Doctrine of Magnanimity

Definition and Description

Magnanimity is the quality of being magnanimous which is the quality of being generous in forgiving an insult or injury without being pettily resentful or vindictive. It is being noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. A believer who is magnanimous is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He is generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, and noble. He does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice. The Lord Jesus Christ is magnanimous and the apostle Paul wants the Philippian believer’s to follow suit. It is one of the functions and manifestations of the believer’s royal ambassadorship. The believer can witness with either his words (presenting the Gospel) or his actions. The magnanimous behavior of a believer manifests one of the characteristics of Christ who was generous and gracious in forgiving and tolerant in the face of insults. It is a manifestation of the Spirit and the Word’s work in the life of a believer. Magnanimous behavior among believers will resolve the personality conflicts. Magnanimity among believers will produce unity in the local assembly.

Vocabulary

The adjective *epieikos* is a compound word composed of the following: (1) Preposition *epi*), “upon.” (2) Adjective *eikos*, “reasonable, probable.” The adjective *epieikes* was employed by Homer, Xenophon, Plato, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Sophocles, Plutarch, Josephus and Philo. Liddel and Scott list the following classical meanings (Greek-English Lexicon, New Edition, page 632): (1) Fitting, meet, suitable (2) Of statements, rights, etc. (a) Reasonable, specious (b) Fair, equitable, not according to the letter of the law (3) Of persons (a) Able, capable (b) In moral sense, reasonable, fair, good (c) With social or political connotation, the upper or educated classes (4) Adverbially, fairly, tolerably, moderately (a) Probably, reasonably (b) With moderation, mildly, kindly (c) Generally, usually.

The adjective *epieikes* and the noun *epieikeia* are both derived from *eikos*, “becoming, decent,” or from *eiko*, “to yield, give way,” and mean from Homer onwards “the proper way of life,” or from Thucydides onwards “forbearance, indulgence, mildness.” *Epieikes*, together with its derivatives, was originally an expression for the balanced, intelligent, decent in outlook in contrast to
licentiousness. Then it was used for a considerate, thoughtful attitude in legal relationships which was prepared to mitigate the rigors of justice, with its laws and claims, in contrast to the attitude which demands that rights, including one’s own, should be upheld at all costs. It is opposed to unbridled anger, harshness, brutality and self-expression. It represents character traits of the noble-minded, the wise man who remains meek in the face of insults, the judge who is lenient in judgment, and the king who is kind in his rule. Hence, it appears often in pictures of the ideal ruler and in eulogies on men in high positions.

In Greek and Hellenistic philosophy both concepts express social virtues and ideals of high value. In Homer, the word meant “what is fitting, right, or equitable” where it is used for the work of the gods (Iliad, 23, 246). The word “to agree to what is right” in Aristophanes (Nu. 1438). It takes on another meaning in the writings of Plato, that of “what is serviceable” (Leg. I, 650b). Also, in Plato the word was used of the man of experience meaning “of an equable temperament” (Leg. XII, 597a). In the writings of Thucydides the word was used in the sense of the “seasoned” man (VIII, 93, 2). In Xenophon, the word meant the “reasonable” man who stays within the limits of what is moderate and orderly (Hist. Graec. I, 1, 30). Epieikes expresses moderation or kindness towards men.

Praotes, which is also translated “gentleness” in the English translations pertains more to the attitude of the individual, whereas epieikeia is related to the outward conduct of the individual. Praotes is unrestricted virtue whereas epieikeia is directed towards others. Aquinas states that epieikeia always refers to the condescension of a superior to an inferior, something praotes does not imply. He also states that praotes is passive whereas epieikeia is more active. Praotes deals with the mental attitude and epieikeia embodies itself in outward acts.

The adjective epieikes appears only 8 times in the LXX. Each time it translates sallach. The noun epieikeia and the adjective epieikes are used to describe God’s disposition as a Ruler where He can display kindness, goodness as King (1 S. 12:22; Ps. 86:5; Wis. 12:18). They are also used of the actions of earthly kings (2 Macc. 9:27) and of a prophet (2 K. 6:3).

The adjective epieikes is found 5 times in the NT (Phlp. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18). Its cognate noun epieikeia is found twice in Acts 24:4; 2 Cor. 10:1). Louw and Nida define the word, “pertaining to being gracious and forbearing – ‘gentle, gracious, forbearing’” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2, page 749). Bauer, Gingrich and Danker list the following definitions (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 292): Yielding, gentle, kind, Right-minded, Forbearing spirit, Gentleness, Adverb, more gently. The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following (page 156): Suitable, fair, reasonable, gentle, mild, patient; Mildness, gentleness, probity. The New
Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following (page 238): (1) Seemly, suitable (2) Equitable, fair, mild, gentle. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words *epieikes*, from *epi*, "unto," and *eikos*, "likely," denotes "seemly, fitting"; hence, "equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law"; it expresses that considerateness that looks "humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case"; it is rendered "gentle" in (1 Tim. 3:3), RV (KJV, "patient"), in contrast to contentiousness; in (Titus 3:2), "gentle," in association with meekness, in (Jas. 3:17), as a quality of the wisdom from above, in (1 Pet. 2:18), in association with the good; for the RV rendering "forbearance" in (Phil. 4:5), RV, In the Sept., (Esth. 8:13; Ps. 86:5).

