



Does Patience Really Matter?

Ephesians 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹*Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,* ²*with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.*



Patience is one of the most understated yet powerful characteristics any human being can have. Most of us think of patience as simply waiting things out - it's raining and we can't start the game until it stops, so let's be patient. While this is a true facet of patience, biblical patience goes much further than that. The Bible teaches us the kind of patience one needs when going through a hard and perhaps painful experience. This kind of patience adds a factor of endurance to the necessary waiting, as one needs to bear a burden or discomfort for a time. Interestingly, the New Testament adds yet another dimension to the kind of patience Christians are supposed to have. As we shall soon see, this kind of patience is all about self-restraint. The question is, am I personally and truly living a life of Christlike patience?

The Merriam Webster Dictionary shows all of these various aspects of patience.

Merriam-Webster:

Patient: adjective

1. bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint
2. manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain
3. not hasty or impetuous
4. steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity
5. able or willing to bear



1 and 3 above are the basic, common aspects of patience. We will focus on the more challenging aspect, 2. manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain.

THE FIRST APPROACH TO PATIENCE: This involves being appropriate, not reactive to the situation. This is a good example for parenting.



Gentle: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1933 *epieikes*; appropriate, i.e. (by implication) mild

The Kings James Version translates this word "gentle" 3 times, "patient" once, "moderation" once

God's "patience" is the highest model and example for our patience:

James 3:17: (KJV) *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, **gentle** <1933>, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

Gentle - meaning an appropriate reaction to the situation. God has this gentleness and appropriateness in His example, so that is what we are supposed to be.



Those who are to lead the flock are to be patient, as opposed to being one who reacts and adds to trouble:

1 Timothy 3:3: (KJV) *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but **patient** <1933>, not a brawler, not covetous;*

It's interesting that *patient* is mentioned before the word *brawler*. Someone who is patient is calm and quietly waits. A brawler is one who is looking to pick a fight. These are complete opposites. Those who lead in Christianity should not be looking to pick a fight with anybody. This basic level of patience is very important.

All true Christians should have patience that can be readily observed:

Philippians 4:4-7: (NASB) *⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your **gentle spirit** <1933> be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*



Let your *gentle spirit* be known to all men - here is that same word for appropriateness or patience. People should see this in us, just like what Paul was telling the Philippian Christians. Our evenness of reaction, our appropriateness, should be shining out of us. This kind of patience depends on our continual resetting of what we allow our minds to dwell upon. Do we look for that appropriateness in all aspects of our lives?



THE POWERFUL PROCESS OF PATIENCE:

The most basic biblical definition of patience is to wait with calm intention. This is a necessary foundation for everything else that true Christian patience will require of us.



Am I equipped to intentionally wait in this way, or do I fall into the restless wondering and wandering of my human emotions?



A DEEP, SOUND
AND POWERFUL
ENDURANCE.

The next New Testament approach to patience is the most common. It is a deep, sound and powerful endurance.

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5281 *hupomone*;
NOUN: cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy

Jesus teaches us that this kind of patience is broad and absolutely necessary for discipleship:

Luke 21:19: (KJV) *In your **patience** <5281> possess ye your souls.*

This is a big statement. In other words, "In your *endurance* possess ye your souls. Endure through your trials. Observe how I prove my loyalty to my Father, and do the same."



Jesus instructed us to *love one another as I have loved you*. How important and powerful that is. But here he says, *in your endurance, possess ye your lives*. Jesus told us these levels of patience have great significance.

We looked at the noun form of the word for *patience* or *endurance*. Here is the verb form:

Endure: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5278 *hupomeno*

VERB: to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere



James 5:11: (KJV) Behold, we count them happy which **endure** <5278>. Ye have heard of the **patience** <5281> of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

The patience of Job is a famous phrase.

"THE PATIENCE OF JOB"



This "patience" is:

a **determination to remain in a difficult position**,

to **cheerfully endure** and

to **have fortitude** based upon your ability to continually remind yourself of your own "deliberate purpose."

