

The Fruit of the Spirit — Patience, Gentleness and Meekness

Jan Timmerman, Women's Ministries International Coordinator

The Fruit of the Spirit — Patience

*The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness.
He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,
but everyone to come to repentance
(2 Peter 3:9, NIV).*

The word "**patience**" means, longsuffering, mild, gentle, and constant in all circumstances." The real test of patience is not in waiting, but in how we act while we are waiting. If we have patience, we are able to be longsuffering without losing our temper.

I will forever be grateful to a precious saint, Dorothy Dake, the wife of Finis Jennings Dake, who wrote the Dake Bible. They were faithful members of the Lawrenceville Church of God where we pastored for over thirteen years.

I asked Sister Dake to teach a Bible series on the fruit of the Spirit in our women's Bible study group. The first three weeks were devoted to love, joy and peace. It shall indelibly be imprinted upon my heart and mind the week of our study of longsuffering. As I introduced Sister Dake, she rolled her wheelchair to the front of the room and began weeping uncontrollably. Finally, she uttered these words, "I have, through much study and soul searching, shared my heart with you on love, joy and peace. But I must tell you, we might be studying longsuffering for the next several weeks." Every woman in the room that night fell to their knees and we wept and cried out to God. Long story short, we studied longsuffering for at least five weeks. What valuable truths Sister Dake imparted to us.



First Peter 1:13 says, "Gird up the loins of your mind." That means that every morning we must put on the whole armor of God. We have to get ready mentally for the tests of our patience, preparing our minds for whatever may happen during the day. If we do not prepare our hearts and our minds, Satan will catch us off guard.

When we grow weary of the apparent futility of praying for and working with individuals who seem totally unresponsive, what is it that urges us to continue? Is it not the Spirit, bearing the fruit of longsuffering and patience in our hearts? And, how many times have we thanked God for helping us to endure, after seeing the long-awaited answer to our prayers?

Do not give up. With patience, keep on trusting God for the answer. The Holy Ghost knows our real need, and He will make intercession for us when our own utterance fails.

Patience is a strong resilience in the Spirit when we are under pressure.

The Fruit of the Spirit — Gentleness

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls
(Matthew 11:28, 29, NIV).*

There is no better example of **gentleness** than that of Jesus. He was gentle with little children, even when His disciples felt that they were distracting attention from the greater

issues, such as physical healings, divorce and remarriage. The little ones were not “in the way,” but were worthy of Jesus’ attention. In the midst of “adult matters,” He took them in His arms, put His hands on them and gave them His blessing.

The Holy Ghost is often symbolized by the gentle peace-loving dove. The dove will defend its own, but is never on the offensive. And so it is with the Holy Ghost. He will defend the truth, but He will do so in a manner that will allow the offender to calm himself so as not to make the wounds deeper. The Spirit-filled temple will manifest this peaceable, tender touch.

When we are kind and gentle toward another who may seem “not worth our time and attention,” we never know what the outcome of our investment may be in the future.

True gentleness begins at home. It may be with your immediate family, with your church family or your hometown. A good example is the father of the “prodigal son.” He did not raise a ruckus when his younger son made the unwise request for his inheritance in advance. He was full of loving, gentle acceptance when the son finally came back home. This story does not show the least bit of retaliation when his elder son “blessed him out.” It is a perfect picture of love which is found in the makeup of every fruit of the Spirit.

The tender voice or hand usually communicates much better than any other tactic when others tend to be anything but gentle. If there is love in the heart, the voice and the hand will convey it.

The fruit of gentleness gives us the ability to remain calm and kind, even amid great stress. It reflects the ability to be “easily approachable,” reflecting kindness.

*Come Holy Spirit, I need you
Come Sweet Spirit, I pray
Come in Your strength
and Your power
Come in Your own gentle way.*



The Fruit of the Spirit — Goodness

*Oh, how great is your goodness which you have laid up for those who fear,
revere, and worship you, goodness which you have wrought for those
who trust and take refuge in you
(Psalm 31:19).*

As we seek to develop **goodness**, kindness, and mercy in our lives, sometimes we get sidetracked into looking at our problems instead of looking at God’s character. God is good, kind, and merciful and because we are His children, He wants to be good to us. But He can only bless us when we are willing to receive His goodness, kindness and mercy.

Goodness, as a fruit of the Spirit, is not a goodness that has been taught, or instilled by proper training. Rather, it is the goodness of God Himself, borne in the heart and life by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of all that is “good.”

A Spirit-filled life when “doing good,” probably scarcely realizes that it is doing anything noteworthy. More than likely, the person will be as those described by Jesus, who at one of the judgments of God, will be surprised when the Master will say to them:

*. . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the
foundation of the world:
For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I
was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me

(Matthew 25: 34-40).

When the abiding Spirit sees a need that one should supply, He simply prompts that one to respond to that need. He stands alongside to help the human instrument to do His bidding. And it is totally out of character for the individual to claim credit for the benevolent movings and acts of the Spirit.

That is exactly why we need to be good, kind, and merciful to all people. Our witness will not have any power unless we are kind. We are called to be light in a dark world, and we must make up our minds that we are going to shine.