FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PATIENCE (PERSISTENCE)

**Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience …

By studying the fruit of the Spirit maybe we can identify some problem areas, some weak areas and grow to be more fruitful. What can we do to produce a greater amount of fruit?
We can study and develop a love and an appreciation and an awareness of fruit and it’s production!

We have broken the nine into three groups.
1. Inward: love, joy, peace
2. Outward: longsuffering-patience, gentleness-kindness, goodness.

Today’s study of LONG-SUFFERING AND PATIENCE IS OUR 4TH STUDY, THE FIRST IN THE OUTWARD GROUP. With five more to follow.

Key verse for Love – **John 15:9 (NASB)** "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.
Key verse for Joy – **Neh 8:10** … And do not be grieved, for the joy of the **LORD** is your strength.”

Key verse for Peace – **Isaiah 26:3 (ESV)** You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.
Key verse for Patience – **James 1:4-5 (NASB)** And let endurance (patience) have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

In the dictionary, "patience" has several meanings:
1) bearing pains or trials calmly and without complaining,
2) not being hasty or impetuous,
3) being steadfast despite opposition or adversity,
4) showing forbearance under provocation or strain. We often think of patience (or being patient) as something benign (meaning #2), but the dictionary definitions and Bible imply that pain, trials, adversity, and strain may also be involved (James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 2:20, Romans 5:3-4, 12:12, we will look at these verses later).

Patience is not an instinct. A baby wants their food and diaper changed right now. Teens are not patient. We must learn patience. It is learned by practice and it is often learned after many, many mistakes. Long-suffering and patience should grow and be habitual for the Christian since it is one of the results of spiritual growth.

God has a purpose for the difficult, daily grind that you go through. Remember the key verse, God has a “perfect result” in mind for you – what is that result? That you would become more Christ like in this life and thus bring glory to God your creator, savior and sustainer of life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within you, that is why it is called fruit of the Spirit.

How does God bring this Christ like fruit into your/my life? We don’t like to hear this but listen to Romans 5:3 (NASB) And not only this, but we also rejoice in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance (patience).

It seems to me that the antithesis to patience (for the glory of God) is anger. Instead of responding to a build up of one trial after another with a godly attitude of patience, we respond in anger. The situation makes us angry. The person makes us angry. We are simply put into an angry filled mood rather than a Christ like mood which is the purpose of the trials.

For some individuals it takes very little to make them angry. That person would be on say level 3 spiritually speaking. Therefore God will pile a little more on you to bring you up to level 4 or 5. When you get to level 5 God pours more on you to bring you to level 6 or 7. And God continues to pile daily tribulations upon you so that you will develop into as close to Christ likeness as possible while here on earth. You/I will never escape tribulation because it has a work to do in our lives.

God is patient with us and slow to anger. This is something that Jonah knew full well and is the reason he hated to go to Ninevah to a people he literally hated. Listen to his complaint about God who eventually decided to spare Ninevah. Jonah 4:2 (NASB) He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to
forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.

What we’re going to talk about is the root of impatience, which is anger (Just like Jonah’s). We don’t want to just talk about patience today; we want to go right down to the foundation, which is uncontrolled anger. Remember patience is slow anger. Proverbs 16:32 (NASB) He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Eight keys to managing your anger:

1. Resolve to manage it.
Proverbs 16:32 (NASB) He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

The first thing I want you to know today is that anger can be managed. In fact, anger for a right cause, managed directly, is a tremendous attribute. Don’t you get angry about injustice and sin? And aren’t there times when it literally motivates you or compels you to do something about it?

Now, here’s where the problem comes in. When I’ve talked to people who have a real problem with anger, they’ll say, "I just can’t help myself. You don’t understand, I mean, when it happens, it happens, and I’m a volcano. I mean, I blow up." The fact is that everyone can control their anger, I can prove it. Let’s say that you’re really mad at your kids. I don’t know what they’re doing but boy, you’re yelling and screaming. You’re pointing fingers and all that stuff. I mean you’re really giving it to them. You know what I’m saying?

Now the phone rings. I’ve seen this happen. You are not a happy camper. But you pick up the phone and go, "Hello." Aren’t we sweet? And don’t our kids wish that they were on the other end of that phone line? Sure you can control it. You pick when you’re going to be angry. You better believe you do. That’s why you get angry at your kid behind closed doors. If the neighbor kids came over the same day and did the same thing, you’d say, "Oh, that’s all right. That’s no problem. I know you broke the vase, but it’s just a vase. It’s only been in the family for 230 years."
A pastor I know said that a member of his church said, "Well, my anger is bad. It’s not controllable. It’s probably the cross I must bear." The pastor said, "No, it’s not the cross you must bear; it’s the cross your wife has to bear. It’s your sin; it’s her cross."

2. Realize the cost.
**Proverbs 29:22 (NASB)** An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

The Bible is very specific about the damage done by uncontrolled anger. It destroys relationships.

