Paul uses the word *πραΰτητα* which is translated "gentleness." It is this which was the hallmark of Christ's character (Matt. 11:29) and that which he taught was essential to the character of His followers (Matt. 5:5). W. E. Vine defines it as an "inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly toward God. It is that temper of Spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or