Commenting on the adjective’s cognate noun *epieikeia*, Trench writes, “The existence of a word like *epieikeia* shows a high degree of ethical development among the Greeks. *Epieikeia* refers to the sort of moderation that recognizes that it is impossible for formal laws to anticipate and provide for all possible cases and that asserting legal rights can be dangerous since these rights can be pushed into moral wrongs, so that the highest right (*summum jus*) can in practice prove to be the greatest injustice (*summa iniuria*). By not claiming its own rights to the fullest, *epieikeia* rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice. Thus *epieikeia* is more truly just than strict justice would have been; it is ‘just and superior to the just,’ as Aristotle said. According to Brandis, ‘it namely is not what is legally just but what rectifies it.’ In Aristotle’s words, *epieikeia* is a ‘correction of law where law falls short on account of generalities,’ and he contrasted the man who stands up for the last tittle of his legal rights with the *epieikes*. Plato defined *epieikeia* as ‘a lessening of legalities and advantages.’ In a fragment of Sophocles, *epieikeia* is opposed to ‘pure justice.’ Grotius defined *epieikeia* as ‘a correction when law fails on account of generality.’ *Eugnomosyne* is similar to *epieikeia* but not as closely related to the language of ethics. *Epieikeia* always refers to drawing back from the letter of the law to preserve its spirit. Seneca emphasized this aspect of *epieikeia*: ‘It does not affect less than the just, as it were, but as it really is the most just.’ Aquinas asserted: “It is the lessening of punishment when it is proper, of course, and in what respect it is fitting.” (Synonyms of the New Testament, pages 167-168).

According to Aquinas, “They differ from each other inasmuch as *epieikeia* is a moderation of outward punishment; *praotes* strictly speaking diminishes the passion of anger” (Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, page 169). The word in the NT denotes one who is *magnanimous in their behavior*. The New Universal Unabridged Dictionary lists the following definitions for the adjective *magnanimous*: (1) Generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness: to be magnanimous towards one’s enemies. (2) High-minded; noble: a magnanimous king (3) Proceeding from or revealing nobility of mind, character, etc: a magnanimous love of justice. If we paraphrase
this definition and apply it to the Christian, we would say that the he must be: (1) Generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness especially towards one’s enemies. (2) High-minded; noble (3) Possessing nobility of mind, character, having a magnanimous love of justice.

**Philippians 4:5, “Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord is immanently near.”** The adjective *epieikes* in Philippians 4:5 means “magnanimous.” It functions here as a substantive and should be translated accordingly as “magnanimity.” Magnanimity is the quality of being magnanimous which is the quality of being generous in forgiving an insult or injury without being pettily resentful or vindictive. It is being noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. A believer who is magnanimous is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He is generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, noble, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. He does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice. The Lord Jesus Christ is magnanimous and the apostle Paul wants the Philippian believer’s to follow suit. Magnanimous behavior among the Philippian believers will resolve the personality conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. If they were magnanimous with each other in the first place, there would not have been a problem between the two.

**Documentation**

**Philippians 4:5, “Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord is immanently near.”** 1 Tim 3:3, “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but magnanimous, peaceable, free from the love of money.” Titus 3:2, “to malign no one, to be peaceable, magnanimous, showing every consideration for all men.” James 3:17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, magnanimous, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” 1 Pet 2:18, “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and magnanimous, but also to those who are unreasonable.”

Magnanimity Related to Christ: Luke 23:34, ““Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.” 2 Cor 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” Philippians 2:5-8, ”Everyone keep on thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded
existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset. On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men. In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

Magnanimity Related to Forgiveness:  Luke 17:3-4, “Be on your guard for yourselves: if your fellow-believer should sin against you (1st class condition: “and he will”) reprove him and if he should repent, forgive him. Even if 7 times in the course of the day he should sin against you, and 7 times in the course of the day he should return to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.” Ephesians 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be gracious to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, put on as the elect of God, separate and beloved, compassionate affections, graciousness, wisdom, humility, patient-endurance; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint another, even as the Lord Christ forgave all of you, so also you should forgive others.”

