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The Fruit of the Spirit - Longsuffering

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Love, joy and peace we have learned are the first three fruit of the spirit and how important it is to guard our hearts with diligence, but now comes the fruit of longsuffering and the benefits that we will receive as this fruit begins to operate in our lives.

Pro 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." KJV

Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." KJV

Gal 5:13-14 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." KJV

These scriptures are not talking about the Holy Spirit bearing fruit, He already is all of these things, it is talking about us bearing fruit in our lives with the help of the Holy Spirit, about us taking on the character of Jesus and acting like He would act, however, it takes time to produce fruit, sometimes there are things that will keep that fruit from coming to maturity. Selfishness, lack of knowledge or ignorance are things which will keep growth or maturity from coming. The world knows us by our character and our fruit, they don't know us by our gifts only by our fruit.

Matt 7: 20 "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." KJV

Jesus is teaching us where He is and what we are to Him, He being the branch and us being the vine, for us to have consistent fruit in our lives, continually growing, we must have Jesus in our lives. It is a place that we dwell in, it is our home.

John 15:4-5 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." KJV

Longsuffering means that we must be willing to grow in all the fruit of the spirit, not just picking and choosing which fruit we would like to have the most. Having different temperaments and personalities cannot let us forget about love and peace and gentleness and goodness. Longsuffering must be our goal regardless of what personality traits we may have.

Rom 2:4 "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" KJV

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." KJV

James 5: 7-8 "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for

the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." KJV

Longsuffering is related to patience and endurance and because of the goodness of God, it is His plan that all should come to repentance. Longsuffering is defined by Lester Summerall as "love on trial" or "love being tried". The entire 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians explains love being longsuffering, as we develop the fruit of longsuffering; it means that love operating in us will be on trial.

Are we going to allow God to get involved in us, and let love continue to grow or are we going to cast it away, not letting patience grow or learn what it means to endure?

Longsuffering in our lives will always have to do with relationships, longsuffering is not toward God, He is longsuffering toward us. However, if we have in us control, just always wanting to fix things and end up only stirring things up, causing everyone involved to lose their peace this is not good. This is not the intended plan of God, for us to try and straighten out other people, but His plan is that we continue to plant His seed, the word, in their lives, having longsuffering with patience until the seed sprouts, it is watered and it will begin to produce a harvest. It is most important if we are in a leadership position that we develop longsuffering to allow time for the word of God to grow in individual lives.

Longsuffering is the quality of self restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate. Longsuffering is the opposite of anger and is always associated with mercy, being the quality of a person who is able to avenge himself but refrains from doing so. Longsuffering is long tempered, getting things back under control; endurance and patience are part of longsuffering. Patience being the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or adversity is the opposite of despondency and discouragement is always associated with hope.

Longsuffering is necessary in our development and like all the other fruit is supernatural. Longsuffering is also known as long tempered the opposite of being short tempered, but in maturing we have to let longsuffering develop. One of the ways to develop longsuffering is to allow endurance and patience to work in our lives; it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God. When longsuffering is not in operation in a relationship and a fault arises, it always is the result of unforgiveness or resentment and unless not dealt with turns into bitterness, but a fault met with longsuffering will be the result of forgiveness, love and mercy being shown. Faults are not always the reason for strife and contention, but the lack of longsuffering especially in leadership. However, we are all leaders wherever we might be.

How do we accomplish this? We are the caretakers of our hearts and the following scripture will tell us how it is done.

Col 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;" KJV

Col 3:12 "Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones (His own picked representatives), [who are] purified *and* holy and well-beloved [by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by] tenderhearted pity *and* mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, [and] patience [which is tireless and long-suffering, and has the power to endure whatever comes, with good temper]." AMP

Paul is teaching that Jesus had shown longsuffering to him and regardless of what his past had been, he was able to obtain mercy and that the longsuffering shown to him was a pattern to those he came in contact with. Jesus shows us this same longsuffering and regardless of what has happened or is happening in our lives, that same longsuffering is available to us.

1 Tim 1:15-16 "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." KJV

Relationships can become very complicated unless longsuffering is involved. We must be careful of the words spoken by us showing love and mercy, spoken as a blessing and not a curse. As longsuffering is developed and matured in our lives, we will be less likely to speak ill of someone else, but we must remember to pray for them. Longsuffering will enable us to this.

Eph 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." KJV

1 Peter 3:8-10 "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:" KJV

1 Peter 3:8-10 "Finally, all [of you] should be of one *and* the same mind (united in spirit), sympathizing [with one another], loving [each other] as brethren [of one household], compassionate *and* courteous (tenderhearted and humble). 9 Never return evil for evil or insult for insult (scolding, tongue-lashing, berating), but on the contrary blessing [praying for their welfare, happiness, and protection, and truly pitying and loving them]. For *know that to this you have been called*, that you may yourselves inherit a blessing [from God—that you may obtain a blessing as heirs, bringing welfare and happiness and protection]. 10 For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days [good—whether apparent or not] keep his tongue free from evil and his lips from guile (treachery, deceit)." AMP

Eph 4:2-3 "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" KJV

Longsufferings function is to keep unity among the believers and will enable us to receive blessings and be able to speak blessings to others.