

Fruit of the Spirit — Part 4

Jimmy Harris August 13, 2017

Review

Continuing our study on the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23.

- **Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

“I say “fruit” and not fruits, for the text says so. The work of the Spirit is one, whether it be known by the name of love, or joy, or peace, or meekness, or gentleness, or temperance. Moreover, it is constant; the fruit of the Spirit is borne continually in its season. It is reproductive, for the tree multiplies itself by its fruit; and Christianity must be spread by the love and joy and peace of Christians.”¹

C. H. Spurgeon, The First Fruits of the Spirit

There is a holy order to these

- **LOVE** is the mother of all the fruits of the spirit. The source of love is abiding in Jesus. Without love — everything else is empty. But if our motives are love then joy is a natural byproduct of that love.
- **JOY** is deeper than happiness, and endures in all things. If you have love and joy it makes sense that you could begin to trust God — that you would begin to experience peace.
- **PEACE** that is a calm quietness in our body, mind, and spirit. When we fix our minds on Jesus — the God of peace guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus! We begin to meditate on what is good, what is true, beautiful, good report...

Today's Fruit of the Spirit — Patience = one of the great grandchildren of love, joy, and peace

Definition: What is patience?

Makrothumia — (mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) forbearance, fortitude, “longsuffering.”

From the same as longanimity, that is, (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude: — longsuffering, patience.

- **Longanimity**: a disposition to bear injuries patiently
- **Forbearance**: a refraining from the enforcement of something (such as a debt, right, or obligation) that is due

¹ Charles Spurgeon, *The Complete Works of C.H. Spurgeon, Volume 30* (Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2015)

- **Fortitude:** strength of mind that enables a person to encounter danger or bear pain or adversity with courage
- **Longsuffering:** patiently enduring lasting offense or hardship

Application — How many patient people do you know?

The problem of hurry. Clutter. Constant entertainment. Multi-tasking. Endless information. Waiting in line. Watching TV while we drive. Phones attached to our faces!

Count it all joy

James 1:2-8

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Longsuffering — the ability to stand through trials with character and strength

Patience is forged in suffering

- **Count it joy-** the testing of your faith produces PATIENCE
- **Patience produces!** perfect, complete, lacking in nothing. WOW!
- **ASK** God in faith — Faith in what? He gives liberally and without reproach.
- **TRUST HIM!** Don't doubt God's wisdom and timing. Asking while doubting is double minded — it makes you unstable. God will not withhold from you what you need. Especially in your darkest hour.

God's timing is perfect. He is not always "on time" — but he is never late.

Have you ever heard someone say, "don't pray for patience?"

*Have you ever heard someone say, "don't pray for patience?" The insinuation is that God will give you a bunch of trials to teach you, to shape you into a more patient person. **God allows** trial — he doesn't **author** trials. As if God is plotting against you. Temptation comes from us, and it comes from the enemy. Temptation never comes from God.*

James 1:12-18

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

- **Test:** shows you what you need to learn
 - **Your sinful attitudes are simply EXPOSED by a test — the test doesn't fail — you do.** This “test” happens WAY before you get stuck in traffic. This test is a pop quiz! You should be more than ready to handle it; Trust God and Live without Control. But listen to the God who has things in hand.
- **Temptation:** Traps you. Manipulates you. Tries to destroy you.
 - **God doesn't arrange for you to be stuck in traffic for you to learn patience.** Trials are not what God is arranging to test you. God does not sin or tempt. **13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.** Why is this so important in the context of trials that produce patience? Our view of God changes what we expect and ask for.
- **Torturer:** God brings every good and perfect gift! He is the Father of lights!

James 1:16-24

Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Where do we start?

3 ATTITUDES

- **Swift to hear**
- **Slow to speak**
- **Slow to wrath**

Start with your mouth (verse 19) — *Does the slightest little thing set you off? Do you struggle to listen? Do you say everything you think without filter? How long is your fuse? Here are three things you can do immediately to begin to undo your impatient heart.*

- **Swift to hear**
 - Position yourself to listen first — two ears / one mouth
- **Slow to speak**
 - We speak life and death all day long...choose your words.
- **Proverbs 10:19**
In the multitude of words sin is not lacking. But he who restrains his lips is wise.

- **Slow to wrath**

- Allow the Spirit to rid you of anger. Anything you do with anger — you can do better without it.

Application — These are the attitudes of patience. These attitudes will begin a new work in your heart...

Practicing patience (don't just hear the Word, do it)

Although you cannot “produce” the fruit of the spirit — there are ways that you can make room for patience to grow in your life.

3 PRACTICES

- **Silence**
- **Solitude**
- **Simplify**

- **Silence**

- Exposes our hearts. Take a breath. Even five minutes of quiet will settle the murky waters. I encourage people to do this — but a word to the novice of silence. This will not be easy. You will be AMAZED at what is going on in your heart and mind when a moment of silence exposes — gives a little time for the waters to clear.

- **Solitude**

- Exposes our demanding needs we put on people. Be alone and do nothing for a while. Jesus often was found off and alone. You are never alone!

- **Simplify**

- Declutter — Your life! A busy and crowded life exposes our unholy attachment and confidence in things. One of the largest growing businesses in America? Storage.
- **Simplify your stuff.** Choose one room each weekend — three bins. Remove every unessential thing that clutters your physical space.
- **Do the same thing with your calendar.**

In his book “*Whats Best Next*,” Matt Perman gives the advice, “Put the big rocks in first.”²

- **Cleanse your time of all unnecessary things. Leave room.**

You cannot become patient without margin in your life. You are literally planning to be angry and controlling if you refuse to bring margin into your life.

² Matt Perman, *What's Best Next* (Zondervan, 2014)

Prayer

Help us Lord Jesus to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. We want to become a people that live without demanding to be in control, a people that trust without fear. We want to create the space in our homes, in our calendars, in our hearts, for your Spirit to reign and rule. Help us to look at any circumstances, and trust that things are well in your kingdom. We trust you. Pour out your Spirit, Jesus let us breathe in quiet rest, and confident assurance. God we all agree that you are in control, and we can entrust our lives to you.

In Jesus name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the Bible say “fruit” (singular) of the Spirit, and not “fruitS” (plural)?
2. In your own life, traditionally, what has been your view of biblical “patience”?
3. In James 1:2-8, what is the relationship between joy, patience, wisdom, and faith?
4. What is the difference between “testing” and “temptation”? Can you give a personal example?
5. Right now, in your LifeGroup, take two (2) minutes of SILENCE, for each of you to ask God to expose any unholy attachment in your lives. Afterwards discuss how long two minutes was, and the results of the “unholy attachments.”