Magnanimity Related to Humility:  Philippians 2:1-4, “Therefore, if...and there is, any encouragement in Christ, if...and there is, any motivation from virtue-love, if...and there is, any fellowship through the Spirit, if...and there is, any compassionate affections. Consummate this happiness of mine, namely that all of you may keep on thinking the same by all of you possessing the same virtue-love, united in soul. All of you keep on thinking the one thing. Never (thinking) according to inordinate ambition nor according to self-deception but with humility. All of you keep on regarding each other as better than yourselves. Each stop being occupied with your own circumstances but rather the circumstances of others.” 1 Peter 5:5-6, "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders (pastor-teachers); and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." 1 Peter 5:5, "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Magnanimity Related to Undeserved Suffering: Matt 5:39-42, “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.
Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.” 1 Cor 6:7, “Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” 1 Pet 2:18-23, “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this {finds} favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer {for it} you patiently endure it, this {finds} favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting {Himself} to Him who judges righteously.” 1 Pet 3:14-17, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, {you} are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always {being} ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

Magnanimity Related to Virtue-Love: Matthew 5:43-48, “You have heard that it was said, ‘you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, virtuously love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 19:19, “You shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39, “You shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.” Mark 12:31, “You shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 6:27-35, “But I say to you who hear, virtuously love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do
not demand it back. And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way. And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount. But virtuously love your enemies, and do divine good of intrinsic value, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.” John 13:34, "A new commandment I give to you, that you virtuously love one another, even as I have virtuously loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples (mathetes, “technical students of Bible Doctrine”), if (maybe you will, maybe you won’t) you have love for one another.” John 15:12, “This is my commandment, that you virtuously love one another, just as I virtuously loved you.” Romans 12:9-21, “Let virtue love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; clinging to what is good. Be devoted to one another (Royal Family) in brotherly love (phileo); give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in confident expectation of blessing, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty (arrogant) in mind, but associate with the lowly (spiritually immature). Do not be wise in your estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone (believer and unbeliever). Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved (Royal Family), but leave room for the wrath of God (Supreme Court of Heaven), for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. ‘But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, given him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with divine good of intrinsic value.” Romans 13:8-10, “Owe nothing to anyone except to virtuously love one another; for he who virtuously loves his neighbor (believer and unbeliever) has fulfilled the law. For this, ‘you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘you shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.’ Virtue-love does no wrong to a neighbor; Virtue-love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.” 1 Cor 8:13, “Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, “Virtue-love is patient,
virtue-love is kind, and is not jealous; Virtue-love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it (virtue love) does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Virtue-love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:13, “But now abide (live in) doctrine, confident expectation of blessings, virtue-love, these three; but the greatest of these is virtue-love.” Galatians 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but doctrine working through virtue love.” Galatians 5:13-14, “For you were called (elected) to (spiritual) freedom, brethren (Royal Family); only do not turn your spiritual freedom into an opportunity for the old sin nature, but through virtue-love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word (agape, “virtue love”), in the statement, ‘you shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.’ Galatians 5:13-14, “For you were called (elected) to (spiritual) freedom, brethren (Royal Family); only do not turn your spiritual freedom into an opportunity for the old sin nature, but through virtue-love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word (agape, “virtue love”), in the statement, ‘you shall virtuously love your neighbor as yourself.’ Ephesians 4:1-2, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another by means of virtue-love.” Ephesians 5:1-2, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children (Royal Family); and walk (live your life) by means of virtue love, just as Christ also virtuously loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, virtuously love your wives, just as Christ also virtuously loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” 1 Thessalonians 3:12, “And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in virtue-love for one another, and for all men (including the unbeliever), just as we also do for you.” 1 Peter 3:8-9, “And in summation, all be of one attitude, sympathizing, virtuously loving the royal family, compassionate, humble-minded, not rendering evil for evil, or insult for insult, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that for this purpose you were elected that you should inherit a blessing.” 1 Peter 4:8, “Above all, keep fervent in your virtue-love for one another, because virtue-love covers a multitude of sins.” 1 John 3:11, “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we (Royal Family) should virtuously love one another.” I Jn 3:16-17, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God
abide in him?” 1 John 3:23, “And this is the commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and virtuously love one another, just as He (the Lord) commanded us.” 1 John 4:8, “The one who does not virtuously love does not know God, for God is love.” 1 John 4:11, “Beloved (Royal Family), if God so virtuously loved us (1st class condition, “and He did”), we also ought to virtuously love one another.” 1 John 4:20, “If someone says, ‘I personally love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not virtuously love his brother (Royal Family) whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

Lord Jesus Christ

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are inherently magnanimous. It is one of their attributes. The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1st Advent revealed this magnanimous character of the Trinity. The greatest manifestation of God’s magnanimity was at the Cross when every sin in human history, past, present and future was imputed to Christ on the Cross and He was judged as our substitute.

