

# Instead

## Building Patterns of Love by God's Grace

**I**nstead of defending my rights to be treated a certain way, heard completely or understood satisfactorily...

I will consider God's undeserved kindness he showed me in *picking & forgiving me* (Eph. 1:4, 7; 2:1; **4:2**). As a result, I will ask God to help me treat others the way I have been graciously treated. By God's grace and with his help, I will choose humility – because God chose it first.

**I**nstead of demanding that others say certain things to me, do certain things for me, think certain things about me...

I will look to God who has not been demanding with me. He has *adopted me as his child, given me every spiritual blessing I need in Christ, given me the abiding presence of the Spirit of God, immeasurable riches in Christ* and a *church family* to lean on (Ephesians 1:3, 5, 7, 13; 2:7, 15; **4:2**, 7-32). As a result, I will ask God to help me show others the gentleness I have received from God though I don't deserve it. By God's grace and with his help, I will choose gentleness – because God chose it first.

**I**nstead of expecting everyone else, or anyone else to function on my time schedule or lack of a schedule...

I will look to God for the timing of my life's events and personal fulfillment. He is trustworthy with timing. He chose me to be in Christ *before time began*. He revealed the Gospel to the world *at the right time*. He will reveal the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us *in the future* (Eph. 1:4; 2:7; 3:2-5; **4:2**). By God's grace and with his help, I will choose patience – because God chose it first.

**I**nstead of selfishly protecting myself or lashing out at others because of their immaturity and faults...

I will look to God who has dealt with my immaturity and faults. *He bore the weight of my sin in himself, paid for my sin in his own body, showed me mercy and sought me out* despite my indifference and animosity (Eph. 1:7; 2:1, 4-8, 11, 17-19; **4:2**). As a result, I will invite God's strength to know when it is time to absorb the ill feelings, pain of forgiveness and certain types of consequences of the behaviors of others. Whether they are a result of awkwardness, immaturity or just plain sinful behaviors, words and actions of others, I will look to God to help me bear with others in love. By God's grace and with his help, I will choose to bear the burdens of others – because God chose it first.