

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Study Series: The Fruit of the Spirit

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Lesson 5 - Forbearance (Patience, Longsuffering)

Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore

Texts: Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:2, 2 Peter 3:9

The Nine Elements of the Fruit of the Spirit		
1	Love	Love (Agape) is the kind of love God has for His creation. It is pure, selfless and self-sacrificing; seeking the best for others (even enemies) at all times, at all costs.
2	Joy	The joy here is much deeper than a sense of happiness or gladness from life's circumstances. It is a profound delight and rejoicing that comes from knowing and serving God.
3	Peace	Peace is an unshakeable inner calm that can be a rare quality in turbulent times.
4	Forbearance	Also called longsuffering, forbearance has the common synonym "patience." It also means to delay the repayment of a debt.
5	Kindness	Kindness is looking beyond our interests to the interests of others.
6	Goodness	This fruit of the Spirit is an attribute of action. It means living one's life with good morals and motives as well as doing good things for others.
7	Faithfulness	Faithfulness is steadfastness, constancy, or allegiance; it is carefulness in keeping what we are entrusted with.
8	Gentleness	Gentleness is the quality of being kind and careful. The way a Christian engages with others is what the fruit of gentleness is all about.
9	Self-control	Ability to control our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Reminder: What is the Fruit of the Spirit?

The fruit of the Spirit is the result of the Holy Spirit's presence and formative work in the lives of maturing believers. The elements of the fruit of the Spirit are itemized in Galatians 5:22-23. Today we are looking at the fourth element called forbearance. Let's look at Galatians 5:22 from different translations:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (NIV)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (ESV)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (NKJV)

Forbearance is sometimes translated as "patience," but the actual meaning of the word goes far beyond just being patient. It is also sometimes translated as longsuffering but also goes beyond it. It's extending the terms to benefit another instead of demanding a justifiable immediate payment. In the banking world, forbearance is when a lender allows a borrower to pause or reduce payments for a limited time while the borrower builds back their finances. Forbearance is showing patience in the face of boredom, suffering, difficulty, pain, and annoyance. It means, more specifically, restraint in the face of difficult people.

The Greek word translated as forbearance is the word "makrothumia." It is a blend of two Greek words; the first word "makro (which gives us the English prefix macro) means "large" or "long." The second word "thumos" means "temper." Therefore, makrothumia literally means long tempered, the opposite of short-tempered or having a short fuse.

Forbearance as the nature of God.

Forbearance is most often used in the bible to describe God's character. It is the patience and long suffering that the Lord has towards sinners who need Him. He knows that time away from Him eventually loses its luster and appeal, hence He waits patiently for us. We will look at a few texts of Scripture that help us to understand and appreciate God's forbearance.

- **Romans 2:4:** *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (NKJV)*
- **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.*

The long-suffering of God is what makes salvation possible for most people. Both Apostles Peter and Paul maintain that despite an attitude of ungodly persons toward salvation and taking the Lord's delay as proof that His promise will never be fulfilled, it is rather an evidence of the Savior's merciful patience. He waits so that all who will, may have the opportunity to accept salvation. Peter also used this quality of God to explain His patience with people at the present time wanting more to come to salvation. (See 2 Peter 3:8-13) God will endure human sin for a period of time to allow the gospel to reach more people. But he points out that there will be an end to God's forbearance. Time will run out and all of God's promises will be fulfilled.

- **Psalm 103:8-10** *“The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.*
- **Psalm 86:15** *“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.*
- **Joel 2:13** *“So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.*

Why does God want us to demonstrate longsuffering?

By the help of the Holy Spirit, we as believers are able to model God's great patience towards those who anger or deeply disappoint us. The Holy Spirit fills us with the fruit of forbearance so He can lengthen the fuse of our temper. The longer it takes for our temper to smolder under self-control, the more time we have to cool down. The Spirit's forbearance releases our vengeance to the Lord.

As with all the other fruit of the Spirit, God wants us to be like Him. God cares for all humanity; and He does it with tremendous compassion, mercy and longsuffering. God's people are in training to become kings and priests to rule with Him in the future (Revelation 1:6), and this involves learning to forgive others, to show mercy and to be forbearing—or else we would be just like the worldly leaders of today.

Slow to anger, quick to forgive.

Forbearance is not a natural attribute, it is a fruit of the Spirit, a product of the formative work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. The scripture is filled with instructions about bearing with one another and several warnings about the dangers of being too quick to get angry. These instructions are impossible to obey without the help of the Holy Spirit.

- **Proverbs 14:29** - *Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*
- **Proverbs 15:18** - *A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.*
- **Proverbs 19:11** - *A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.*
- **James 1:19** - *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*
- **Ephesians 4:2** *“with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”*
- **James 1:19** *“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,*

Benefits of Forbearance/Patience

- Patience makes it easier to acquire skills and to accomplish things that are difficult or time-consuming.
- Forbearance allows us to be in alignment with God and helps us not to miss the timing of God. Job went through many trials and a lot of losses in his life. Yet, he waited patiently for God to restore him and stop the trials. He refused to curse God in his struggles, even when he did not understand what was going on or why it was happening.
- Forbearance allows us to enjoy the vengeance of God. David was anointed to be the next king of Israel. He had to run for his life for many years before he became king. He had multiple opportunities to seize the throne, but he would not take it by force. David waited for God to hand it to him. He waited in patience for God to move.
- Patience makes it easier to avoid jumping to premature conclusions; so it can help you to consider nuance, to change your mind, and to develop a greater understanding of the unfamiliar.