This patience is an extraordinary endurance that finds its courage in a clear mental picture of its expectations.

WHAT ARE
WE THINKING
ABOUT?



Do I have a crystal-clear mental picture of what I expect of myself through experiences? If so, I can have this kind of endurance.

Job said, *Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him* (Job 13:15). This shows his endurance and fortitude. His patience was severely tested. He had his three "comforters" who kept telling him he did something wrong. But Job disagreed. He understood he needed to wait through the experience. The burden was massive, almost unbearable. And yet he shows us how to bear a huge burden.



The Hebrew Christians were also sterling examples of this same kind of Job-like endurance:

Hebrews 10:32-36: (NASB) ³²But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you **endured** <5278> a great conflict of sufferings, ³³partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

What a great example! Look at how they stood up for those who were persecuted. They lost everything for the sake of Christ.



Remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured - this was not a trial of endurance that came to very mature Christians. This was a trial of endurance that came to relatively new Christians after just being enlightened. They endured hardship - the seizing of their property, persecution - they really stood FOR Christ and WITH Christ.

³⁵Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of **endurance <5281>**, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

While they came through their hard experience, Paul says not to throw away their confidence in God just because it might be a little easier now. They still had need of endurance, the kind of perseverance that holds up, the kind of patience that bears the burden without knowing when it is going to end *so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.*

This is one of the directives for every one of us as Christians. We are looking at the fortitude kind of patience here.



THE POWERFUL PROCESS OF PATIENCE:

Waiting with calm intention lays the groundwork for a much deeper level of patience. It is perseverance. It is waiting with calm intention while bearing a painful or trying burden. This kind of patience is only developed through the challenging experiences of life. The deeper our development of this perseverance, the more we become like Jesus.



Am I focused in on becoming Christlike by persevering through my trials, or do I easily lose my objectivity due to the severity of my experiences?

Does the severity of my experiences knock me off my center? Does it make me lose focus so that I am not enduring as I could - as I should - as a follower of Jesus?

The next time we hear someone say, “Just be patient!” we need to pause and consider how Jesus would handle our experience.

With intentional waiting and the perseverance of bearing difficulties as two important aspects of patience, what could be missing?

Biblically-defined patience focuses us on managing our way through long periods of unsettled life experiences. The two aspects of patience we have discussed so far show us primarily how to manage things that come to us from the outside world. Our next aspect of patience focuses us on appropriately handling things that require restraint from the inside out.



The third aspect of patience is, interestingly, a part of the fruit of the spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23: (NASB) ²²*But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience** <3115>, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*



**FOCUSING ON THE FRUIT OF PATIENCE:
A NEWLY DEVELOPED DISCIPLINE BASED
ON SELFLESS LOVE AND SPIRITUAL THINGS!**

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3115 *makrothumia*;
NOUN: longanimity, i.e. (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance
2) longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3116 *makrothumos*;
ADVERB: with long (enduring) temper, i.e. leniently

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: with longanimity
(longanimity means "a disposition to bear injuries patiently, forbearance")

It is interesting how in the English language we use the same word for all these different kinds of patience. In the Greek language, there are three different words. We appreciate the Greek-English Lexicon definition on patience as a noun: **slowness in avenging wrongs**. This is a self-restraint aspect of patience we don't normally talk about because frankly, nobody likes to do it.



Human nature says if we feel something, we want to just act on it. This verse is saying, "Not so fast!"



Example of forbearance: When a loan is in forbearance, it means you don't have to make payments, or you can temporarily make smaller payments. The loan holds back on its legal and required payment schedule. Taking advantage of this is convenient, but it does not help you pay back that which you owe.

When COVID-19 hit, many loans were put into forbearance because people could not work. The banks did not collect on what was due until the person went back to work.

Forbearance is holding back on collecting that which is rightfully owed to us. It is part of the important development process in the Christian life.

We looked at the noun and the adverb of the Greek word for this kind of patience or forbearance. Here is the verb form:

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3114 *makrothumeo*;
VERB: to be long-spirited, i.e. (objectively) forbearing or (subjectively) patient

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1b) to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others 1b1) to be mild and slow in avenging
1b2) to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish



All of these definitions are contrary to what how we are encouraged to react in our current society:

“Go get them!”