Proverbs 15:18, "Hot tempers cause arguments." (Personal examples)
Proverbs 14:29, "Anger causes mistakes." (Personal examples)
Proverbs 14:17, "People with hot tempers do foolish things." (Personal examples)

3. Reflect before reacting.
**Proverbs 29:11 (NASB)** A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.

You know, **delay** is a tremendous tool in helping you control your anger. I’m not talking about delaying for months or weeks. I’m talking about catching yourself and pulling back maybe for a half hour. Letting it kind of simmer a little bit. Just understanding what’s happening to you, your feeling, your reactions.

Anger is the result of .. Hurt or Frustration or Fear or any combination of those three.

And haven’t we all had these moments when we said something and then five minutes later, we thought, "Boy, wish I wouldn’t have said that." We’ve all had that haven’t we? I have learned to never answer an email when I am upset or angry. I have written a response but not sent it many times and then the next day deleted it. Why, because I knew it was not a Christ like response.

4. Release your anger appropriately.
There are right ways and wrong ways to do this.
**Ephesians 4:26 (NASB)** BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on
How do you respond to anger?

(1) Don’t deny it.
If you’re angry or upset with someone, don’t act like you aren’t. Haven’t you said to a person, "You’re angry with me, aren’t you?" and they reply "No, no, absolutely, not. I’m not angry with you." I think it’s healthy, at times, to let your children know you’re angry. Not that you don’t want them, but that you’re angry with what they’ve done. God let’s us know that he’s angry with some of the things we do. Don’t deny it and act like well, it just didn’t happen. Or in my tradition, "Well, I’m righteously indignant."

(2) Do confess it.
There’s nothing wrong with this. The psalmist did it. If you really want to know how to release anger in a correct fashion, just read the psalms. David did a marvelous job venting to God how he felt, what he thought.
Read Psalm 73 and listen to the confessions of an angry man.

5. Think about the consequences of this sin. (Part 5 of the keys to handling anger)
Psalms 69:6 (NASB) May those who wait for You not be ashamed through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; May those who seek You not be dishonored through me, O God of Israel,

6. Let it have its perfect work.
Psalm 4:3-5 (New King James Version)

3 But know that the LORD has set apart[a] for Himself him who is godly;
   The LORD will hear when I call to Him.
4 Be angry, and do not sin.
   Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah
5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
   And put your trust in the LORD.

6. Re-pattern your mind.
"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2
The way you think determines how you feel. The way you feel determines how you act. Your beliefs control your behavior.

So if I’m acting angry, it’s because I’m feeling angry. And if I’m feeling angry, it’s because I’m thinking angry. So I have to go clear back to my thought line and begin to re-pattern the way I think, since my thinking controls my behavior. You see, our mind needs to be reprogrammed, because I can almost guarantee that if you watch any TV show, somewhere in that show, anger will be expressed, and almost always in the wrong way. Somebody will get a gun, shoot somebody. Somebody will smack somebody across the head. Somebody will cuss and swear. You’ll see a great deal of anger expressed wrongly, because it’s very common in our American society.

I encourage you to take the verses we’ve looked at and memorize them. Reprogram your mind.

7. Relate to people that are patient.
   **Proverbs 22:24-25 (NASB)** 24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, 25 Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.

Anger is contagious. And it’s a learned behavior. In fact, we learn how to blow up from watching other people blow up. It’s a learned behavior. And the proverb writer says, "Don’t hang around with those kind of people, because if you do, you will find yourself becoming an increasingly angry person."

8. Rely on Christ’s help.
   **Romans 15:5 (NASB)** Now may the God who gives perseverance (patience) and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, Pray that God would help you to develop a heart of patience rather than the fleshly anger you/I often display. Thank God for the daily difficulties you face because they are there to make you more like Christ.

**Patience is waiting without worrying.**
The word “wait” is used 106 times in God’s Word.

**Psalms 27:14 (NASB)** Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord. (When have you successfully waited on the Lord)
**Psalms 37:7 (NASB)** Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

**Psalms 40:1 (NASB)** I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. (Think of how much turmoil David went through as the anointed heir to the throne)

**Proverbs 20:22 (NASB)** Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you. (The example set by Jesus himself on the cross)

**Isaiah 40:31 (NASB)** Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

From “Our Daily Bread”

A pastor was leaving his church one Sunday morning and passed the flower lady: an older lady who sold flowers to make her living. She was there every day. And as was his custom, he stopped, gave her a dollar, got a flower and put it in his lapel.

He sometimes had a conversation with her. This day he said, "How are you doing?" She said, "I’m doing wonderful." And he said, "Now, tell me truthfully. It couldn’t always be good. Don’t you have troubles?" She said, "Oh, sure. I have trouble. But you can’t get to the age I am without having troubles. I’ve learned how to handle them." He said, "Well, tell me. How have you learned how to do this?" She said, "You’re a pastor; you ought to know." She said, "Just think of Jesus on Good Friday. You know, Pastor, that was a terrible day. But three days later came the resurrection. I have a lot of Good Fridays in my life. I have a lot of setbacks and dark times and difficulties. But you know, every time I get hit and have a Good Friday, I just wait three days, and I start to see the light and I start to hope, and I start to have the resurrection."

Pretty good sermon by the flower lady, don’t you think?