

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## - *patience* -

... Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place...

(Mark 6:31)



Another fruit that the Holy Spirit grows in us is patience. For many of us, this quality is only possible in our lives through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Patience is also a primary characteristic of God – we see evidence of his patience over and over again in Scripture. He is patient when his people are disobedient, unfaithful and when we simply don't understand what he is saying to us.

His amazing and gracious patience with us is the reason and the model for the patience that we extend to others – and to ourselves. Not only is patience one of the fruit of the Spirit, it is also one of the primary qualities of love (1 Cor 13:4).

As we focus on this particular fruit of the Spirit, allow God to reveal more of his patience to you and listen to what he might have to say to you about this important quality.

(On-line link)

# PATIENCE - FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## Call to worship

God, God, a God of mercy and grace, endlessly patient  
—so much love, so deeply true—  
loyal in love for a thousand generations,  
forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin.

God, God, you are a God of mercy and grace.  
You are endlessly patient – so full of love, so deeply true.  
You are loyal in love for a thousand generations,  
You forgive iniquity, rebellion and sin.



Based on Exodus 34:6 MSG

## Scripture

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.  
Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,  
but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

## Prayer

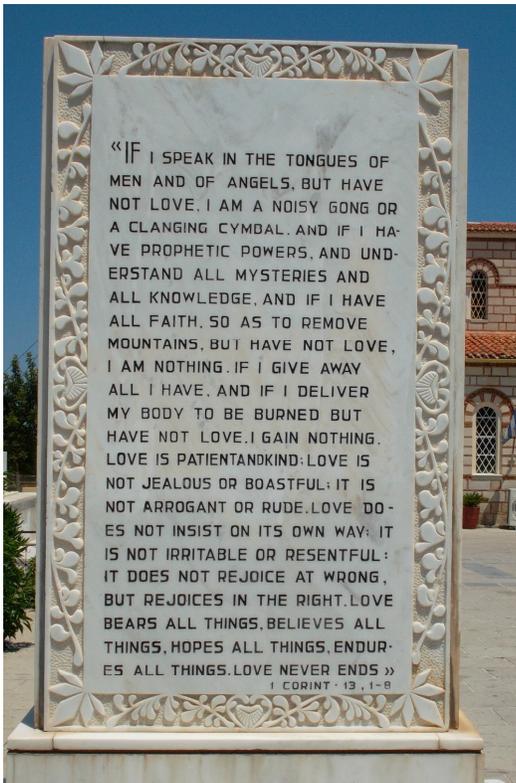
You are holy, Lord, the only God, and Your deeds are wonderful.  
You are strong. You are great.  
You are the Most High. You are Almighty.

You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.  
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.  
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,  
Lord God, living and true.

You are love. You are wisdom.  
You are humility. You are endurance.  
You are rest. You are peace.  
You are joy and gladness.

You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.  
You are beauty. You are gentleness.  
You are our protector. You are our guardian and defender.  
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.

You are our faith, our great consolation.  
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,  
God Almighty, Merciful Saviour. i



## SONG

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,  
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,  
who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.



## Scripture

They, our ancestors, were arrogant; bullheaded, they wouldn't obey your commands. They turned a deaf ear, they refused to remember the miracles you had done for them; They turned stubborn, got it into their heads to return to their Egyptian slavery. And you, a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, Incredibly patient, with tons of love— you didn't dump them... You in your amazing compassion didn't walk off and leave them in the desert. The Pillar of Cloud didn't leave them; daily it continued to show them their route; The Pillar of Fire did the same by night, showed them the right way to go.

Nehemiah 9:16-19 MSG



Change your life, not just your clothes. Come back to God, *your* God. And here's why: God is kind and merciful. He takes a deep breath, puts up with a lot, this most patient God, extravagant in love, always ready to cancel catastrophe.

Joel 2:13 MSG

## REFLECTION

The story of Joseph is a story of dreams, disappointment, endurance and waiting. From being favoured son to being thrown in a pit, then betrayed and sold; from being a favoured worker to ending up neglected and forgotten in an Egyptian prison, Joseph learned to wait and somehow during all these years was able to hold on to his sense that God was in control and knew what he was doing with Joseph's life.

This is a story of patience.

This is waiting in the uncertainty and darkness, wondering if the dreams were really just dreams and not the reality he expected them to be.

This is being betrayed, falsely judged and abandoned.

This is emerging out of such circumstances with grace and a willingness to serve, even those who had contributed to his suffering.

Patience.

Endurance.

Waiting in the unknown – and being true to self.

What does Joseph's story have to say to you?



### **Prayer**

When I feel lost and alone, Lord, remind me that you too have felt lost and alone.