“If they push you, you push them back!”

“If someone says something to you, you say something right back!”

The idea of forbearance is a very different approach. We are to be on guard over our emotions and not give into them.

This is why this type of patience is a fruit of the spirit. Remember, it is the fruit of God’s spirit which develops within us. It does not come naturally or easily. We develop it because of the grace of God’s spirit.



Let’s look at this forbearance or self-restraint in action. Our first example is the Parable of the Ungrateful Servant.



The context of this parable is a servant is owed a great deal to his master, and he could not pay. The master’s response was to take the debtor’s whole family and put them into servitude until the debt was paid in full.

Matthew 18:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶*So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, have **patience** <3114> (forbear) with me and I will repay you everything.* ²⁷*And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.*

This is a powerful example. The servant had a massive debt. The lord of that servant mercifully said, “I will forgive that debt. Go and take care of your life.”

What a tremendous example Jesus used! In the end, the servant does a terrible job of forbearing on someone else who owes him a miniscule amount of debt. The unforgiving servant threatens his debtor with jail and shows no mercy. The lesson of the parable is that God is patient (and merciful!) with us, and we need to be patient (and merciful!) with others in return.

Patience or longsuffering is a willingness to be non-reactive and appropriate. It also tells us to be willing to wait for a situation to completely unfold and to be disciplined in holding back. This kind of patience gives the benefit of the doubt and can only truly be displayed by humanity through a humble spirit. It cannot work without humility.

The fruit of the spirit that scripturally comes right before patience is the **fruit of peace**.

We need to master this peace before this kind of patience can be attained. **Having the peace of God helps us hold back because we can see things through a different set of eyes.**

God’s forbearance or restraint is our primary example.





Romans 1 was all about blatant idolatry and sensuality.

Paul next urges Christians to, with “long-enduring temper,” refrain from judgment without proper cause and place:

Romans 2:1-2,4: (NASB) ¹Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ²And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

Being in the seat of judgment would be idolatrous behavior. God is the judge.

Q. But there are times we ARE supposed to judge, right?



Paul says we should not be judging others when we are doing the same kinds of things. We may be doing them differently or not as blatantly, but we are guilty too, so we cannot judge others.

However, there are times where judgment is appropriate. It is in those times when we really need godly restraint because otherwise we can pollute righteousness with pride, arrogance and personal opinion.



Mercy must be a part of judgment. If we are not merciful to others, we are not being Christlike.

It is too easy to just judge! Hold back! We forbear because God in His spiritual wisdom forbears:

⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and **patience** <3115> (forbearance), not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

God held back for us. We should do the same for others and have great compassion for our fellow sinner.



The Scriptures show God’s amazing forbearance and “holding back” throughout all the ages of humanity. There is no comparison to our little examples of when we have to hold back. God’s example is so much higher.

God dramatically shows us His forbearance. His spirit within us will help us rise above our fleshly desires and deeds with a long-tempered approach, to best manage life’s inconsistencies.

Our forbearance also has to do with waiting for the unfolding of God’s plans and prophecies. Such waiting must be with a steady heart and mind:

James 5:7-9: (NASB) ⁷Therefore be **patient** <3114>, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being **patient** <3114> about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸You too be **patient** <3114>; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.



In Episode 1285: “When Jesus Prayed, ‘Thy Kingdom Come,’ What Did He Mean?” we discussed the kingdom. Knowing that this present evil world is crumbling all around us, it is sometimes difficult to wait for the kingdom and the promised hope for all people. We need to forbear and focus on developing Christlikeness.

That development of Christlikeness now does not happen by getting involved in all the social activities that are around us and trying to right every single wrong. We need to hold ourselves back in a godly fashion because God is not trying to correct the wrongs today. He is allowing them to happen.



If faithful, we will be a part of the future *ministry of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:11-21) of the whole resurrected world. For now, we need to hold ourselves back with godly restraint.

