



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Part 5)

Inexhaustible Patience

"You also must be patient. Keep your hopes high, for the day of the Lord's coming is near." (James 5:8)

Patience is the ability to endure difficult circumstances, tolerate provocation. It is the level of endurance one can take before negativity. It implies qualities of calmness, stability, and persistent courage in trying circumstances. It is associated with forbearance, perseverance, longsuffering and steadfastness. The Bible portrays patience in 3 ways (James 2: 7,10,11):

- Patience of Job: this kind of patience is a patience under personal affliction, total loss, and rejection.
- Patience of the laborer: this kind of patience is a patience under unexpected and uncontrolled situation, patience while waiting and facing the unknown future.
- Patience of the Prophets: this kind of patience is a patience under mockery and torture, patience while facing provocative and rebellious people.

Human beings are naturally impatient; reason why the Bible calls and commends us to be patient. Patience is our response, our attitude in trying times. It is an overlooked virtue Christians need to develop, because it is a necessity in a Christian life (*James 5:8*). God wants patient people in His Kingdom, it is one of the virtues of God's elects (*2 Peter 1:5-8; Colossians 3:12*).

There are many tips psychologists suggest on developing patience. They are very helpful, yet there is something beyond psychological exercise in Biblical patience. The patience God wants to develop in us is more than mind and mood control, more than trying to control self. It is God's trait, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who works within us, but we must submit to His shaping and molding power. So, what would Christian do to develop patience?

1. **Ask God to fill us with His Patience.** Know the situation that easily triggers your impatience, then double prayers when facing those triggering situations.
2. **Exercise patience in little things;** the more we do so, the easier it develops and the more resilient we become.
3. **Take trials as an opportunity to grow and get more strength from God.** For God's Children, trial is part of a refining process. I have experience, in many instances that when fixing my situation, God is fixing me. The greater the test, added strength we get. We cannot see the purpose of our dark moment, but God knows all about them, and He will reverse them to our edification and His glory.
4. **Recall what God has done in the past.** This will help us to endure the test of delay and wait patiently for the Lord's timing and way (*Psalm 40:1*).
5. **Reflect on God's patience:** Think about how patient God has been toward us? How often we have failed Him? And how many times He forgave us? God never give up on us (*Hosea 11:8*). It will help us to deal with rebellious thought and provoking people.

6. **Resolute to be like Jesus.** Jesus is the perfect model of patience (II Thessalonians 3:5). Anytime we are confronted with impatience triggering situation, we can ask ourselves on how would Jesus respond in this situation?

Can God be glorified in us when we are facing challenging situation? Like Job, God counts on us, He is glorified when we are tested without turning away from Him. When the going gets tough, when we face trials and tribulations, when we do not find a way out, and see no solution... we are called at that very moment to look to Jesus, the perfect model of patience. We are called to look at the finished product, refined character, «*Christ-likeness in me and you*».

We are called to «count it all joy» (James 1:2-3) when facing various trials, knowing that this will produce unwavering patience as its reward. Patience overflows from a regenerated and a Spirit filled heart. There is no other way to develop patience unless we are under hardships, challenging situation and provoking people. God, in His infinite wisdom, will not spare His children from these, rather He designs them to mold us to climb the ladder of perfection (2 Peter 1:4-7) until we reach the image of His Son, Jesus Christ which will allow us to see His face. *On that day when we see His face, our patience will receive its ultimate reward; and we will shout for joy: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."*(Isaiah 25:9)

As we patiently wait For His return, may God through His Holy Spirit develop in us the patience that endures the test of time; for "perseverance must finish its work" so we may be mature and complete to behold the King in His glory.