

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

PATIENCE

Galatians 5:22-23 - **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”.**

As the New Testament was written originally in Greek, we find the word for patience is *macrothumia*, this is a combination of two words, *macro* meaning “long” and *thumos* meaning “temper”, and points to the idea of our anger taking a very long while to build before it is expressed, and when it is expressed, it is under control.

An attribute of God

1 Peter 3:20 gives the account of God’s dealing with men in the Old Testament - *“Who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water”.* God waited patiently as Noah and his sons prepared the ark, and preached to the people warning them of the coming judgment. God held back the inevitable day of doom as long as possible and controlled his righteous anger for that evil and violent generation.

We know we are living in the last of the last days on earth and God again is holding back his anger for our generation. *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some, understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance”* - (2 Peter 3:9-10). God’s patience and compassion for the sinner (not toward their sin) is to bring men to repentance (*Romans 2:4*). Please read this important verse.

God does not have to suffer long with offenders, he does it because *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud”* (1 Corinthians 13:4). Those who show patience do it with a strong purpose of kindness. God’s judgement on this present generation **will** come to pass but only when God’s patience finally comes to an end, are you ready for His return? (Read *2 Peter 3:9-15*).

How can we grow in Patience?

A Minister and his wife were in despair concerning their wayward daughter, she was living a reckless life. The Minister tried arguing, scolding, pleading, but nothing worked, she was just hardened more and more, her boyfriend was everything they did not want for their child. Finally, she left home and for two and a half years the daughter ‘did her own thing’. A friend tried to comfort them with these words “You don’t really have much choice, now she’s eighteen, she’s determined, you are going to have to accept whatever she decides”. The only thing the Minister and his wife could do was pray and try to show their daughter love and patience. During one of the church prayer meetings a member felt led by God to ask could they stop everything and pray for the Minister’s daughter. They prayed sincerely and thirty-two hours later the daughter returned home, for forgiveness.

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She asked her father who had been praying for her as on the Tuesday night God had woken her and showed her, she was heading towards this abyss, it was bottomless and it frightened her so much she realized how hard and rebellious she had been, but God wrapped his arms around her and held her tight, and kept her from sliding any farther. Afterwards she totally committed her life back to Jesus and went on to serve him.

When going through difficult times, have you ever prayed, “Lord give me patience - NOW”. It is worth remembering that patience has its source in the heart of God and the fruit of the spirit is the direct result of being made “partakers of the divine nature”. This only grows as we live in communion with God.

A young faithful Minister was having to cope with the insults and perversity of certain people who were bitterly opposing him and seeking to hinder and injure his ministry by every means in their power. When questioned regarding his patience with these people he replied “God bears with them, and therefore so can I”. Trouble can affect us in two ways, it can either make you bitter or tender.

Job and Joseph in the Old Testament are two great examples of tribulation working patience. Joseph was accused unjustly and spent ten years in prison as an innocent man, but emerged free from bitterness, his faith in God undaunted and his love for his treacherous brothers unwavering. (Read *Genesis 45*).

Paul the Apostle charges Timothy to endure persecution, because the Lord rescues us from them all. (Read 2 Timothy 3:10-11). Whatever trials may come our way may our lives preach louder sermons than words and may we strive more and more to show forth patience to everyone we come in contact with as we await the near return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.