**L5 The Fruit of the Spirit—Longsuffering (Patience)**

**INTRODUCTION…**¹

Patienteness (common for longsuffering) is an essential aspect toward maturity and growth as a Christian, yet it is not a fun thing to obtain. We, as fallen humanity, do not like to wait, especially in our fast paced, and fast food society. We may cry out to God and ask that He give us Patience, NOW! Yet, if He did, would we have it? It is not likely, as it needs to grow through difficulties so it can build and improve. It is not something we neither get off the shelf of a bookstore nor find in a hurry. Yet, we can be patient and live without anxiety. The key is to have a trust that our true security is to be in God's will and the spiritual blessings we have are because of Christ in our lives. This gives us absolute confidence in God even in the midst of crises and anguish.

Patience allows us to handle distress and times of waiting and confusion. This even allows us to not only endure but thrive in trying circumstances that threaten our pretense and ability to persevere, feeling out of control, or experiencing limits to what we want to accomplish, such as pain, suffering, or loss. Here, it is all of the above for David in the Psalms, including betrayal as well (Psalm 4). So, we can see what the Lord has done for us, so we don’t forget His grace, His provisions, and His answered prayers and blessings. We are not to be overcome with the struggles of the moment, so we do not see how He has brought us through them in the past. We are to refresh our memory and confidence in Him. Confidence comes from our faith and is inspired by mutual encouragement to see what is important, which is what we have in Christ and not what we lost or could have had.

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**I. DEFINITIONS (THE UNDERSTANDING & SUBSTANCE OF LONGSUFFERING)**

Patience is one of the most difficult areas of the Christian life. Constantly changing circumstances test people's patience; yet patience is presented in the Scriptures as essential to proper Christian living. Of the several words dealing with patience in the New Testament one of the most frequent is makrothumia, (or “longsuffering”). It is, perhaps, the key to the several words regarding patience, for it rightly points to the character of God. Because God is patient, he bore with the world of total spiritual bankruptcy in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:20). He is presently delaying the great Day of Judgment in order to prolong the day of salvation (2 Pet. 3:15). God's patience, therefore, should bring men to repentance (Rom. 2:4; 9:22-24).²

¹ Discipleshiptools.org
A second word group for patience (hypomenē and related forms) is customarily rendered by such words as "endurance" or "endure." These describe an aspect of God's patience (Rom. 15:5) as well as that of his Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2). "Endurance" (or patience) is not simply a passive resignation to the inevitable, however, it is, "an unruffled expectancy of God's salvation, to be fulfilled in the coming of our Lord (1 Th 1:2f; Rev 1:9). The motives behind it are hope attaining perfection and salvation. For its exercise Christ is our model."  

A third word that bears a related concept to the ideas of longsuffering and endurance to designate patience (kartereō) embodies several English meanings and emphases such as "be strong," "hold on to," and "endure," hence a sense of perseverance. Although it occurs but once in the New Testament, and that in connection with Moses' forsaking of Egypt (Heb. 11:27), it does provide a rich source of information. Thus, as distinct from the previous two New Testament words for the concept of patience, kartereō underscores the idea of a proper and courageous God-given strength that sees one through anything, which life presents. Such a steadfast perseverance comes not from a mere holding out to the end but from a holding on to that which is right and, above all, to him who is the source of strength for the believer's life. 

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II. THE PRACTICE OF LONGSUFFERING / PATIENCE

Because God is patient, believers ought also to be patient (Matt. 18:21-35). Several examples of patience can be noted in the Old Testament. Perhaps the finest of these is that of Jacob who worked for some 14 years in order to marry Rachel and he continued to serve his untrustworthy father-in-law for still another 6 years. New Testament believers have a rich source of aid in being "longsuffering," for it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). By knowing and obeying God's will believers are spiritually equipped "with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully" (Col. 1:11). Not only the Christian ministers (2 Cor. 6:6), who most assuredly must develop this character trait (1 Tim. 1:16), but every Christian should be marked by godly patience toward all (1 Thess. 5:14). Patience enables the believer to walk worthy of his calling (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12) and helps reproduce the same performance of faith in other believers (Heb. 6:11-12). Moreover, as believers await the sure return of Christ for his church, godly patience conditions them to face all of life's trials. Thus, James reminds his readers, 

So be patient, brother and sisters, until the Lord's return. Think of how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the ground and is patient for it until it receives the early and late rains. You also be patient and strengthen your hearts, for the Lord's return is near (James 5:7-8).

