

# PATIENCE

The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self control. Against such things there is no law.  
-Galatians 5:22-23

## WHAT IS PATIENCE?

**Patience (makrothymeō):** the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset<sup>1</sup>

“The best way I have come to understand its meaning is to divide makrothymeō into its two component parts: makro (meaning “long or extended”) and thymia or thymos (meaning “temper”). So makro + thymia/thymos means “to be long tempered or forbearing.””<sup>2</sup>

➔ Forbearance, restraint, fortitude, endurance, even-tempered, perseverance

*Would the people who know you best describe you this way?*

As a note, patience is not the same thing as being mad inside as little things happen, holding on to them forever and then blowing up for three months’ worth at one time. If you’re not patient on the inside, you’re not patient.

**Patience is a reflection of God**, not only because it is fruit of the Spirit, but because when others see our patience, we reflect God to them. Those living without God, go through difficult circumstances. When they see us going through something hard, but we have spiritual fruit, they’ll see something they want.

*1 Timothy 1:16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (ESV)*

## HOW CAN I GET PATIENCE?

Patience can be cultivated, but this cultivation, like that of any good fruit, demands a desire for the change, a consistent practice, and the realization that what has been learned over time (impatience) will also take time to unlearn.<sup>2</sup>

**Pray for patience.** You might automatically assume, ‘I’m not going to pray for that, because I’ll immediately be thrown into some trials and struggles.’ Maybe, but God calls us to display the fruit of the Spirit, and so it is.

**Put patience on**, like a garment you need to wear. It’s cold outside, I’m going to put on my coat. This event/situation/discussion is going to be long/boring/annoying/frustrating; let me put on patience.

*Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. (ESV)*

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press

<sup>2</sup> Crosby, M. (2015). Fruit of the Spirit : Pauline Mysticism for the Church Today. ORBIS.

**Follow the example of others.** Locate some people who are patient, those who you have witnessed maintaining patience in difficult circumstances. Get together with them, ask them what their strategy is. Implement some of their tactics into your own life. Also note how God took them out of those situations, because God can do the same for you. The early church did this. As they watched Paul example patience, they had the opportunity to emulate what they saw in him.

*2 Timothy 3:10-11 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. (NKJV)*

*Hebrews 6:11-12 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.(ESV)*

## THE RESULTS OF PATIENCE

**We get stronger.** The more we practice patience, the better we get at it, the easier it is and the more we become patient without having to try. So much so, that we are even displaying JOY while being patient.

*Colossians 1:11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; (ESV)*

When we are impatient, we are demonstrating that we think our circumstances are halting our success and growth and should be avoided by whatever means possible. However, that very circumstance could be what catapults us into the next level of our growth. Be patient through it, learn from it, grow from it.

**We inherit promises.** Some of us have heard promises from God that we have yet to see. We can spend all our time fretting over the fact that they haven't come yet, or we can be patient and wait on the Lord.

*Hebrews 6:11-12 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.(ESV)*

“Patience helps us be more loving toward others, more at ease with the circumstances of our lives, and more able to get what we want. It constantly rewards us with the fruits of maturity and wisdom: healthier relationships, higher-quality work, and peace of mind.”<sup>3</sup>

*2 Corinthians 6:3-10 We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are **true**; as unknown, and yet **well known**; as dying, and behold, **we live**; as punished, and yet **not killed**; as sorrowful, yet **always rejoicing**; as poor, yet making many **rich**; as having nothing, yet **possessing everything**.(ESV)*

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<sup>3</sup> M. J. Ryan, The Power of Patience: How to Slow the Rush and Enjoy More Happiness, Success, and Peace of Mind Every Day (New York: Broadway Books, 2003), 9-10.

	<b>Written by</b>	<b>Addressed to</b>	<b>With whom are the recipients called to be patient?</b>	<b>What other qualities accompany patience?</b>
<b>Ephesians 4:1-6</b>	Paul	Believers in Ephesus, a pagan city		
<b>Colossians 3:12-14</b>	Paul	Believers in Colossae who were exposed to false teachings about the nature of Christ		
<b>1 Thessalonians 5:14-15</b>	Paul	Believers in Thessalonica who had been converted from paganism		
<b>2 Timothy 4:1-2</b>	Paul, near the end of his life	Timothy, Paul's young fellow worker		
<b>James 5:7-11</b>	James, the brother of Jesus	Believers scattered due to persecution		