

Patience

Purpose: To understand what the fruit of patience means and to inspire us to allow the Holy Spirit to develop it in our daily lives

Objective: To know what patience means biblically

1. To value patience in our lives
2. To trust the Holy Spirit to develop patience in our daily lives

Key Text: “The fruit of the Spirit is...patience” Galatians 5:22

I. Introduction

(If you have a prism of some kind and sunlight (Only sunlight will work), you can shine the light on the prism and show the various colors that are produced. If this is not possible you can describe what would happen.)

Just as light shines through a prism and fractures into various colors, so also the light of God shines through us to reveal the fruit of the Spirit which fractures into various virtues that ultimately *reflect the character and nature of God Himself*. Blending two colors together makes other colors possible. For example, red and yellow make orange. The fruit of the Spirit has nine primary virtues and the blending of them together makes other virtues possible.

We will be looking at one of the primary virtues: patience. It has been said that the first three virtues, love, joy and peace are oriented toward God. The next three, patience, kindness, and goodness are manward. They show themselves in our relationships with others. Patience is certainly a virtue in short supply today. The prevalent way of acting and thinking in our society is: “What I want, I want now. Hurry up! Make haste. Time is not to be wasted.” Driving self and others is the name of the game.

II. What does patience mean?

In gaining an understanding of this particular fruit of the Spirit it is helpful to see the context in which it often appears. Patience is often connected by context with waiting and perseverance or endurance.

A. Waiting:

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways...” Ps 37:7. We see that David waited upon the Lord

“I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry.” Ps. 40:1 We see the answer to David’s waiting. God responded.

(A personal illustration when you exhibited patience in waiting and the difference it made in your life; less anxiety, more peace etc. Or use the following from Our Daily Bread)

God wants us to see results as we work for Him, but His first concern is our growth. That's why He often withholds success until we have learned patience. The Lord teaches us this needed lesson through the blessed discipline of delay.

Taken from "Our Daily Bread," September 3

B. Perseverance

"As an example to us, the prophets demonstrate patience in the face of suffering." James 5:10, 11.

An example of persevering in hard or difficult times can be used here or use the following.

The Marshmallow Test

In the 1960s, Walter Mischel of Stanford University ran an experiment where he would make a proposal to 4 year olds: "If you'll wait until after I run an errand, you can have two marshmallows for a treat. If you can't wait until then, you can have only one--but you can have it right now."

Amazingly some children were able to wait what must have seemed an endless 15-20 min. for Mr. Mischel to return. The children would use various methods to distract themselves from the marshmallow in front of them. As promised the pre-schoolers would receive the two-marshmallow reward. The children who couldn't wait grabbed the marshmallow, almost always within seconds of the experimenter leaving the room.

Years later when these children had graduated from High School, it was discovered that those children who grabbed the marshmallow were more troubled and tended to have fewer desirable qualities. They were more likely to be shy, indecisive, easily upset, stressed, resentful and prone to jealousy. On the other hand those who resisted at four were more socially competent, embraced challenges instead of giving up, were better able to cope with frustration, more confident, trustworthy and dependable. Patience is indeed a virtue and one with lasting implications!

Transition: Are we exhibiting patience in our relationship to God and with others in their Christian growth? How are we doing in difficult times? How do we develop patience?

III. Developing Patience

A. Trust in the Character of God

Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord,' plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Isaiah 46:10 . . . Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ' My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'

Romans 8:31-39, especially 31-32: What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how

will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Trust that God is good; He loves you; and He is in control.

B. Lean on the Promises of God

II Peter 1:3-4: He has given us His precious and magnificent promises through which we can become partakers of His divine nature.

C. Empowered by the Spirit of God

Galatians 5:15: Walk in the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

D. Follow the example of Jesus

Hebrews 12:1, 2: ...Let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Transition: How do we develop patience? Patience does not come naturally. It goes against the natural tendencies of our society. Here are some suggestions. Remember, this is a fruit of the Spirit. Because that is true, God must work it out in our lives. Let's base the changes upon the character of God, the promises of God, the Spirit of God, and the example of the Lord.

IV. Application

List out some areas that are particularly difficult for you, ones that you most often do not exhibit patience in. One area that many need more patience is in their driving. What promises of God can you memorize that you can draw upon in these situations? Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to act patiently. Ask God's people to hold you accountable in these particular situations. Thank God often that He is patient with you. We know that it is God's will that we be patient people. Therefore we can ask to be patient people. God will begin to work in your lives to make you patient. Let's stop right now and take some time to pray and ask God to glorify Himself by making us into patient people.