

As we've already considered love, joy, and peace, we come this morning to the fourth fruit of the Spirit and patience. But before we do that, I want to start with a brief review. (1) This fruit is singular. It's the fruit of the Spirit. This means, every person who possesses the Spirit, will bear, in various degrees, all the fruit mentioned.

(2) This fruit is from the Spirit. It's the fruit of the Spirit. It's the direct result of the Spirit's work in our lives. Strictly speaking, we don't make this fruit, but the Spirit creates it, without our hearts and lives. As we abide in Christ, the Spirit communicates grace from Christ to our souls, enabling us to bear fruit for God.

(3) This fruit is our responsibility. It's for this reason, Paul bookends this passage with exhortations to "walk in the Spirit" (v16 and v25). Furthermore, throughout Scripture we are told to actively pursue these fruit. 1Tim.6:11—"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness." These are graces or virtues (fruit), that every Christian is to pursue.

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Necessity
- III. Its Promotion

#### I. Its Meaning

1. The Greek word most often rendered "patience" is the combination of two words—long and suffering.
2. At its very core, patience entails the long-suffering, endurance, or perseverance of opposition and hardship.
3. And so, terms such as endurance, perseverance, and forbearance, are all basically synonymous with patience.
4. Oftentimes, newer translations such as the NKJV, NASB, and ESV, render the term endure or persevere.
5. Thus, by way of a simple definition, patience is the endurance of delay and/or opposition, by trusting in God, and waiting for His promises.
6. (1) Patience implies endurance—as I've said, endurance and perseverance are at the core of patience.
7. Biblical patience refers to the continuation or persistence of a person in a specific act, practice, or duty.
8. It's the opposite of giving up—it's the willingness to continue in something until you reach goal or end.
9. (2) Patience implies opposition—as I've said, the very word rendered patience literally means to suffer long.
10. To "suffer" implies some form of opposition, hardship, or delay—patience is to suffer or endure long.
11. Matt.10:22—"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."
12. While this statement has a specific reference to the apostles, it has a broad application for all Christians.
13. All Christians will be hated and forced to face opposition from this world—thus, we all need patience.
14. Jas.5:10—"My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience" v11—"Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the

- patience of Job, and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."
15. Both the prophets and Job were examples of those who patiently endured affliction, hardship, and suffering (the prophets at the hand of evil men, and Job at the hand of a wise God).
  16. (3) Patience implies trust—this concerns the "how" of patience—how do we endure, persevere, or suffer long?
  17. We are enabled to endure through all manner of opposition, as we look to God for strength and grace.
  18. It's for this reason, Scripture often weds together the graces of faith and patience, 2Thess.1:4—"we ourselves boast of your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure."
  19. Heb.6:12—"imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" Rev.13:10—"Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."
  20. We could say faith is the mother of patience, as we are enabled to endure by faith deriving strength from Christ.
  21. (4) Patience implies promise—this concerns the "why" of patience—why do we endure, persevere, and/or suffer long?
  22. Christian patience always has an eye to the promises of God—He will make everything right in His time.
  23. 1Thess.1:3—"remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."
  24. Notice the phrase "the patience of hope"—this means, they were patient because of hope, or they were patient in waiting for their hope.
  25. Ultimately our hope is the return of Christ, the bodily resurrection, and the final state on a renovated earth.
  26. Wilhelmus a Brakel—"Patience cannot exist without hope. When there is no longer hope patience will no longer be exercised."
  27. Jas.5:7-8—"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."
  28. Wilhelmus a Brakel—"Patience is the believer's spiritual strength which he has in God whereby he, in the performance of his duty, willingly, with composure, joyfully, and steadfastly endures all the changes and afflictions of life, having a hope that the outcome will be well."
  29. Patience (a) trusts God, (b) endures all changes and afflictions of life, and (c) looks to the fulfillment of God's promises.

## II. Its Necessity

1. Here I want to suggest there are three basic reasons why patience is essential—waiting on God, enduring opposition, and forbearing with others.
2. (1) Patience is necessary to wait on God—patience enables us to wait on God and His perfect timing.
3. The Scriptures often couple together waiting and patience—as they are closely and intimately related.
4. Thus, one important aspect of patience is waiting on God to act when and how He determines is best.
5. Ps.37:7-9—"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...for evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth."
6. Here the Psalm writer is exhorting the people of God to wait patiently on God, to judge His enemies, and save His people.

