Magnanimity

You have heard that it is said,

Be kind to your friend, and hate your enemy.

Love your enemies, bless anyone who curses you,

do good to anyone who hates you,

and pray for those who carry you away by force and persecute you.

*(St. Matthew 5:43-44)*

**Overcome evil with good. *(Romans 12:21)***

**Eleven-year-old Ian was like all the other kids in the fifth grade at Lake Elementary School in Oceanside, California, except for one thing. Ian had been diagnosed with cancer and would soon be put through a regimen of chemotherapy in which he would likely lose much of his hair. The thought of losing his hair in clumps and the sure ridicule from classmates caused him to beat the inevitable and shave his head. Then it happened. One by one, the boys in his class began arriving at school with their heads shaved. In a week, thirteen of his classmates had bald heads. The last scenes of a television news report showed Ian’s teacher getting his head shaved and one of his bald classmates saying, “If they’re going to laugh at Ian, they’re going to have to laugh at us too.” *(Philip White, in Unity magazine)***

**Moody Monthly ran a story several years ago about a man who was arrested by the Communists during the Korean War and ordered to be shot. Moments before the death sentence was carried out, the Communist commander learned that his prisoner ran an orphanage that cared for small children. He decided to spare the man’s life and kill his son instead. The young boy was murdered in the presence of his father. Later in the war, the Communist leader was captured and condemned to death. Before the sentence was carried out, the father whose boy had been killed pleaded for the life of the killer. “Allow me to take him,” he pleaded. “I want an opportunity to train him.” His request was granted, and the father immediately expressed his forgiveness for the man’s actions. He took the man to his home and treated him with love and cared for his wounds and physical needs. That same leader requested forgiveness from the father and from God for his murderous deeds. He later went on to become a Christian pastor. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker’s Sourcebook, p. 161)***

**Leonardo da Vinci was a famous painter. He was one of the outstanding intellects of all history. He was a draftsman and engineer. But just before he commenced on his work “The Last Supper,” he had a violent quarrel with a fellow painter. He was so enraged and bitter that he was determined to paint the face of his enemy (the other artist) into the face of Judas. In this way he would take revenge and vent his anger by handing the man down in infamy and scorn to succeeding generations. The face of Judas was, therefore, one of the very first he finished in the painting. Everyone who saw this initial stage of the painting could recognize the face of the other painter as that of Judas. When it came time to paint the face of Christ, he could make no progress. A week went by. A month went by. He could not get the face of Jesus right. Something seemed to be missing. Something seemed to be baffling to his paint brush. It was holding him back. It was frustrating his best efforts. At length he came to the conclusion that the thing frustrating him was the fact that he had painted his enemy into the face of Judas. Therefore, he painted out the face of Judas and commenced anew on the face of Jesus. This time he did so with great success. *(Christopher Ian Chenoweth)***

**Successful people forget. They know the past is irrevocable. They’re running a race. They can’t afford to look behind. Their eye is on the finish line. Magnanimous people forget. They’re too big to let little things disturb them. They forget easily. If anyone does them wrong, they consider the source and keep cool. It’s only the small people who cherish revenge. Be a good forgetter. Business dictates it, and success demands it. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**No man ever saved anybody, or served any great cause, or left any enduring impression, who was not willing to forget indignities, bear no grudges. The world saviors have all, in one way or another, loved their enemies and done them good. *(Harry Emerson Fosdick, famous Protestant preacher);***

**Another time, one of the men who had been associated with the Fillmores in the Unity work carried off most of the furniture from the rooms to start a work of his own. He claimed that this furniture was as much his as it was the Fillmores’. Instead of threatening him or suing to recover their possessions, the Fillmores went quietly on with their work, praying that they would have whatever they needed. They were able to carry on. In fact, when this man began a magazine of his own a few years later, the Fillmores had forgiven him--if they had ever had any anger against him--to such an extent that they ran a notice in Thought, praising him and telling about his new venture. Jesus said: “And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.” They were His disciples and they followed His instructions as well as they were able. *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 115)***

**In 1946, Czeslaw Godlewski, was a member of a young gang that roamed and ransacked the German countryside. On an isolated farm, they gunned down ten members of the Wilhelm Hamelmann family. Nine of the victims die. Hamelmann himself survived his four bullet wounds. Godlewski recently completed a twenty year prison term for his crimes. But the State would not release him because he had no where to go. When Hamelmann learned of the situation, he asked authorities to release Godlewski to his custody. He wrote in his request: “God has forgiven my sins. Should I not forgive this young man of his?” He lived with the man for the rest of his life. *(Christopher Ian Chenoweth)***

**Minoru Genda, a Japanese general who helped to plan the attack on Pearl Harbor, was awarded the United States Air Force Legion of Merit in 1959. This occurred when Genda was head of the new Japanese air force, and after he had test-flown Lockheed's F-104 Starfighter in California. His recommendation was a factor in Japan's purchase of the planes. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 404)***