Waiting for God’s plan to unfold can make us impatient with one another. If we have this lack of forbearance - lack of self-restraint - between us, let’s take it as a warning sign. Pause and consider!




Again, the prophets are an example:

James 5:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰As an example, brethren, of suffering and **patience <3115>**, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We count those blessed who **endured <5278>**. You have heard of the **endurance <5281>** of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Verse 10: examples of the suffering, forbearance and the self-restraint kind of patience.

Verse 11: the endurance kind of patience.

The two work together. Here James shows us the forbearance and the endurance of the prophets as well. They are a tremendous example for us to study, absorb and follow. Forbearance and endurance absolutely go hand-in-hand!

 This is not easy. If endurance means being under the weight of trial, how can we hold ourselves back and at the same time press ourselves forward?



Hold back, keep moving forward, hold back - how do we do that? We think the answer is that self-restraint allows us to move forward. If we are moving forward toward Christlikeness, we are restraining ourselves so God’s spirit can speak and act for us and show us how. Restraining ourselves allows God’s spirit to shine through us. So, holding back (our emotions) is in fact moving forward as a Christian.



THE POWERFUL PROCESS OF PATIENCE:

So far, we have seen forbearance as holding back from that which you can rightfully claim, holding back from judgment of those around us in a godly way and holding back our weariness in waiting for God’s plan to flourish.

The Old Testament prophets were all strong examples of this.



Am I in tune enough with God's spirit to recognize my personal need for forbearance, or do I instead just react?

Let's look at the example of Peter when he gave his sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:14-41. The holy spirit was poured out on the apostles and disciples. Peter explained with a level head what was taking place. He held back his anger and explained how evil men crucified Jesus. He said Jesus was prophesied to be raised back to God as Lord and Christ and that all should repent. He showed self-restraint and did not let his emotions take over so that he could preach the good news.

This is such a good example because the same Peter before Pentecost would have impetuously gotten right up in those people's faces, pointing his finger and saying: "This is what you did!" But here he is showing the reason God allowed the events of the crucifixion and the resulting magnitude of God's plan for everyone.

Peter show great forbearance once he received God's holy spirit. He stopped being impetuous and became the mouthpiece Christianity needed to begin understanding. The difference between the "old Simon" versus the "new Peter" is God's spirit and forbearance.

The forbearance we are to develop is a spirit-driven character trait. We can only develop it by paying attention to the spirit that brings it.

**Forbearance is an important Christian trait.
How can we tell if we are properly developing it?**

Already we can see forbearance is required in every aspect of our discipleship. That being the case, we obviously need to understand when to apply it and how we can tell it is working. There are three times in the New Testament where the word *forbearance* is used in conjunction with another specific word. This combination of words deepens the meaning of Christian forbearance.

Let's define this other word and review a few examples of how it is generally used in the New Testament:

Bear: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #430 *anéchomai*; to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon 1) to hold up 2) to hold one's self erect and firm 3) to sustain, to bear, to endure

It means holding oneself firm and straight because we have to stand for something, against something or with something. It is this firmness, this clarity, this strength of stance. We are going to get a sense of this word by itself at first and then will look at it with forbearance.



The first example of “holding oneself up in a firm way” was demonstrated by Jesus in a difficult situation. This account occurred after the Mount of Transfiguration.



A man begged for Jesus’ help, as his son was demon possessed and no one else could cast it out:

Luke 9:41-43: (NASB) ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said, You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and **put <430>** up with you? Bring your son here. ⁴²...But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³And they were all amazed at the greatness of God...

This might be confusing. What is Jesus asking, *How long shall I...put up with you?* It sounds like he is exasperated, like he is done with them and wants to throw them all away.

But that is not what he meant. *Put (anéchomai)* implies to stand firm; be strong for what you stand for. This gives us a hint that Jesus isn’t asking, “How long should I tolerate you?” Rather, “How long must I stand firm for the righteousness of God in a dark, sinful, broken and destroyed world? How long until I can just erase it all?” Jesus is not exasperated - he heals the boy. His next statement is *Bring your son here*. This is not exasperation. It is a sense of, “It is dark here, and I am standing in light - how long until I can just finish the work I started?”