Our Lord’s magnanimous behavior was demonstrated during His 1st Advent by the manner in which He demonstrated the quality of being generous in forgiving insults and injury without being pettily resentful or vindictive. Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.’” He was noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. The Lord was generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He was generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, and noble. He did not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice. 2 Cor 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” Philippians 2:5-8, "Everyone keep on thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset. On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men. In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

The Kenosis of Christ teaches the believer what true humility is. The Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily denied Himself the independent function of His divine attributes
in order to serve mankind by dying a substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. The Kenosis of Christ demonstrates His perfect humility. We are to follow our Lord’s example of humility. He executed God’s Plan for His life by using what God had given him. The Kenosis reveals the thinking of our Lord’s humanity (Phil. 2:5-8). God the Son voluntarily submitted to the plan of God the Father and, as a man, demonstrated an attitude that we are to have.

**Unity**

Magnanimity among believers will produce unity in the local assembly. There is unity between the church and Christ through positional, experiential and ultimate sanctification. Unity in the Body of Christ is based upon Who and What God is and What He has provided and can only be attained under 3 categories of sanctification which compose the Plan of God for the Church Age. The doctrine of positional sanctification states that there is unity and equality positionally within the Church through the Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 3:11). Unity in the church can only be achieved experientially through the Spirit and the Word of God (John 4:24; 17:13-23; Rom. 6:19, 22; 12:5-13; Eph. 4:1-13; Phlp. 1:27; 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:15). There can only be unity experientially in the Body of Christ when members of the Body faithfully perceive, metabolize and apply the Word of God under the influence of the Spirit as it is faithfully communicated by their divinely appointed pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:1-13). Experiential corporate unity in the Body of Christ is a direct result of the faithfulness of individual believers. The church will ultimately be united in resurrection bodies forever with the Lord Jesus Christ at the Rapture or exit-resurrection of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-17; Gal. 6:8; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:53-54).

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines a union as, “an act or instance of uniting or joining two or more things into one.” Unity is a biblical concept since it originates in the mind of God and since it originates in the mind of God, it is in the essence of God. God is a union of 3 co-equal, co-infinite and co-eternal Persons functioning as a unit, a team with 1 will, purpose and plan in mind, united through virtue-love enjoying a perfect harmonious friendship with one another. The Trinity is a term to describe this concept. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are unified in thought, words and actions. They are unified in will, purpose and plan. This unity has been extended to their creatures through the unique theanthropic Person of creation; the Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union, the God-Man. Unity is the monopoly of God and is a mystery hidden in the essence of God, enjoyed by the Trinity in Their majestic counsels before the foundation of the cosmos. This mystery has been revealed to both men
and angels through the life of a lonely solitary figure on the pages of Scripture, the Man from Nazareth, the unique theanthropic Person of the cosmos, the Lord Jesus Christ. Unity is impossible to attain in life without God imputing to us eternal life. True unity cannot be attained and maintained without the life of God, eternal life and that life is a gift given at the moment of believing in Christ.

Unity is manifested among His creatures through the appropriation of divine provision. Christ is the great divine provision for God’s creatures. He is the Great Premise from Whom we can conclude the meaning and purpose of our lives. It is only through Christ, the Word of life, that unity can be attained with the Trinity. Man cannot be united with God without Christ, the Word of Eternal life. Man can only be eternally united with the Trinity through the Great Mediator, the Great Divine Provision Who originates from eternity past in the essence of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the appropriation of His finished work on the cross. The union of angels and men with the Trinity is only accomplished through the Great Divine Provision, the Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union. It can only be accomplished through the function of volition. Unity is accomplished positionally and thus eternally through the non-meritorious decision to appropriate or exercise faith in this Great Divine Provision, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, the Living Word of God, Who originates from eternity past in the essence of God. Unity is accomplished experientially with the Trinity through the non-meritorious decision to appropriate or exercise faith in the mind of Christ, the Word of God which originates from eternity past in the essence of God. It can only be accomplished experientially with the Trinity through appropriation or the application of the Great Divine Provision, the written Word of God, the mind of Christ which originates from eternity past in the essence of God.

Man was designed for the distinct purpose of not only resolving the angelic conflict but for an even greater purpose and that of being united with the Trinity functioning harmoniously in concert with Them, in fellowship with Them, in friendship with Them, sharing perfect happiness. He was created to restore this union with the Trinity. It was ultimately accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union at the cross when He hung suspended between heaven and earth and voluntarily offered Himself as a Substitute for our sins. The union of all God’s creatures and His creation was ultimately restored through the Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union when He voluntarily died a substitutionary spiritual death on the cross. Man cannot achieve unity with God without appropriating this Great Divine Provision, the Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union. He cannot achieve unity with himself without God and His Provision.