7. Yes, everything appears to be in disarray—it seems that evildoers are having their way with little or no consequences.
8. But dear brethren, this is far from the truth—God is watching every single move, and He's keeping a long list.
9. But what are the people of God to do in the meantime? Well, we are rest in the LORD (that means trust Him), and wait patiently for Him.
10. Ps.40:1—"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry (Ps.25:5-6)"—the phrase "I waited patiently" is a single Hebrew word meaning "to wait, look for, or expect."
11. It carries within it the idea of patient waiting, or of content and enduring determination to trust in God.
12. Now, I totally understand that ultimately speaking, David within this Psalm, speaks typically of Christ.
13. Verse 2 speaks about Christ resurrection—and thus v1, speaks about His patient trust in His Father...
14. But I personally believe the Psalm does, in the first place, speak of David's experiences as an individual.
15. The historical circumstances of this Psalm could apply to several different instances in David's own life.
16. He was facing serious danger, he was crying out to God for help, and now he must wait for God's response.
17. Brethren—the issue of patience is essential to prayer—rarely do we receive what we ask for the first time.
18. Thus, our Savior taught two parables about prayer (Lk.11, 18)—and both underscore our need for persistence (Lk.18:1—Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart).
19. Brethren—I think we as Christians often expect immediate results—but this isn't always the way it is.
20. Sometimes, dare I say most times, we must labor long in prayer over things before they come to pass.
21. We must pray and wait—patience enables us to wait on God's answer, trusting He knows what's best.
22. (2) Patience is necessary to endure opposition—as I've said, the same word rendered patience is also rendered endurance.
23. In this sense, the word refers to a patient enduring through this world, faced with constant opposition.
24. The Christian life is likened to a journey through the wilderness, a long and difficult race or marathon.
25. The Christians life isn't easy, and it isn't usually short-lived—it's long, difficult, uphill, and demanding.
26. I've heard at times a very helpful phrase "plodding along"—that is—every day we need to plod along.
27. We need patience—we need endurance—we need the ability to perseverance through this wicked world.
28. Rev.1:9—"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev.14:12)."
29. John says Christians are companions in three things—the tribulation, kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ.
30. (a) The tribulation—that is—the tribulation, trouble, and affliction, associated with this present world.

31. (b) The kingdom—that is—we are citizens of Christ's kingdom, which must advance through conflict.
32. (c) The patience—this refers to the endurance or patience, that comes from the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ.
33. Christians need patience because they must endure through this world, filled with tribulation and conflict.
34. (3) Patience is necessary to forebear with others—that is, it enables us to be gracious and forgiving to others.
35. This is likely what we think of when we speak of patience—dealing with difficult people around us.
36. For example, a mother needs patience in dealing with her children, and a wife needs patience dealing with her husband.
37. Scripture uses the word "forebear" in this connection, Eph.4:2—"with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."
38. The word rendered "bearing" literally means—"to bear or carry" and refers to the endurance of the weaknesses of others.
39. To "bear with another in love"—means—"to endure each other's weaknesses"—it closely relates to forgiveness.
40. Col.3:12-13—"Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (Prov.19:11)."
41. 2Tim.2:24-25—"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they will know the truth."
42. Ministers of the gospel need patience as they instruct slow-learning Christians, and even correct heretics.
43. 1Thess.5:14—"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."
44. These words are not merely for the pastors, but for every member—they too have obligation towards the church.
45. The apostle suggests that most churches, will have three types of people, which need individual assistance.
46. (a) Warn the unruly—that is—those who are wilfully walking contrary to God's revealed will and word.
47. (b) Comfort the fainthearted—that is—the timid or fearful—the need to be comforted and encouraged.
48. (c) Uphold the weak—that is—strengthen the weak—they are weak and needy, filled with doubts and fears.
49. (d) Be patient with all—this refers to all three categories of people—the unruly, fainthearted, and weak.
50. Dear brethren—simply put, how are we to interact with each other, without this grace (fruit) of patience.
51. There are the unruly among us, the fainthearted, and the weak, and we all need patience to deal with them.
52. Now—let in passing say something that I trust is evident—most, if not all of us, fall into one of these categories ourselves.
53. Brethren, I don't mean to be unkind, but if you look around you, you'll find many reasons behind the need for patience.