THE LESSON: Stand firm as a follower of Christ when we see unfaithfulness surrounding us in the world.



This next example is Paul encouraging the Thessalonians:

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4: (NASB) ³We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; ⁴therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you **endure <430>**.

Paul showed a deep appreciation for the Thessalonians because they stood firm no matter what the experiences were. We are also to stand firm as a follower of Christ when faced with persecutions and afflictions.

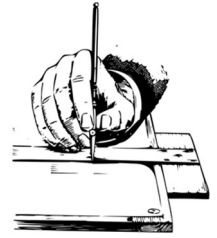
When we say “stand firm as a follower of Christ,” we are picking up exactly on what the Apostle Paul said they were doing. In other words, “You have had hard times and yet you are standing. You are like a rock that cannot be moved.” This is inspirational! We are seeing this word used for standing firm in a couple of different ways.

Our final example is Paul urging the Hebrew Christians to stand firmly in their faith in light of needing the book of Hebrews as a guide for spiritual growth:

Hebrews 13:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰Now the God of peace... ²¹equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. ²²But I urge you, brethren, **bear <430>** with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.



This is an interesting use of this word, because *bear* is again the word **<430>** meaning to first stand firm. Paul is telling the Hebrew Christians that he wrote this (the book of Hebrews) to help them grow up in Christ. He has given them much information to help them apply things spiritually. It is to tell them how to grow in Christ even with having such a strong Jewish background.



I urge you...to bear (stand firm) *in this exhortation* - he is giving this to them so he can show them how to stand firm in this exhortation. They needed this, so now take it and stand firm with it!

THE LESSON: Stand firm as a follower of Christ when our faith needs instruction and encouragement. Even when we are not in the greatest position, it is still an opportunity to stand firm as we receive the lesson to help us to be more Christlike.

We have seen this idea of standing firm being applied to:

1. Standing **in spite of**
(Jesus standing firm in spite of the darkness standing around him)
2. Standing **against**
(the Thessalonians standing against their persecutions and afflictions)
3. Standing **because of**
(the Hebrew Christians standing because of Paul's encouragement)

Now let's look at standing **in relation to** forbearance.

Paul had just told the Ephesians how deeply he had prayed for them in his imprisonment.

They were dealing with some core belief issues challenging Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian fellowship:

Ephesians 4:1-3: (NASB) *¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,*

Walk like a disciple of Christ. Follow him with assurance and be alert. *Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.* This makes us think of Christian soldiers, like somebody who stands firm, strong and tall - standing at attention. What does "standing at attention" mean? It means our entire body is ready and paying attention. That is what the apostle is saying - *walk in a manner* - where we are sometimes standing at attention, or where we are walking as a soldier, ready for whatever action or command might come before us.

These two words together deepen the meaning of Christian forbearance:

²with all humility and gentleness, with **patience <3115>** (forbearance), **showing tolerance <430>** (standing firm) *for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*

Together these are a powerful combination: Holding ourselves back with forbearance so that we can stand firm in Christ.



Have humility and gentleness be our basis as we restrain ourselves, our human emotions, from reactive behavior towards those who may question our standing as true Christians.

One of the issues in the book of Ephesians was that the Jewish Christians were giving Gentile Christians a hard time. This created a lot of tension. The apostle tells the Gentile Christians they are just as much a Christian as the others. Have forbearance. Do not say what you want to say. Stand. Have that self-restraint and stand firm in Christ. *Stand for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit.*



Forbear and stand firm in Christ:

Ephesians 4:4-6: (NASB) ⁴There is one body and one spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

This is the result. This is where we need to be with standing firm and forbearance - standing firm in Christ. Use self-restraint so we can actually stand firm in Christ rather than standing firm in ourselves. We have tried standing firm in ourselves time after time rather than standing firm in Christ, and it always ends in disaster. Forbearing for the wrong reasons does not bring us where we need to be. These verses tell us we must show self-restraint for godly reasons and then stand firm in Christ.