Unity is the great objective of our Lord’s prayer in His Upper Room Discourse: John 17:13-23, “Now, I come face to face with You (the Father) and these things (mystery doctrine for the church age taught in chapters 13-17:12) I
declare in the cosmos in order that they may possess this same joy of mine fulfilled in them. I have given them Your doctrine and the cosmos hated them because they are emphatically not of this cosmic system as I am emphatically not of this cosmic system. I do not request that you should remove them out from this cosmic system but that you protect them from the evil one (Satan). They are emphatically not of the cosmic system as I am emphatically not of the cosmic system. Set them apart by means of your truth, Your Word is truth. As You have sent Me into the cosmic system, I also sent them into the cosmic system. Now, I set myself apart as a substitute for all of them in order that they also may be set apart by means of truth. Now, I do not make request for these alone but also for those who believer in Me through their word (teaching) in order that they all may be one as You, Father are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us so that the cosmic system may believe that You sent Me and the glory (manifestation of eternal life in time) which You have given Me, I have given them (manifestation of eternal life in time) so they may be one, as We are one. I in them and You in Me in order that they may be matured into one so the cosmic system may know that You did send Me and have virtuously love them as You have virtuously loved Me.”

Unity is eternal friendship and partnership with God through appropriating or exercising faith in the Word of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ. The life of God, eternal life is received by simply believing in the One, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Divine Provision, Who died and gave Himself as a Substitute for all mankind. The Great Divine Provision Whose mission was to bring man into an intimate relationship, a friendship with the Trinity. Thus, unity is inextricably tied to the 2 immutable things: (1) Divine Essence: Who and What God is. (2) Divine Provision: What God has provided. Hebrews 6:17-18, “Because God desiring to demonstrate more abundantly towards the heirs of the promise, the immutability of His counsel (in eternity past), interposed through an oath that by two immutable things through which it is impossible for God to lie so that we might have strong encouragement those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the confidence set before us.”


Humility
The believer who is magnanimous possesses humility which is acquired by applying the Word of God while under the influence of the Spirit. Humility is freedom. It is freedom from subjectivity. Subjectivity is preoccupation with self or self-centeredness. Humility allows you to understand objectively what reality is. Reality is the essence and plan of God. A person who is humble is someone who is teachable. If you can be taught then you will be able to learn God’s system for happiness. Arrogance is the believer’s worst enemy. Arrogant people are stupid because they cannot learn. Humility seeks reality. It desires and accepts truth. The believer who has humility is objective meaning that they are not self-centered.

Humility is: (1) A system of thinking: Freedom from arrogance (2) A way of life: Submission to legitimate authority. Humility responds to: (1) Establishment truth by submitting to authority. (2) The Word and the Spirit of God. Humility is a state of honor and integrity (Prov. 11:2; 15:33; 29:23). It is a system of thinking under pressure (Prov. 3:33-35; James 4:6). Humility and arrogance are systems of thinking. There are 3 categories of humility: (1) Organized (2) Enforced (3) Genuine.

Organizational humility: (1) Home and Family (2) Soul (3) Local Church. Enforced humility: (1) Parental authority (2) Authority of your own volition over your soul (3) Pastor’s authority. Genuine humility: (1) Positive response to your parents authority as a child. (2) Self-discipline as an adult. (3) Positive volition towards Bible Doctrine. You cannot be magnanimous without first being humble. Humility is the pre-requisite for manifesting magnanimous behavior to all mankind.

The believer with humility submits to the authority of the infallible Word of God. The humble believer will submit to the spiritual authority of the pastor-teacher which ordained by the Word of God in the church age (Eph. 4:11-12; Heb. 13:7-17; 1 Pet. 5:1-7). Spiritual humility demands submission to authority. The believer with humility also functions according to establishment principles. It takes humility to attain spiritual maturity. Humility for the believer is orienting oneself to the grace policy of God. The humble believer adjusts to the integrity through the function of Rebound. The humble believer acknowledges his total and absolute and total dependence upon Who and What God is and What He has provided him from eternity past under the principles of Election and Predestination. The believer can only acquire humility through the daily application of the Word of God while under the influence and mentorship of God the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual humility demands that the believer functions according to the royal family honor code (Rom. 12:9-21). Humility is evaluating oneself according to absolute truth, Bible doctrine. The more humble the believer, the more doctrine he will apply. The humble believer is a spiritual adult who does not think more highly of himself than he ought to think. He tolerates the immature believer by operating
in impersonal unconditional love. He operates with character and integrity toward obnoxious and inconsiderate members of the royal family. He functions according to virtue-love. The humble believer avoids entering into inordinate ambition and competition through the function of the 3 arrogance skills. He does not enter into bitterness, vindictiveness, implacability or self-pity when treated unfairly or when abused or dishonored in any way by other members of the royal family. He is occupied with Christ rather than with himself puts the needs of others ahead of his own goals or desires in life.