**General Hospital is one of the most popular and longest-running daytime dramas. The pairing of Luke and Laura, however, was the catalyst that sparked the attention of viewers. Critics initially panned the plot line, saying that no woman would ever fall for someone who had assaulted her, but the public loved this super-couple. Their 1981 wedding set a mark as the highest-rated episode in daytime drama history. *(Babette d’Amours, in Tidbits)***

**As it happens, Jordan is where Saddam Hussein’s eldest daughter, Raghad, who apparently has forgiven him for murdering her husband, is coordinating her father’s defense. It is a cumbersome and fractious undertaking said to involve 22 lawyers and 1,500 volunteers. *(Rocky Mountain News, August 23, 2005)***

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**Edwin Stanton, for one, had publicly denounced Abraham Lincoln as a “low, cunning clown” and called him “the original gorilla.” But Lincoln appointed him Secretary of War because he saw Stanton as the best man for the place. *(Clarence W. Hall, in Reader’s Digest)***

**When Abraham Lincoln was looking for votes among his Illinois neighbors he encountered an old farmer who was violently opposed to him. “Vote for you?” shouted the old man. “Why, I’d sooner vote for the devil!” “I am sure you would,” replied Lincoln calmly, “but in case your friend doesn’t run maybe you would give your vote to me.” *(Armstrong Trap magazine) Q4768268***

**Once when Abraham Lincoln was visiting the Union front during the Civil War, a young aide-de-camp was showing him around. Lincoln wanted to take a look at the enemy, so he stood up, top hat and all. As musket fire began coming his way, the aide-de-camp, named Oliver Wendell Holmes, took Lincoln's arm and dragged him to safety, saying, “Get down, you fool!” Later the young aide worried about his hasty remark. How would the Commander in Chief react to such disrespect? His concern evaporated when Lincoln sought him out before departing,  and said, “Good-bye, Colonel Holmes. I'm glad to see you know how to talk to a  civilian.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**As a young, struggling attorney, Abraham Lincoln felt honored to be employed on an important case. The other attorneys chosen to represent the case were well known for their legal and persuasive expertise. However, one attorney, upon seeing Lincoln, remarked, “What is that gawky ape doing here? I refuse to work with him. Get rid of him.” Lincoln remained calm and pretended not to hear the deliberate insult. As the trial proceeded, Lincoln was ostracized by the other lawyers. In fact, he was never recognized as one of the representing attorneys. He listened carefully to the court proceedings and observed his insulter's masterful handling of the case. He won the case hands-down. The next day, Lincoln was quoted as saying, “His brilliant argument was a revelation to me. He was expertly prepared, fluent in his presentation, and undoubtedly the most professional questioning I have ever witnessed. I can't hold a candle on his abilities. I am going home to study law all over again.” Years later, Abraham Lincoln became president of the United States. That same attorney who had rudely insulted Lincoln became his most outspoken critic. However, Lincoln never forgot the brilliance of this man. When an appointment was needed for secretary of war, Lincoln chose Edwin M. Stanton, the very man who had wounded and insulted him. Lincoln proved his character by offering a forgiving spirit rather than a lifetime grudge. Shortly thereafter, an assassin's bullet pierced Lincoln's body. Stanton, filled with sorrow and inconsolable grief, sobbed, “Now he belongs to the ages!” *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker's Sourcebook, p. 162)***

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**Magnanimity does not condone wrongdoing, of course. Nor does it suggest that the wrongdoer should go scot-free. But it does call for understanding of the pressures that led to the transgression, plus a willingness to help the guilty one. *(Clarence W. Hall, in Reader’s Digest)***

Mary Kay, of Mary Kay Cosmetics, tells of the time one of the secretaries on her support staff wasn’t living up to her potential, so instead of firing her, Mary Kay transferred her to the accounting department, where the woman quickly began to shine. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 148)*

**General Nicolas Bravo (1784-1854) while fighting for Mexico's independence in 1813, captured 300 Spanish soldiers who had just executed his father, but instead of executing them he set all 300 free -- pointing out that they had only been obeying orders from their military commanders. *(Ripley's Believe It or Not!)***

**The pearl is another example of greatness coming out of adversity. Where does the beautiful jewel come from? It begins as an irritating grain of sand, which somehow has made its way between the folds of the oyster shell. The pearl emerges as the result of the oyster’s reaction to the irritant. Someone has said, “A pearl is an oyster that has been wounded.” *(Rev. Billy Graham, in Till Armageddon)***

**When people share their fears with you, share your courage with them. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Steven Spielberg, the Oscar-winning motion picture director, was a skinny, non-athletic student. As a 13-year-old, he became the target of harassment by many of his bigger classmates. One bully gave him grief all year. When the class played football as part of the physical education program, he would knock Spielberg down, push his face in the dirt and give him a bloody nose. One day Spielberg said to the bully, “Listen, I'm thinking of making an 8 mm movie about fighting the Nazis and I want you to play this war hero.” The bully laughed in his face. Later, however, he said he was interested. He was a big 14-year-old and Spielberg told him he looked like John Wayne. He outfitted the bully in a helmet, fatigues, and a backpack and cast him as a heroic squad leader. From then on, the bully was Spielberg's best friend. (Bits & Pieces)**

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