Forbearance is a defining characteristic of discipleship as it is a primary defining characteristic of selfless love:

1 Corinthians 13:3-7: (NASB) ³And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴Love is **patient** <3114>, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Jesus loves us, and yet exercises great restraint as he waits for us to grow and develop. This is how we are to love one another. How do we do that? By focusing on the will of God.



Many people have read or heard this “Love Chapter.” These verses are often read at weddings, but often we miss the point of the beginning - *Love is patient*. We think love is just willing to wait - to be calm, cool and collected. This is not saying just that - it is saying that love is forbearing; it is full of self-restraint. This is the first quality the Apostle Paul lists!

It is no accident that self-restraint is such an important part of our Christian walk. That is why it is part of the fruit of the spirit.

This word has great value in the marriage relationship. How about forbearing and self-restraint when we have difficulties within a marriage? These qualities of selfless love should be shown first. Forbearance is bigger than what we might think.



THE POWERFUL PROCESS OF PATIENCE:

Our lesson here is clear. **Forbear, restrain yourself from natural reactions and responses and instead choose to stand firm in Christ because he taught us to stand firm in love.** To selflessly love is to first and foremost commit to restraint as we put others first, even if they may view our Christianity differently.



Am I committed to forbearance when it comes to the brotherhood or am I settling for just being reactive?

This was the issue with the Ephesians. Their Christianity was being viewed as a secondary kind of Christianity. Even if we are being looked at that way, we need to have the forbearance necessary to stand up for Christlikeness on a higher level.

Many times we settle for just being reactive. That might be easier, but it is so much less productive.

There is so much to learn about having the patience that requires self-restraint. If we ever thought this was easy, we need to think again.

Now that we see how our self-restraining patience helps us stand firm in Christ, how else should it be applied?

We now see the importance of love as a primary driving force as we apply the patience of self-restraint and stand firm for Christ regarding issues of Christian interpretation. This same formula will also apply to every other aspect of our experiences. As Christians, there should never be a time when our forbearance is applied without selfless love.

If we forbear only because we know we should, that's good - but it is not using Christlikeness. It is not using selfless love. We want to rise up to this higher level of godly self-restraint with selfless love as the motivator.

Forbearance applied in love is required when dealing with whatever issues we may have within the body of Christ. If properly exercised, we will stand firm in Christ and not ourselves.

These two words are used together, which deepen the meaning:

Colossians 3:12-13: (NASB) ¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and **patience <3115>**; ¹³**bearing <430>** with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

This forbearance is hard to do, especially when we have a challenge with someone that sees things differently than we do. We must rise above without compromising biblical principles and love each member of the body of Christ because they are chosen of God.



The same basic formula exists here: forbearance or self-restraint plus standing firm. The two words used together deepens the meaning. When we have complaints about - or issues with - each other, we need compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness. This will allow us to properly forbear, and therefore stand firm in Christ, as we stand WITH those of the brotherhood with whom we disagree.

Patience: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3115 *makrothumia*;
NOUN: longanimity, i.e. (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude

+

Bear: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #430 *anéchomai*; to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with

If we are all really trying to work at following Christ but are disagreeing on a topic, we need to learn how to stand WITH one another. That takes forbearance because when we forbear, we can then stand for Christ. We take “self” out of the way.

As we stand firm in Christ, this opens the door for an even higher basis for fellowship:

Colossians 3:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴*Beyond all these things (forgiving one another) put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.* ¹⁵*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.* ¹⁶*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* ¹⁷*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.*

This is what a healthy group of brethren looks like, having one purpose based in love with heartfelt harmony and praise. This is hard to get to, especially if some in the group have a lot of passion and drive for the gospel.

Inevitably, we will see things a little differently and will rub each other the wrong way. *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts* - how? We get out of the way - by restraining ourselves - and we stand with Christ and the brotherhood through the spirit.