**Virtue-Love**

Magnanimous behavior is one of the functions of virtue-love. Virtue-love has 2 directions: (1) Vertical: motivational virtue directed toward God. (2) Horizontal: functional virtue directed toward mankind. The vertical, motivational virtue of a believer produces the horizontal, functional virtue directed toward all mankind. You cannot possess the latter without first possessing the former. The magnanimous behavior or conduct of a believer is a manifestation of a believer’s horizontal, functional virtue. Virtue-love will manifest itself not only in magnanimous behavior but also in self-sacrifice. It manifests itself in forgiveness. Virtue-love is mandated of every believer. It is unconditional and self-sacrificial. Virtue-love is acquired by the believer who learns and applies the Word of God. It is produced by the Holy Spirit (Ga. 5:22-23). The Spirit produces this characteristic in the believer who applies the Word of God.

**Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a manifestation of a believer’s magnanimity. One of the manifestations of magnanimous behavior is forgiveness. There are 2 categories of forgiveness: (1) Forgiveness of personal sins by God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ at the cross. (2) Forgiveness of others as a function of virtue-love under the royal family honor code.

The believer is both the object and the subject of forgiveness. The believer is obligated to forgive others because God has forgiven him through His Son Jesus Christ. The humanity of Christ in hypostatic union set all precedence for the attitude that the believer is to possess in life which is to always maintain an attitude of forgiveness towards others (Luke 23:24).

Forgiveness of others is an essential function of the Royal Family Honor Code. It is an essential aspect of virtue-love. The believer possesses the horizontal, functional aspect of virtue-love for other members of the human race will be forgiving. He will possess a forgiving attitude regardless of the extent of injury to
him as a person. The impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union exhibited a forgiving attitude on the cross while enduring the greatest suffering that any member of the human race has ever had to endure in history when He received the imputation of the sins of the entire world as well tremendous verbal and physical abuse from other members of the human race. He not only taught it to His students but he also put forgiveness into practice at the cross. Luke 17:3-4, “Be on your guard for yourselves: if your fellow-believer should sin against you (1st class condition: “and he will”) reprove him and if he should repent, forgive him. Even if 7 times in the course of the day he should sin against you, and 7 times in the course of the day he should return to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.” Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.”

His forgiving attitude on the cross while experiencing the greatest suffering that any member of the human race in history has ever had to endure set all precedence for the believer here in the Church Age. The Church Age believer should also possess a forgiving attitude toward other members of the human race, especially members of the royal family of God. Ephesians 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be gracious to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, put on as the elect of God, separate and beloved, compassionate affections, graciousness, wisdom, humility, patient-endurance; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint another, even as the Lord Christ forgave all of you, so also you should forgive others.”

The Church Age believer has it his disposal all the divine power needed to exhibit this attitude. The believer who utilizes the 2 power options (Word and the Spirit) of the operational type spiritual life will be able to forgive others regardless of the extent that they have been injured or have injured someone that they love. The believer who can forgive others who have injured them or someone that they love is manifesting the power of God in their lives and are revealing Christ to others with their attitude. They are in reality revealing the Shekinah Glory of God Who is Christ which is the same Glory that Moses desired to see (Ex. 33:18-19; 34:6-7).

The local assembly cannot advance as a spiritual combat unit without each member putting into practice the doctrine of forgiveness. It is not enough to know the doctrine of forgiveness but it is practicing forgiveness which manifests to others that you are the Lord’s student (John 13:34-35). If the Lord forgave others and He endured more suffering on the cross than any member of the royal family will have to go through, the Church Age believer should manifest the same mental
attitude. Forgiveness is essential in every human relation: (1) Local Assembly (2) Marriages (3) Friendships.

A forgiving attitude is a characteristic of a believer in spiritual adulthood. This attitude matures as the believer advances through the 3 stages of spiritual adulthood. The believer who consistently (rebounding when necessary) resides in the dungeon of the cosmic system by functioning according to the 3 arrogance skills will not possess a forgiving attitude is arrogant and will die the sin unto death and eventually be declared a loser at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ. The believer who consistently resides in the royal palace (operational type spiritual life) by functioning according to the 3 spiritual code of conduct is humble and will be declared a winner at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ. The Church Age believer must always keep in mind when involved in any type of relationship whether marriage, the church, friendships or business that if God the Father forgave him through Christ, they should forgive others without exception.

Underserved Suffering

Magnanimous behavior is demanded of a believer if he is to endure underserved suffering. There are 5 categories of Christian suffering: (1) Self-induced misery for punishment. (2) Divine discipline for punishment. (3) Providential preventive suffering for blessing. (4) Momentum testing for blessing. (5) Evidence testing for blessing. The last 3 are exclusively for the believer who is in spiritual adulthood. The spiritually adult believer who wants to attain spiritual maturity and do the will of God must go through suffering in this life. This suffering is for blessing and not for discipline. God disciplines believers who fall away from Bible Doctrine (Heb. 12:5-11). Most believers suffer because they make bad decisions and therefore suffer the consequences for those bad decisions. The believer who is executing the Plan of God and learning Bible Doctrine will go through suffering which is undeserved (1 Thess. 3:4). It is called undeserved because they did not bring this suffering upon themselves (1 Pet. 2:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:6).