### III. Its Promotion

1. Here I want to provide several helps, whereby we can promote the Christian grace or fruit of patience.
2. (1) Pray for the grace of patience—I've mentioned before, that this is where we always need to start.
3. 2Thess.3:5—"Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."
4. The apostle prays that the Lord would direct their hearts into two things: the love of God and the patience of Christ.
5. The first of these is easy to understand—it was his prayer that they know God's love more intimately.
6. The second of these is less clear—it likely means one of two things—patience FOR or FROM Christ.
7. Patience FOR Christ—this is how the KJV renders it—"may the Lord direct your hearts into...patient waiting for Christ."
8. Patience FROM Christ—that is—he prayed that the Spirit would lead them into the grace of patience that's IN Christ.
9. Either way, and this is what's very clear, patience is a grace that is obtained, in part, in answer to our prayers.
10. (2) Repent of the sin of impatience—I think most of us would have to agree, we can be very impatient people.
11. We grow impatient with God, with our circumstances, with our spouses, children, and Christian brethren.
12. Humility is essential to Christian patience, Eph.4:2—"with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love."
13. Put another way—impatience is the result of pride—you are simply unwilling to forbear with others.
14. (3) Trust God to one-day right all wrongs—remember, at the very heart of patience is trust in God's promises.
15. An impatient person attempts to take matters into his own hands, he isn't content to let God handle it.
16. Impatience is a form of pride, or the refusal to let God be God—vengeance belongs to God, and not us.
17. Furthermore, impatience is evidence of unbelief—as we fail to believe or trust that God will do as promised.
18. Ps.37:7-9—"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth (Jas.5:7-11)."
19. Brethren—I really believe this passage has much to say to us, in light of national changes that's taken place.
20. How—do we face, every day, wicked and evil politicians and leaders, bent on destroying this country.
21. We trust God, and remember that one day He will right every wrong, and repay those who rebel against Him.
22. 1Pet.2:18-24—"Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,

- that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed."
23. (4) Ponder the beauty and rarity of patience—fewer things will distinguish us from this world like patience.
  24. In fact, patience is a divine perfection, found flawlessly in God Himself—He's the God of all patience.
  25. Ps.103:8—"The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy"  
Nah.1:3—"The LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*."
  26. Prov.16:32—"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."
  27. Brethren—simply put—the grace of patience is a very rare thing that renders the soul morally beautiful.
  28. (5) Remember God's patience toward you—that is, be ever reminded how God was and is patience toward you.
  29. (a) Before conversion, 1Tim.1:16—"For this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life."
  30. (b) After conversion—that is—as God's people, our heavenly Father remains very patient toward us.
  31. This has always been an amazing thought to me—how patient God remains toward me even though I know so much (and yet sin so often).
  32. (6) Except suffer as God's means to promote patience—hardship is a key means through which God works patience in us.
  33. Jas.1:1-4—"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
  34. Sickness, persecution, and hardship are all means ordained of God, to work patience within His people.
  35. Thus, we have to receive such things ultimately speaking, from the hand of God, as means to give us patience.
  36. (7) Imitate Christ, the most patient Man—we behold the Savior's patience in at least three beautiful ways.
  37. (a) With regards to His Father's will—as we read through the Gospels, our Savior was ever conscious of His Father's will.
  38. He ever lived patiently on His Father's timing—knowing that His hour had been determined from eternity.
  39. (b) With regards to His disciples—our Savior was always patience and forbearing with His needy disciples.
  40. (c) With regards to His suffering—here we behold our Savior's patience the clearest—in bearing the wicked and evil treatment of men.
  41. But brethren, remember, though this suffering was great, His greatest suffering was at the hands of His Father.
  42. Let me leave you this morning with likely the greatest of all motives and helps to promote patience—the perfect patience of our Savior, as He bore or endured the just wrath of His Father on the cross.