When I am in the darkness and my dreams seem shattered,  
remind me that no darkness is too dark for you.

When I have had enough and am ready to give up,  
show me again that your plans for me have not yet come to an end.

Teach me wait, to trust, to endure –

and to look for the way that you will bring your dreams for me into fulfillment.

Thank you, Lord. <sup>ii</sup>

### **Scripture**

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:12-13

### **Pause**

## Scripture

Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. Proverbs 14:29

## Prayer

O teach me, Lord, to be joyful in hope  
to be patient in affliction and faithful in prayer.  
Clothe me with the compassion and kindness that comes from you.  
Take from me all impatience and pride,  
And all need to take control of my own life and go my own way.

Let your gentleness rest on me,  
And cover me with your humility.  
Teach me to bear with those who try my patience  
And to love them with the love that flows from your Spirit.  
As you have forgiven me, give me grace to forgive others  
That I may more truly reflect your grace and goodness in this world.  
I pray this in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>iii</sup>

Based on Romans 12:12 and Colossians 3:12-13

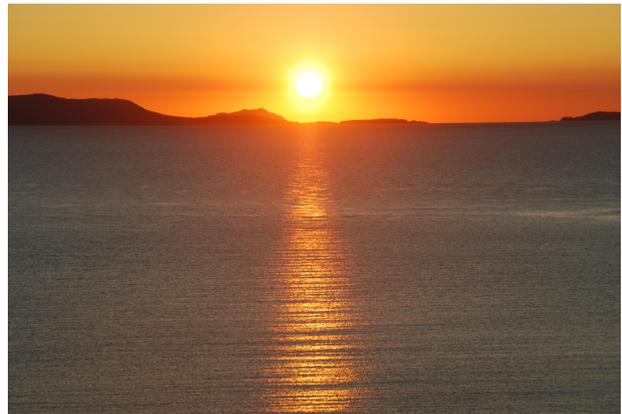
## Song

Over all the earth You reign on high  
Every mountain stream, every sunset sky  
But my one request, Lord, my only aim  
Is that You reign in me again

Lord reign in me, reign in Your power  
Over all my dreams, in my darkest hour  
You are the Lord of all I am  
So won't You reign in me again

Over every thought, over every word  
May my life reflect the beauty of my Lord  
Cause You mean more to me than any earthly thing  
So won't You reign in me again

Lord, reign in me ...



## Benediction

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
as you trust in him,  
so that you may overflow with hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Romans 15:13

**GOING DEEPER:** Here are some suggestions that may help you to engage more deeply with this theme.

- **Reflect:**

The story of the Bible is (in part) the story of stubborn and disobedient people, and a faithful, patient God.

Reflect on ways you have experienced the patience of God...

How have you lived out that patience in your relationships with others?

When you think about patience, what comes to mind?

Where in your own life would you like more patience?

- The **Bible** has many references to waiting on God and being patient, as well as references to the patience God has shown and continues to show His people. For example, there are Abraham and Sarah, waiting for a child; Moses and the people in the desert, waiting to enter the Promised Land; David, waiting in the desert for Saul to cease pursuing him and for his anointing as King to be brought to reality; the disciples waiting for the Holy Spirit. Choose one of these stories, or another story that comes to mind. Read it through once or twice slowly and thoughtfully. Wait and listen. What might God be saying to you?
- You could use one of the Bible passages or songs provided in the material to practise **Lectio Divina**.
- If you enjoy being **creative**, think about some ways you could symbolically show what God's patience is like. You could use collage, paint, clay or even objects you find outside to express this. Or, you could create something that expresses the times you have to wait or show patience and what that was like for you.
- Go for a **walk**. Where do you see signs of God's patience in the world around you? What do you learn from nature about being patient and waiting for the right time? What would you like to say to God about what you have discovered?
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time worshipping together and praising God for the patience He has shown you, and what you have learned about yourself in regard to patience.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:

**Thank God** for who He is and what He is doing in your life

**Notice** what is happening around you and in you

**Respond** to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him

- **Simply sit in His presence.** We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.

## EVEN DEEPER

### LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

#### Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

##### 1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

##### 2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

##### 3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

##### 4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

##### 5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

##### 6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

Mars Hill Bible Church  
[marshill.org/teaching/sp](http://marshill.org/teaching/sp)

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

### 1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

### 2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

### 3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

#### Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

### 4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward

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## SONGS

**Holy, holy, holy** – John B. Dykes and Reginald Heber (What's New in Praise and Worship 2007, Track 6)

**Lord, reign in me** – Brenton Brown (Best Worship Songs Ever, CD 2, Track 4)

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<sup>i</sup> Francis of Assisi

<sup>ii</sup> J. Brown

<sup>iii</sup> J. Brown