Suffering for Blessing is designed to build up your spiritual muscles and to bring you to spiritual maturity, thus bringing glory to Him in the Angelic Conflict. It is a privilege to suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29; 3:10; 1 Pet. 3:14). Suffering for Blessing is for the spiritual adult and not the spiritual child. It is for the believer who consistently applies Bible Doctrine. Suffering for Blessing is for the believer who knows and understands the Mystery Doctrine for the Church Age. It comes in 3 categories: (1) Providential Preventive Suffering (2) Momentum Testing (3) Evidence Testing. Providential Preventive Suffering prevents the believer in spiritual self-esteem from getting arrogant and is designed to bring the believer to
spiritual autonomy (2 Cor. 12:7-9). There are 4 categories of Momentum Testing: (1) People Testing (2) Thought Testing (3) System Testing (4) Disaster Testing.

There are 4 Categories of Suffering in 2 Cor. 12:10 which Momentum Testing consists of: (1) “In slanders”: People Testing (2) “In pressures”: Thought Testing (3) “In persecutions”: System Testing (4) “In stresses”: Disaster Testing. Momentum Testing is for the believer in spiritual autonomy and is designed to bring them to spiritual maturity. Evidence Testing is exclusively for the believer who has reached spiritual maturity. It is for the believer who has been entered by God into the Rebuttal Phase of Satan’s Appeal Trial as a witness for the Prosecution.

Spiritual Code of Conduct

The believer whose behavior is magnanimous is functioning according to the spiritual code of conduct. Adherence to the spiritual code of conduct will produce magnanimous behavior in the believer. The spiritual code of conduct contains 14 principles for the believer to live by, which were expressed by Paul in Philippians 3:8-14: (1) Philippians 3:8a, “Furthermore in fact, yes without a doubt, I continue to regard each (7 pre-salvation distinctions of Paul in verses 5-6) today as a liability because of the incomparable knowledge pertaining to Christ Jesus, my Lord”: Christocentric knowledge pertaining to the Person, Work and Spiritual life of Christ. (2) Philippians 3:8b: “Even regarding all of them (7 pre-salvation distinctions of Paul listed in verses 5 and 6) today as piles of excrement in order that I might gain Christ-likeness”: Gaining Christ-likeness. (3) Philippians 3:9a: “So that I might be identified with Him”: Experiential identification with Christ. (4) Philippians 3:9b: “faithful Christ-likeness, the divine righteousness based upon doctrine”: Exchange of Adamic-nature for Christ-nature. (5) Philippians 3:10a: “that I come to know Him experientially”: Experiential knowledge of Christ. (6) Philippians 3:10b: “the power from His resurrection”: Experiencing eternal life in time. (7) Philippians 3:10c: “the participation in His sufferings” Experiencing undeserved suffering as the means of being identified with Christ in His death experientially. (8) Philippians 3:10d: “by my becoming like Him with respect to His death”: Experiential identification with Christ in His death. (9) Philippians 3:11b: “I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the spiritually dead ones”: Experiential identification with Christ in His resurrection. (10) Philippians 3:12c: “I am sprinting, if (by sprinting) I also may have captured the prize for which I also have been captured by the Christ Who is Jesus”: Sprinting spiritually in order to capture the spiritual prize that resides in the Person of Christ Jesus. (11) Philippians 3:13c: “I am in fact continually
concentrating one thing”: Concentration upon the execution of the plan of God.

(12) Philippians 3:13d: “by forgetting the past and by extending myself forward towards the future”: Forgetting past spiritual successes and failures.

(13) Philippians 3:13e: “I am sprinting towards the finish line”: Exerting every effort both mentally and physically and spiritually in order to execute the plan of God.

