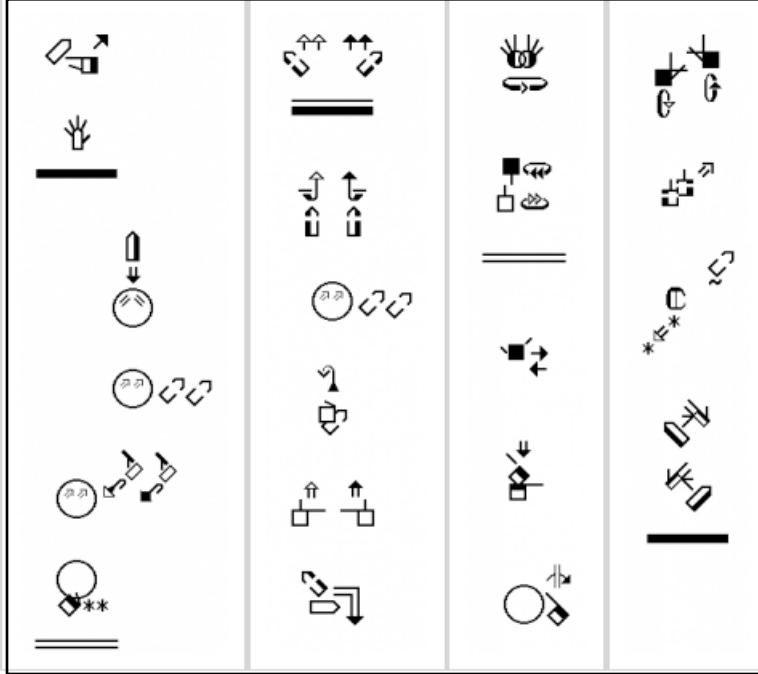


ONE ANOTHER RECEIVE

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

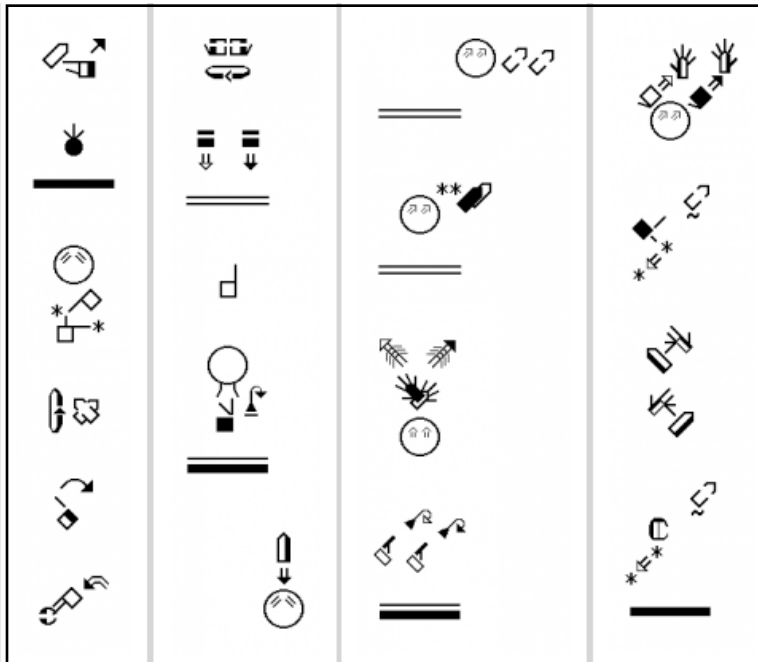


The power of patience is tremendous. The farmer needs it; the athlete needs it; a parent needs it. A technician needs patience. Patience is enduring the weaknesses and infirmities of others. It is putting up with boring repetition; loving people when they have disappointed you.

Patience is evidence of Christ's presence. It is a gift from God to be sought, cultivated and pruned. Patience is the opportunity we have not sought, but always a choice.

If we learn patience we will be able to encourage others in their struggles against temptation and sin.

Romans 15:6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

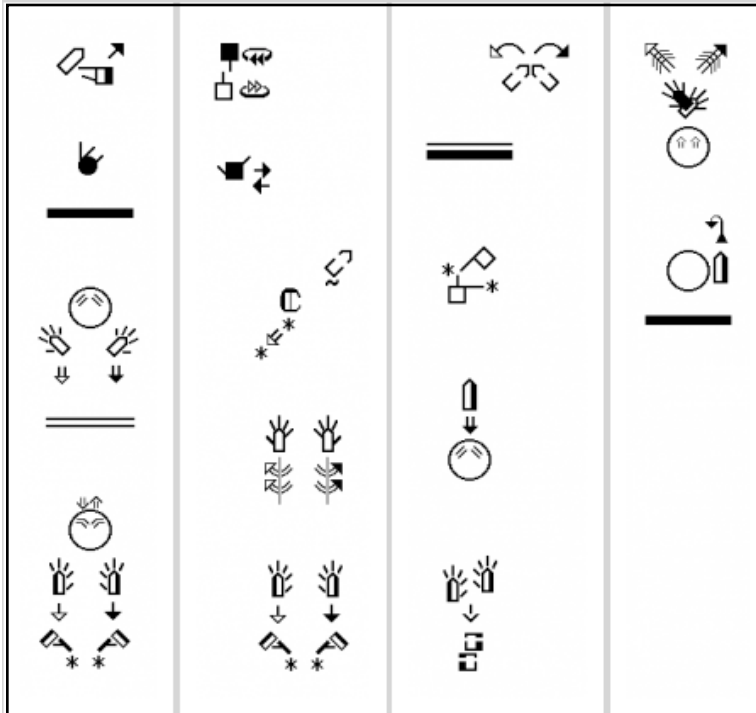


Honoring God appeals to His true disciples. We can put aside our differences because disunity destroys our main purpose: glorifying God. Parents won't argue in front of the children because it hurts the family. We agree to disagree because we agree that we cannot be honoring God if we are not patient.

The larger the group the more we must be patient. Paul is not advocating conformity but unity. Patience builds unity not forced conformity.

Mature Christians give up their rights in order to build unity in the church. People only interested in their rights do not glorify or honor God.

Romans 15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.



The challenge for the mature Christian is to receive those who in the nonessentials disagree. This requires a spirituality beyond worldly ability. A person insisting on their rights is difficult to be patient with. This is the occasion when the proverb is true. "Let the Lord speak to their heart," but we should not expect the Lord to speak to their heart on things clearly taught in scripture. God expects us to do that.

Love people, receive people, but do not receive sin. Just as you expect people to wipe their feet when they enter your home, expect people that love Jesus to hate sin.

It is not hypocrisy to have manners; it is not hypocrisy to respect a vegetarian or a teetotaler. Not to argue about unimportant matters is a virtue, not a weakness.

To be diverted from the gospel, from true holiness, and true love, is to become ineffective in Christian ministry. We have the most powerful tools to change the world. We have the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God. If we allow Satan to corrupt or weaken any of these we become like a boat without oars.

Now the real question, for the sake of unity, for the sake of love, is: will you give up some of the things you have a "right" to do for the glory and honor of God?

Christianity is a relationship religion not a rule religion. Neither is it a rights religion, but a love religion. We give up our rights for the sake of relationships.

Let's strive to be more patient with each other and less concerned about our own rights. If someone should trample on our personal rights, unwittingly hurt or insult us, pray that God will give you the patience to endure their immaturity and the wisdom to encourage them to live for Jesus and not themselves.