

# The Persecutor/Persecuted Relationship

## I. The Kindness, Mercy, and Restraint of God

<sup>5</sup>The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. <sup>6</sup>The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup>keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” (ESV Ex. 34:5-7)

<sup>1</sup>That is why <sup>5</sup>you, you fellow member of the human race, have absolutely no excuse—any human being who pronounces against another a sentence of condemnation. To the extent that <sup>5</sup>you condemn someone else, you see, it is actually yourself that you are condemning, in view of the fact that you, the one who condemns, are guilty of doing the very same things. <sup>2</sup>Now we know that when God judges, he renders accurate and impartial verdicts against those who do such things. <sup>3</sup>Well, do <sup>5</sup>you really imagine, you puny sinful human—you who condemn those who do such things even though you are guilty of the same—that you yourself will somehow escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup>Do <sup>5</sup>you dare snub your nose at the incomparably vast and precious riches of his kindness and restraint and patience, failing to understand that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to *repentance*? <sup>5</sup>Because of <sup>5</sup>your dullness and stubbornness and refusal to repent, however, you are storing up punishment for yourself in the Day when God will pour out his wrath and reveal his righteous judgment <sup>6</sup>and “repay each person according to his deeds.” (BHT Rom. 2:1-6)

<sup>8</sup>But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup>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.... <sup>14</sup>So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. <sup>15</sup>Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. (NIV 2 Pet. 3:8, 9; 14, 15)

## II. Imitators of God

<sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. <sup>5:1</sup>Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup>and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (NIV Eph. 4:30-5:2)

<sup>4</sup>When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him. <sup>5</sup>So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup>You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them. <sup>8</sup>But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. (NETCol. 3:4-10)

<sup>27</sup>But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup>If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup>If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” do that. <sup>34</sup>And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” lend to “sinners,” expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (NIVLk. 6:27-36)

### III. Insiders/Outsiders

<sup>5</sup>Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (NIVCol. 4:5, 6)

- <sup>5</sup>Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunities. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone. (NETCol. 4:5, 6)
- <sup>5</sup>Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. <sup>6</sup>Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person. (HCSBCol. 4:5, 6)
- <sup>5</sup> Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. <sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. (NLTCol. 4:5, 6)

<sup>9</sup>Now on the topic of brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. <sup>10</sup>And indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, <sup>11</sup>to aspire to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you. <sup>12</sup>In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders (“win the respect of outsiders,” ISV, NIV; TEV; “so that you may behave properly toward outsiders,” NRSV) and not be in need. (NET1 Thess. 4:9-12)

<sup>11</sup>Dear friends, I exhort you as “exiles and resident foreigners” to refuse the evil desires of the mortal body, which wage war against the inner self, <sup>12</sup>your conduct among the Gentiles being so honorable that when they slander you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and change their minds, and glorify God on the day he comes to save. (BHT1 Pet. 2:11, 12)

#### IV. Persecutor/Persecuted Relationship (Potential hostility in any of the other relationships)

<sup>18</sup>Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup>For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. <sup>20</sup>But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup>To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (NIV1 Pet. 2:18-21).

<sup>1</sup>In a similar way, you wives must submit yourselves to your husbands so that, even if some of them refuse to obey the word, they may be won over without a word through your conduct as wives <sup>2</sup>when they see your pure and reverent lives. (ISV1 Pet. 3:1, 2)

- ...like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so (lit. “and not fearing any terror/source of fear”). (NET1 Pet. 3:6)
- For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do. (NLT1 Pet. 3:6).
- You show yourselves to be her when you follow her noble example, without being afraid of human threats or intimidation (BHT1 Pet. 3:6)

<sup>1</sup>It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. <sup>2</sup>He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. <sup>3</sup>When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (NIVAc. 12:1-3)

<sup>15</sup>It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup>The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup>The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup>But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. (NIVPhp 1:15-18)

...on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers (ESV2 Cor. 11:26)

#### V. “Holy Schizophrenia”: Letting Him Make Us into Merciful and Holy People