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3 Ibid. Patterson.
4 Ibid. Patterson.
5 Ibid. Patterson.
Tools for Developing Patience…

Is the Character of Patience working in you? Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look at this character and fruit of Patience from God’s most precious Word by examining the passages below. Now ask yourself:

1. How is Patience exhibited in my daily life?
2. What can I do to develop a more Patient attitude?
3. What blocks the practice of Patience in my life?
4. How can I make Patience function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?

Patience, (Hos. 2:19-23; Psalm 33:20; Matthew 27:14; Romans 5:3; 12:12; Gal. 5:1; Col. 1:11; James 1:3-4,12; 5:10-11), is showing tolerance and fortitude toward others, even accepting difficult situations from them, and God, without making demands or conditions. Patience allows us to endure a less than desirable situation to make us better and more useful and even optimistic and prudent. Hence, its other name is longsuffering. It allows us to put up with others who get on our nerves, without losing other characteristics of grace.

• Here are positive examples from Scripture (Gen. 39:19-23; Job 1:13-22; Matt. 27:11-14; James 5:7-11)
• Here are negative examples from Scripture (Num. 20:1-12; 1 Sam. 13:8-14; 2 Kings 6:33; Luke 10:38-42)

Impatience, annoyance, intolerance, worry, fear, and distrust are the opposites of Patience. These prevent us from seeing, as our Lord wants us to see, that all things will work for His good in the end (Rom. 8:28). We should hang on, place our trust in Him, and not let the temporary things of life bother or distract us from our purpose and call.

Further Questions

1. How would you define Patience?
2. What are the things that cause you to be impatience or distrustful?
3. How does Fear counteract Patience?
4. How can you make James 1:3-4 work in you? Are you willing to allow Patience to develop in you, even through times of waiting and confusion?
5. When have you most been filled with Patience?
6. In what situation did you fail to have Patience when you should have?
7. What issue in your life would improve with more Patience?
8. Think through the steps you need to take to put Patience into action in a specific situation.

Perhaps you could learn to relax when things do not work out your way, or refuse to allow your circumstances to get in the way of your Patience.

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Quotes on Patience…
➢ Patience is not passive; on the contrary, it is active; it is concentrated strength. -Anonymous
➢ There is no such thing as preaching patience into people unless the sermon is so long they have to practice it while they hear. -Beecher
➢ Patience is the art of concealing your impatience. -Jones

CONCLUSION…
We have no knowledge of God’s timing! It seems that God is slow to us, but He is in absolute control and we can have patience and trust in Him and His timing. We are impatient with our thinking and expectations, whereas God is patient, allowing His grace and plan to work out. We are called to be obedient and workout and at times wait actively in His Word and truth.

When our perseverance and patience is working, we can endure and not give up (Luke 8:15; 21:19). We who are in Christ are blessed by God's grace by our convevant relationship with Christ who comes to us and saves us. This is significant as it echoes what Christ has and will do for us. God is good, and the only ones who are good are those who are in right standing with God. Christ gives us this, which we do not deserve.⁶

Patience will allow us to receive and participate in God’s love as it builds loyalty and faithfulness, as in the life of Hosea. It will take us beyond our comfort zone into an area we do not want to go. Yet, when we do, we are better and more able to be used by God and to be available for others. Without Patience, we cannot be used effectively in the lives of others, as they will seem repugnant to us, and we will be callous and unsympathetic towards them.

Patience will allow us to manage anger and problems, and to wait on God’s timing. Patience will allow us to forgive (Rom. 5:8), as Christ forgave us and has Patience with us. Patience will allow us to endure and go on, even when we do not feel like it. It will see the hope that is ahead, when the clouds of our lives and experiences block its view from our sight. Patience will allow us to cling to Christ no matter what happens. Patience is hanging on to what is good. When we are impatient, we will miss a lot in life, especially in our relationships, because we will give up too easily. Allow the Potter to put you on His wheel and form you in His time!

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⁶ 2002 R.J. Krejcir, Into Thy Word Ministries