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Our loving, tenderhearted heavenly Father wants us to live abundantly. One category of abundant living is our relationships with our loved ones—those in our earthly families as well as fellow believers. What do we do if we are offended by the behavior of one of these loved ones? How do we handle situations like this? It is important that we keep in mind that all people fall short. At times we will need forgiveness, and at other times we will need to grant forgiveness.

In His Word, our loving God teaches us, in such a gracious way, His standard of forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 marks the importance of our forgiving one another by a figure of speech.

This figure is called *asyndeton*, which means “without conjunctions,” also referred to as “no ands.” As explained in E. W. Bullinger’s *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, “...we are not detained over the separate statements, and asked to consider each in detail, but we are hurried on over the various matters that are mentioned, as though they were of no account, in comparison with the great climax to which they lead up, and which alone we are thus asked by this figure to emphasize....” We are to be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. How? “...Even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” We forgive even as God also in Christ forgave us. This is God’s standard that He gave for us to follow. This is how we forgive one another.

In Colossians 3 we read another very similar exhortation using the figure *asyndeton*.

Colossians 3:12,13:

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

In order to further appreciate how the figure of speech *asyndeton* emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in these verses, let's consider another figure of speech that is employed in Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:31:

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

Here we see the figure *polysyndeton*, meaning “many ands.” According to Bullinger, when God uses the figure of speech *polysyndeton*, “instead of hurrying us on, breathlessly, to reach the important conclusion; we are asked to stop at each point, to weigh each matter that is presented to us, and to consider each particular that is thus added and emphasized.” This emphasis gets our attention, causing us to stop and consider each element.

All of us may be tempted to act in ways like those described in Ephesians 4:31 when we perceive that we have been offended by another. But we can stop and consider each of our thoughts and actions, and we then can choose what we will and will not allow. When we decide to put off the negatives and put on what is described in Ephesians 4:32, we will be at peace. We put on kindness and tenderheartedness. We forgive as God in Christ forgave us, so we can be free to enjoy loving relationships with others.

God teaches us His standard of how to forgive in such a gracious way. We all need forgiveness at times. Let's forgive others God's way and live abundantly!

For further study, other articles on the topic of forgiveness are “Overcoming Offences by Keeping God First” and “Forgiveness among Believers.” Learn what God says about forgiveness and remission of sins and other aspects of life at our [This Is What God Says](#) page.

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