Forbear and stand firm in Christ:

This leads to strong and mutually uplifting fellowship in Christ. When we have issues, decide together to forbear so we can mutually stand firm. This is a difficult but required part of our Christianity.

Forbearance is required for those in positions of spiritual responsibility and leadership:

2 Timothy 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹*I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:* ²*preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great **patience <3115>** and instruction.*



This self-restraint, this *great patience*, this great forbearance in Christian leadership is a MUST. The Apostle Paul is telling Timothy (because he is turning a lot of his responsibility over to Timothy knowing he was coming to the end of his life) to *reprove, rebuke, exhort*. How is he supposed to do this? With great self-restraint, *with great patience and instruction*.

Leadership within the body of Christ is ONLY about the word of God and NEVER about personal feelings or agenda. We need to understand we are standing FOR Christ, WITH Christ, and WITH the brotherhood by self-restraint.

Developing and maintaining forbearance in leadership prepares one for the hardest of times:

2 Timothy 4:3-5: (NASB) ³*For the time will come when they will not **endure <430>** sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Look at the contrast between verses 1-2 to verses 3-5. Paul is warning us of the corruption coming to Christianity, and rightfully so. History shows us Rome made Christianity a state religion and corrupted its teachings. They combined Paganism with Christianity, and it all came to pieces and got worse as time went on.

Even when he was still alive, Paul warns them of the corruption happening within the body of Christ, so they needed to be careful. There is a warning to *reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience because the time will come when they will not endure...*

They will not endure (stand firm) for sound doctrine, but they want to have their ears tickled, they want their bellies rubbed - they want to feel contented and happy, not Christlike.



Forbear and stand firm in Christ:

This approach to shepherding leads the leaders to be impervious to outside influences and maintain a pure focus on the truth of the gospel. We all want to learn how to be impervious to outside influences! Jesus was impervious to his circumstances because he was so focused and clear. He stood firmly and restrained his humanity for the sake of his spirituality, of doing the will of God - not the will of a perfect human being!

He even restrained himself when he threw the money changers' tables over and forced the animals out. He did not let the doves out of their cages so the poor would still have a sacrificial animal available in the temple. (John 2:13-17)

Jesus knew exactly what he was doing and exactly how he was doing it so that he could accomplish the lesson needing to be taught. He showed self-restraint so that godliness could reign. We stand in Christ with God.



The Hebrew Christians were exhorted to have the forbearance of the prophets in their experiences:

Hebrews 6:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰*For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.* ¹¹*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,* ¹²*so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and **patience** <3115> inherit the promises.*

How do we inherit the promises? Through faith and self-restraint and with selfless love as our guiding principle.

As Christians, we talk about the promises of God and often say we need to have faith in those promises. This is true and important. But what Paul is saying here is to be imitators of those who, through faith and self-restraint, inherited the promises.



What does self-restraint have to do with inheriting the promises? It is holding ourselves back so that there is room for those promises to be planted, grow, develop and hence, to guide us. That is why both self-restraint with faith are needed.

Self-restraint is powerfully important. How often did the prophets have to wait for God's instruction when all seemed lost or chaotic? And they got frustrated. But God saw them through it. They had to learn; they were not perfect. It is not about being perfect - it is about being faithful. It is about having restraint and faithfulness so we can stand.

Our self-restraint is one of the MOST IMPORTANT qualities we should develop as Christians:

1 Thessalonians 5:14-22: (NASB) ¹⁴*We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be **patient** <3114> with everyone.* ¹⁵*See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.* ¹⁶*Rejoice always;* ¹⁷*pray without ceasing;* ¹⁸*in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁹*Do not quench the spirit;* ²⁰*do not despise prophetic utterances.* ²¹*But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;* ²²*abstain from every form of evil.*

There is so much in these verses. *Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient (forbearing) with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil. How do we do that? By being self-restrained. Always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. How do we do that? Through godly self-restraint.*

Rejoice always. How do we do that? With godly self-restraint so we can truly rejoice even in trial. Pray without ceasing. Hold ourselves back so we can pray and put things out to God. In everything give thanks. Who does that naturally? Nobody - but with self-restraint we can. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the spirit. Again, self-restraint. Let this spirit grow within you. Remember, self-restraint allows us to move forward toward Christlikeness.



