Fruit Of The Spirit — Patience

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

? Have you ever wanted something so much that you had trouble waiting for it to happen?

(ie a job, relationship, vacation, etc.)

We usually think of patience within the context of waiting, "Like I need to be more patient with my puppy who pees on the floor." But the bible actually uses it in a richer context and with the understanding that the person who needs patience is likely suffering great pains and lifelong trials. In Galatians 5, the NIV uses the word forbearance instead of patience. Forbearance is also used in Romans to describe God's grace and salvation to us. Let's start this study by looking at how God models this kind of patience for us.

Romans 3: 23-26 (NIV)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his **forbearance** he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

> **Forbearance:** This term is mostly used today in the context of financial aid or home mortgages. A forbearance is a special agreement between two parties to avoid the consequences of a loan default. The literal meaning of forbearance is "holding back." In a Biblical context, God forbeared His holy judgment against our sinful nature. As sinners, we all deserve immediate death, but God's graceful forbearance allowed us to seek redemption through Christ. Pretty cool, huh?

Questions for Discussion:

? How is Christ's redemptive work a demonstration of God's patience towards us?

? Has anyone ever owed you a debt they were struggling to repay? How patient were you as they repaid that debt?

? How should God's patience with us inspire us to act towards others?

1 Peter 2:19-23 (NIV)

[19] For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. [20] But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. [21] To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

[22] "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

[23] When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Questions for Discussion:

? Our lives are much different than they were 2000 years ago, but sin still exists. What does suffering look like today?

? Our impatience often stems from a desire for justice. Take a look at Romans 3:26 and 1 Peter 2:23. How is justice described?

? Sometimes sin and injustice persists despite our efforts against them, or our petitions to God to alleviate our pain. In light of God's justice, how can we endure these trials and find patience when sin is active against us?

? The original Greek word for "example" in verse 21 was used in reference to a model that students would use when copying how to write and draw. In this context, how should Christ's suffering be an example of patience for us?

Application Questions:

? We often think of patient people as those who are slow to anger, passive in confrontation, or quietly waiting for something to happen. In light of this study, what does a biblically patient person look like?

? How could walking with the Spirit lead to increased patience in your life?

? What is our community application?