

Healthy Faith: The Fruits of the Spirit



Patience

Galatians 5:22-25

Psalm 40:1-3

This Week's Message
July 25, 2021

*Healthy Faith:
The Fruits of the Spirit –
Patience*

But the fruit of the Spirit is...patience

Galatians 5:22
(New International Version)

Sunday's Scripture Reading Galatians 5:22-25; Psalm 40:1-3

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

²³ *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

²⁵ *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

¹ *I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.*

² *He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.*

³ *He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.*

On Sunday, I will continue the series of messages titled *Healthy Faith: The Fruits of the Spirit*. In his letter to the Galatians, in 5:22-23, Paul provides us with this list of those spiritual fruits – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Sunday's message will be on the fruit of *patience*.

I should say at the outset that I'm not the person to say anything about this topic, as I am not a patient person. As I was in the midst of writing that previous sentence, for example, I was losing patience with my phone. It was a bit slow to do a task – too slow for me – which got me thinking that perhaps it was time to get a new phone. As I say, I am not a patient person. But Paul says that patience is a fruit of the Spirit, so I guess I have some work to do, and I suspect I'm not the only one. Maybe your work doesn't need to be done on patience, but something on the list of the fruit of the Spirit is a struggle for you.

On Sunday, I will speak about patience in relation to three areas – patience with ourselves, patience with others, and patience with God. In this space, let's begin with patience with God, which might sound a bit strange, but it is an important subject, I think.

Questions to Consider –

* What kind of changes do you need to make in your life in order to develop a greater amount of patience?

* What are the barriers to becoming a patient person?

* Why are we so impatient?

* Are we ever like Abraham and Sarah, trying to move God along on our timetable?

* Genesis 25:27-34 tells a story of Jacob and Esau. In that story, Esau trades away his birthright to Jacob. That transaction has given us the phrase *Esau trade*, which means to demonstrate bad judgment or to make a bad decision. The result of the judgment or decision causes personal difficulty, and that difficulty often has long-lasting consequences. Have you ever, out of a lack of patience, made an *Esau trade*?

* In Exodus 32:1-24 we find the story of the golden calf, a story which tells us of Moses losing his patience with the people. Do you think Moses was justified in his impatience toward the people? Should he have exhibited more patience towards them?

You have most likely heard, numerous times, this statement – *God won't give you more than you can handle*. I'm not sure where that statement originated, but it is not found anywhere in the Bible. The Bible, surprisingly to some, never makes that statement. The closest the Bible comes is I Corinthians 10:13, which says, *no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can*

A waiting person is a patient person. The word patience means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us.

— Henri J. M. Nouwen

stand up under it. While there is a bit of a similarity in that verse, it certainly is not communicating that God won't give us more than we can handle. In fact, some people have been through enough difficulties in life to cause them to question God's opinion of their strength. So, while God will not give us more temptation than we can handle, there is no guarantee that we will not feel overwhelmed with the struggles of life. When we talk about patience then, it is important that we speak about the patience needed to manage the stresses and challenges of life, which, in this day and age, are numerous, and often overwhelm people.

What we do find in the Bible are stories of people who, like us, struggled with patience. In Genesis chapter 16:1-15, for instance, we read of the impatience of Abraham and Sarah. Though God had promised them a son, God's timing did not suit them. In an effort to move the promise along, Sarah convinces Abraham to have a child with her servant, Hagar. That tragic choice continues to reverberate today, as the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, and the descendants of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, lay claim to the land of Israel. Those competing claims have been the source of much fighting and bloodshed over the ages and into our present day.

I appreciate your patience in reading this study guide, and I look forward to seeing you on Sunday!