(14) Philippians 3:14: “for the prize, which is God the Father’s invitation to privilege residing in the Person of Christ Jesus”: Earning special privileges for the millennium and eternal state, which involve intimate access to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Webster’s New Universal Dictionary defines the noun code, “a system of principles or rules.” They state that the noun conduct means “a mode or standard of personal behavior especially based on moral principles.” If we were to paraphrase the definitions of these 2 words and apply them to our passage we would say that the Paul is challenging the mature believers in Philippi to live in agreement with him and each other by continuing to adhere to a standard or system of behavior based upon spiritual principles. The context of Philippians 3 indicates the exact nature of this spiritual code of conduct. It is expressed by Paul in Philippians 3:3, “because we are the circumcision, those who are serving (God the Father) by means of the Spirit of God, who are priding themselves in Christ Jesus, who have no confidence in the flesh.” This spiritual code of conduct is based upon the Spirit and the application of the mind of Christ, which is the written Word of God. The written Word of God is the perfect, exact expression of the mind of the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ Who now sits at the right hand of the Father in the 3rd heaven. Legalism and self-righteous arrogance is the product of failing to adhere to this spiritual code of conduct (cf. Phlp. 3:1-9). The church age believer’s spiritual code of conduct is the production of the Spirit (Gal. 5:17-23; Phlp. 2:12-13). The Spirit takes the Word at the point of application and produces Christ-like character in the believer (cf. John 16:13-16; 1 Co. 2:10-16; Ga. 5:17-23; Eph. 4:11-16). The Holy Spirit will produce the following characteristics in the believer who adheres to the spiritual code of conduct: (1) An example for other believers to imitate (1 Co. 11:1; 1 Th. 1:6; He. 13:7; Phlp. 3:17-18; 1 Ti. 4:12; Tit. 2:7; 1 Pe. 5:3). (2) Filled with Spirit and Wisdom (Ac. 6:1-7; Eph. 5:18; Ga. 5:16-17; 1 Co. 2:6; Eph. 1:8, 17; Col. 1:9; 4:5). (3) Powerful and Productive Private Life (Jer. 10:23; 2:12-13; 17:5; Eph. 3:16-17; Jo. 7:37-39; Ps. 119:9-11; 1 Th. 2:13; 1 Kgs. 17; Mk. 1:35-39; 6:30-32). (4) Biblical Concept of Oneself (Rm. 12:1-3; Eph. 1:3; 2:10; Col. 2:10; 2 Ti. 1:7-8; 1 Ti. 1:12-15; 18; 4:12-15; 1 Co. 15:9-11; 16:10). (5) Single-Minded Devotion to God (Jo. 4:34; 5:19; 5:30; Phlp. 2:12-13; 3:10-14; Ro. 12:1-2; 2 Co. 4:16-18; Mt. 6:19-21, 30-34; Col. 3:1-2; 1 Pe. 1:17-18). (6) Biblical Conviction (Ro. 4:18-22; 2 Pe. 1:20-21; 2 Ti. 3:16-17). (7) Moral Excellence (2 Pe. 1:5-8; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-20; Ro. 12:1-2; Ga. 5:16-23). (8) Servant’s Mentality
(Phlp. 2:1-8; Mk. 10:45; Mt. 20:20-28; 23:11; Lk. 22:24-30; Jo. 13:1-5, 12-17; Ro. 12:1-8). (9) Surrender and Self-Sacrifice (Mk. 10:45; Phlp. 2:6-8; Isa. 53:10-12; Lk. 9:23-24; Joh. 13:13-17; 13:33-34; Ro. 12:1; 2 Ti. 4:6; Phlp. 2:16). (10) Self-Control (1 Ti. 1:7; 2:9, 15; 3:2; 4:7; 2 Pe. 2:19; 2 Co. 10:3-5; Tit. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 1 Pe. 4:7; Ro. 6:12-14; 2 Pe. 1:6). (11) Pursuit of Excellence (Phlp. 1:9-10; 2 Co. 8:7; 1 Th. 3:12; 4:1, 10; 10:31; Ecc. 9:10; Col. 3:23; Phlp. 3:12-14; 4:8-9). (12) Endurance, Perseverance, and Patience (Heb. 12:1-3; 2 Ti. 4:5-7; 2 Th. 3:5; Ja. 1:2-4; 5:7-12; Ro. 5:2-4; 12:12; Col. 1:11-12; 1 Ti. 6:11-12; 2 Co. 6:4-6). (13) Courageous and Encourager (Jo. 16:33; 17:27-28; He. 5:7-10; 1 Co. 2:1-2; 2 Co. 7:5-7; Ro. 15:4; Josh. 1:6-9; Ac. 9:31; 1 Th. 5:11; He. 10:23-24). (14) Faithfulness (Nu. 12:7; Mt. 24:25; Lk. 12:42; 16:10-12; Rm. 1:8, 11-12; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Th. 1:2-9; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 1:1; 6:21; Col. 1:2, 7; 2:5; 1 Ti. 1:12; Tit. 2:9-10; Rev. 2:10). (15) Team Player (Rm. 12:4-8; 1 Co. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:12-16; 5:23; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:1-17; Ecc. 4:9-12; Phlp. 1:27-30; Ex. 18:1-27; Ac. 6:1-7). (16) Accountability (Ro. 3:9-19; 14:10-12; Phlp. 2:9-11; Lk. 12:48b; Mt. 12:36; 1 Co. 3:23; 11:3; 15:24-28; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pe. 5:1-4; 1 Co. 4:1-2; 1 Ti. 2:2; 1 Th. 5:12; 1 Ti. 3:1-5; 1 Pe. 5:2-3). (17) Wisdom to Deal with Failure (Phlp. 3:13; 1 Jo. 1:9; Ro. 8:35-39). The church age must adhere to this spiritual code of conduct in order to execute the plan of God for his life.