

# THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS ... PATIENCE

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## *Selected Scripture*

### **Introduction:**

[From Illy]... WAITING WITH PATIENCE

The great New England preacher Phillips Brooks was noted for his poise and quiet manner. At times, however, even he suffered moments of frustration and irritability. One day a friend saw him feverishly pacing the floor like a caged lion. "What's the trouble, Mr. Brooks?" he asked. "The trouble is that I'm in a hurry, but God isn't!" Haven't we felt the same way many times?

Can you relate to that? I'm sure we have all seen the quote that says, "Lord, please give me patience, and I want it right away." Sometimes we get in such a hurry for God to do something, and we forget that God's timing is always perfect.

Today we have come to the fourth element of a godly Christ-like, Spirit-led life. He have looked at:

- Love – the key to all of life
- Joy – inner satisfaction based not on circumstances but on Christ
- Peace – the strength of character that brings serenity and contentment even in the midst of trials

Now we come to patience. We need to begin by looking at...

### **The Meaning of Patience**

The word used in the original language is *makrothumos*. It is a compound word composed of two words:

Makros – long, far, distant ... thumos – wrath, fierceness; passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again. It speaks of suffering.

So when you put those two terms together you get the idea of suffering wrath for a long time. The AV usually translates this word as longsuffering. The idea is that of suffering long without retaliation.

A couple of quotes – J. B. Lightfoot, in his commentary describes it as "...self-restraint that does not hastily retaliate a wrong."

Chrysostom, one of the early Church Fathers says, "A patient man is one who, having the resources and opportunity to avenge himself, chooses to refrain from doing so."

There is another word that is used in the NT – "*hupomonee*." It also means patience, but has the idea of enduring, persevering, hanging on and refusing to give up.

But the word Paul used in Gal. 5:22 is *makrothumos* – long-suffering – the idea of putting up with wrong for a long time, forbearing.

1 Cor. 13:4 – "Love is patient..." – same word. The AV translates it as, "Love suffers long..." It doesn't give up, it does not become impatient with God. A Spirit-filled and Spirit-led believer is willing to suffer long and wait for God to work in His time.

### **Examples of Patience**

Let's look for a moment at some of the many examples the Bible gives us of this kind of patience – longsuffering. Interestingly, Job is not one of them.

James 5:11 – "Ye have heard of the patience of Job..." (KJV) The word used there is *hupomonee* – perseverance, endurance. Most other translations use "perseverance." Job was not very patient or long-suffering when it came to his physical afflictions and distress, or the "comfort" of his three friends. But he persevered; he did not give up. He expressed his determination in the words, "Though he slay me, I will hope in him..." (Job 13:15)

However there are a number of examples of longsuffering—patient waiting—in the Scriptures. We find a couple right in that same James passage.

1. The farmer – James 5:7 – waiting patiently for the early and the late rains, waiting patiently for his crop to mature. He knows that it will come, but he also knows that it will take time. He sows the seed and then waits patiently for the moisture necessary for the germination of the seed and for the development of the fruit. The farmer waits

through the dry seasons, the hail storms, the winds, knowing that there is nothing he can do to hurry the process. That is true patience – longsuffering.

In the same way, as Christians, we are encouraged to be patient—to be long-suffering—in our hope of Christ's return – *read v. 7-9 and elaborate briefly on our call to long-suffering.*

2. The prophets – James 5:10 – another example of longsuffering.

James does not elaborate, but refers to the prophets in general.

However, I would like to briefly mention two of them as specific examples:

Isaiah – for approximately 60 years he preached God's message to the people with only a very superficial response. He saw almost no repentance, only sin and idolatry in return for his efforts. Even when God sent him out to preach, he was told that the people would not listen. Yet he patiently preached and prayed for revival in Judah.

Then there was Jeremiah – abused, rejected, thrown into a pit of mud because the people did not appreciate the message he brought from God. For more than 40 years, he endured affliction, yet patiently and determinedly preached, waiting patiently upon God.

3. Jesus Christ – not mentioned by James, but certainly the supreme example of patience and longsuffering.

We see it in His teaching of the disciples. They frequently missed the point, showed little faith and were often focused on personal gain rather than the kingdom of God. Yet Jesus patiently continued with them month after month, teaching them deeper and more profound truths as He approached the cross.

We see his longsuffering when his people rejected Him. They turned away from Him, refused to accept His teaching, yet he wept over Jerusalem, pleading with the people to see and accept the truth.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Luke 13:34 ESV)

I am so thankful that He is still patient, longsuffering. He still waits patiently for people to stop running from Him and turn to accept Him in faith. And He is patient with me in my failures and sins.

These are just a few examples of longsuffering...

## The Importance of Patience

So why is God so concerned with us learning patience and longsuffering? Why does He seem to move so slowly sometimes when we are in such a hurry?

[From Illy]... THE DISCIPLINE OF DELAY

Commenting on our need for patience, M.H. Lount has said, "God's best gifts come slowly. We could not use them if they did not. Many a man, called of God to...a work in which he is pouring out his life, is convinced that the Lord means to bring his efforts to a successful conclusion. Nevertheless, even such a confident worker grows discouraged at times and worries because results do not come as rapidly as he would desire. But growth and strength in waiting are results often greater than the end so impatiently longed for. Paul had time to realize this as he lay in prison. Moses must have asked, 'Why?' many times during the delays in Midian and in the wilderness. Jesus Himself experienced the discipline of delay in His silent years before His great public ministry began."

The purpose of our learning patience is that we might grow in grace. The lessons learned along the road are often more important than the destination.

## The Development of Patience

Well, there is one more thing we need to consider this morning... What is it that keeps us from developing this virtue? Why is patience not more evident in the lives of believers?

Probably the key obstacle is the fact that we are still in the flesh and the flesh is totally contrary to the Holy Spirit. The flesh is naturally impatient. If you doubt that, you have never had children. The flesh is self-centered, selfish, intolerant and impatient.

So, how can we develop this attitude of patience and longsuffering in our life. I see several factors in the Scriptures. All of these are based on the assumption that we, first of all, know Christ personally as Savior.

1. Faith – patience is built on faith. I can be patient, I can wait for God's timing, I can suffer long, if I have faith in God, and truly believe that He knows what He is doing. When I have absolute confidence that He is working things out perfectly, then I can be patient.

2. Hope – patience is focused in hope. The hope of the Lord’s imminent return. James said, “Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:7-8 ESV)  
The hope of the Lord’s return puts everything in a different perspective. Knowing that the trumpet may sound at any moment, makes all those things that irritate us and cause us impatience to seem far less significant. Suffering becomes much more tolerable in the light of the coming glory.
3. Being yielded to the Holy Spirit. This is really the key to it all, because ultimately, patience—longsuffering—is produced by the work of the Holy Spirit in our life. As we give ourselves over to the Spirit, and as we live our lives under His control, we find His fruit being produced in us. And part of that fruit is longsuffering.  
Paul said, “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:24-25 ESV) The key to victory is living in the Spirit.

## Conclusion

So, do you ever feel that you are in a hurry but God isn’t? Do you ever find yourself anxious, selfish and impatient?

I know I do. But let us remember that God’s timing is always perfect, that His Spirit dwells within His children. As we yield to the Spirit, and walk in step with the Spirit, His fruit is produced in us. As we trust Him, hope in Him and yield our will to Him, we will know the patience and longsuffering that we need to take us through the trials of this life.

“The fruit of the Spirit is ... patience.”