

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT “Patience”

In King James English, what we typically call patience is called longsuffering. What is called patience in the KJV we typically refer to as endurance. This message is primarily on the longsuffering type of patience. But as we shall see, it is kind of hard to have one without the other.

In Galatians 5:22, patience is mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit. What is patience and what does it teach us about the character of our God?

Nah 1:2-3 NIV

2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath.

The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.

3 The LORD is **slow to anger** and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

In the face of all this raw power and justice, Nahum reminds us that the Lord is “slow to anger.” This imagery of the jealous, avenging, wrathful, and powerful God is couched in the description of the cloud, which is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Imagine if you will a super cell thunderstorm giving birth to a tornado. This is the picture the prophet paints. God is bearing down on you, he says, but remember He is slow to anger!

The Hebrew words translated “slow to anger” are the equivalent of the Greek word translated “longsuffering” in the New Testament. They both literally mean to be long of spirit. Vine defines longsuffering in this way:

*“Longsuffering is that quality of selfrestraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; **it is the opposite of anger**, and is associated with mercy, and is used of God,”*

Isn't it good to know that God is not quick to retaliate or prompt to punish? If you ever in life have to deal with the anger of God, know that it was a loooong time coming! He does not deal with us in wrath, but in compassion, mercy, goodness, and kindness. In short, God is patient with us (as well as all His creation).

Ps 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, **slow to anger**, abounding in love and faithfulness. NIV

Ps 103:8-12

8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger**, abounding in love.

9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. NIV

Joel 2:13

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, **slow to anger** and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. NIV

We should forever banish from our minds the lie of the devil that says because we have done wrong, God is mad at us, out to get us and unapproachable. Our God is merciful and compassionate and patient for the very purpose that we should repent!

Rom 2:4

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and **patience**, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? NIV

God waits patiently to give us time to turn from wickedness. He is slow to anger, not slow in keeping His promises.

2 Peter 3:9, 15

9 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.

15 Bear in mind that **our Lord's patience means salvation**, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. NIV

This is a good word to remember if ever we get weary of waiting for the Lord. He is not slow in returning and fulfilling His promise. He is showing patience that as many as will repent do.

1 Tim 1:15-17

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst.

16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus **might display his unlimited patience** as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. NIV

Unlimited patience, imagine it! I've often read this and thought how bad Paul was before his conversion. The real revelation is that he was no worse sinner than I was (before or after conversion). And yet the Lord displayed His unlimited patience toward me in showing me mercy and granting me eternal life!

How is this character of God exhibited in our life? First of all, it is birthed into us by the Holy Spirit. Patience after all is a fruit of the Spirit.

Col 1:9-12

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and **asking God to fill you** with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

- 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,
11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully
12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. NIV

It is only by His power and glorious might given to us through the Holy Spirit that we can have endurance and patience. Endurance speaks of our capacity to bear and patience speaks to the attitude with which we bear. One is action, the other attitude. Without patience, it is impossible to endure. Without endurance, it is impossible for our patience to grow. They are two sides of one coin. The Lord not only gives us the power to be patient, He also commands us to be patient.

Col 3:12-13

- 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. NIV

Bearing with one another and forgiving one another are acts of patience. We need to be clothed with patience.

An Example of Patience-

James 5:10-11

- 10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. NIV

Job is given to us as an example of one who patiently endured and was able to see the Lord's compassion and mercy. What were some of the keys to Job's patience?

1. He understood the Sovereignty of God.

Job 1:20-22

- 20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship
21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."
22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. NIV

Job 2:9-10

- 9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"
10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. NIV

2. He had an eternal perspective.

Job 19:25-27 NIV

25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

27 I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

3. He had the peace of personal integrity (a clean conscience).

Job 27:5-6

5 I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity.

6 I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live. NIV

Who We Are to Be Patient with-

Who are we to be patient with? Everybody! But those who bug us generally fall into three classes.

1 Thess 5:14

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. NKJV

We are to be patient with the unruly, the feeble-minded (timid), and the weak.

1. Instruct the unruly.

2 Tim 4:2

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and **encourage-with great patience and careful instruction.** NIV

2. Encourage the feeble-minded.

Feeble-minded or timid is the opposite of patient. It literally means small spirited. These people we are to encourage.

1 Thess 2:11-12

11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,

12 **encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God,** who calls you into his kingdom and glory. NIV

3. Support the weak.

Weak flesh:

Matt 26:41

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but **the flesh is weak.**" NKJV

Acts 5:15-16

15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. NIV

Weak conscience:

1 Cor 8:7

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and **since their conscience is weak**, it is defiled. NIV

Legalism:

Gal 4:9

But now that you know God-or rather are known by God-how is it that you are turning back to **those weak and miserable principles**? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? NIV

Heb 7:18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless NIV

The Need for Patience-

1. Necessary for self-control.

Prov 16:32 NIV

Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

Prov 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control. NIV

Luke 21:19 In your patience possess ye your souls. KJV

2. Necessary for the harvest.

James 5:7-8

7 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. NIV

3. Necessary for receiving the promises.

Heb 6:12, 15

12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. NIV

We need to be patient to live lives worthy of our calling.

Eph 4:1-3

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. NIV

Let us receive God's grace and power through His Holy Spirit to be patient with one another as He is patient with us. Amen!