

THE VIRTUE AND VICE OF TOLERANCE

Ephesians 4:2



Defining Tolerance

- In some places it means “bearable or endurable” (Matt. 10:15).
- Another word means to “hold back” something (Rom. 2:4; 3:25).
- Sometimes it means to “be patient with or to accept” (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; 2 Cor. 11:1, 4, 19-20).
- Yet another word means to “carry something” or even to “give it some degree of honor” (Rev. 2:2; 17:7; Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:18; 15:1).
- Finally, there is a word that means “to release or let go” and “to forgive” (Mark 14:6; Lk. 7:47-49).



Degrees of Tolerance

- Tolerance could just mean that you do nothing about (Matt. 15:14).
- It could be something that you have some patience with for a time (Matt. 17:17; cf. Acts. 17:30).
- Then there is a more full and lasting acceptance (Eph. 4:2).
- Of course, the opposite may be what is required (Rev. 2:20; Matt. 6:12-15).
- Getting it right in one place doesn't mean you have it right in another (Rev. 2:2-4, 19-20).



Locating Tolerance

- We can exercise a great deal of tolerance to those outside of the Kingdom (1 Cor. 5:9-10; Matt. 13:30).
- We also should be incredibly broad as to what we tolerate from those who repent (Lk. 17:3-4).
- There are attitudes that should promote appropriate tolerance among brethren (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:12-13).
- Intolerance is particularly focused inside the kingdom (1 Cor. 5:1-2).
- But there is also room for a degree of intolerance outside of the kingdom (Amos 1:1-2:3; Rom. 1:18-32; 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2).

