

Patience

*“Patience is the very nature of God.”
(Tertullian, AD 200)*

I. Patience is used to describe God Himself. “Indeed only the Lord produces ‘*makrothymia*’ (true patience, longsuffering) in us, and hence is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)” (Helps Word Studies).

- A. Because the Spirit brings forth patience, it is not unlike the feel of the other fruits of the Spirit (E.g., love, joy, peace...) (Galatians 5:22).
- B. How does godly patience feel?
 - 1. It feels like the love of God and is similar to hope. It is not a second-best, no-choice fruit (Romans 5:5).
 - 2. It also has anticipation in it, so it mingles hope and faith (E.g., surfers, fishermen).

II. Patience brings forth success and breakthrough from God.

- A. God’s patience brings forth the salvation of our very souls (II Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4).
- B. Our patience brings forth supernatural strength and provision.
 - 1. Those that hope (wait) in the Lord (Isaiah 40:27-31)
 - 2. Fear is the opposite of patience and robs us of God’s wisdom and voice in difficult circumstances (Isaiah 30:1-3, 15-21; James 1:1-8).
 - 3. We minister patiently and watch for God’s movement. We receive ministry patiently and watch for positive changes (like seed time and harvest).

III. Patience is the key to our ministry to each other and the world.

- A. There is a church history book called “The Patient Ferment of the Early Church” by Alan Kreider about the witness of the Early Church. In it he says that the central witness of the Early Church was their patience.
- B. “Many...have turned from the ways of violence and tyranny, overcome by observing the consistent lives of the [Christian] neighbors, or noting the strange patience of their injured acquaintances, or experiencing the way they did business with them.” (Justin - AD 150).
- C. Two images illustrating the character of God (Matthew 5:43-45)
 - 1. The rising sun: an image of unhurried faithfulness
 - 2. The falling rain: an image of indiscriminate generosity (Matthew 5:13-16)

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