THE POWERFUL PROCESS OF PATIENCE:

Patience can mean simply waiting with intention as well as waiting with intention while you are heavily burdened. As we have seen it can also mean having forbearance, the quality of self-restraint. For Christians, this quality comes into play when we want or deserve something or when our emotions are getting the best of us. While mastering this kind of patience is difficult, it is a necessary trait of true disciples of Christ.



Am I truly focusing my Christian character by forbearing, or am I simply giving in to self-governing decisions?

Let's walk away with from this lesson on forbearance with a new appreciation of what the Scriptures teach us in terms of managing ourselves so that Christ his glory can grow within us. Our personal glory has to be put out of the way so the glory of Christ can rise up, take over, take root, and never turn back.

*So, does patience really matter?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on June 26, 2023

Ep. 1287: What Does God Promise Us As Christians?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Word Study: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3114, #3115, #3116 and #430
All scriptures shown below are from the King James Version.

Patient: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3114 *makrothumeo*;
VERB: to be long-spirited, i.e. (objectively) forbearing or (subjectively) patient

The King James Version translates this word be "patient" 3 times, "have patience" 2 times, "have long patience" once, "bear long" once, "suffer long" once, "be longsuffering" once, "patiently endure" once

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart 1a) to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles 1b) to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others 1b1) to be mild and slow in avenging 1b2) to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish

**All uses:**

Matthew 18:26: The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have **patience <3114>** with me, and I will pay thee all.

Matthew 18:29: And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have **patience <3114>** with me, and I will pay thee all.

Luke 18:7: And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He **bear long <3114>** with them?

1 Corinthians 13:4: Charity **suffereth long <3114>**, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

1 Thessalonians 5:14: Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be **patient <3114>** toward all men.

Hebrews 6:15: And so, after he had **patiently endured <3114>**, he obtained the promise.

James 5:7: Be **patient <3114>** therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath **long patience <3114>** for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

James 5:8: **Be <3114>** ye also **patient <3114>**; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering <3114>** to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Longsuffering: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3115 *makrothumia*;
NOUN: longanimity, i.e. (objectively) forbearance or (subjectively) fortitude

The King James Version translates this word as "longsuffering" 12 times, "patience" 2 times

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance 2) patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

All uses:

Romans 2:4: Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and **longsuffering <3115>**; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Romans 9:22: What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much **longsuffering <3115>** the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

2 Corinthians 6:6: By pureness, by knowledge, by **longsuffering <3115>**, by kindness, by the holy spirit, by love unfeigned,

Galatians 5:22: But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, **longsuffering <3115>**, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Ephesians 4:2: With all lowliness and meekness, with **longsuffering <3115>**, forbearing one another in love;

Colossians 1:11: Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and **longsuffering <3115>** with joyfulness;

Colossians 3:12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, **longsuffering <3115>**;



1 Timothy 1:16: *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all **longsuffering <3115>**, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

2 Timothy 3:10: *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, **longsuffering <3115>**, charity, patience,*

2 Timothy 4:2: *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all **longsuffering <3115>** and doctrine.*

Hebrews 6:12: *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and **patience <3115>** inherit the promises.*

James 5:10: *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of **patience <3115>**.*

1 Peter 3:20: *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the **longsuffering <3115>** of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

2 Peter 3:15: *And account that the **longsuffering <3115>** of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;*

Patiently: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3116 *makrothumos*; adverb: with long (enduring) temper, i.e. leniently: AV-patiently 1; 1 1) with longanimity, i.e. patiently

All uses:

Acts 26:3: *Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me **patiently <3116>**.*

Suffer: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #430 *anechomai*; to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with

The King James Version translates this word as "suffer" 7 times, "bear with" 4 times, "forbear" 2 times and "endure" 2 times

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) to hold up 2) to hold one's self erect and firm 3) to sustain, to bear, to endure

All uses:

Matthew 17:17: *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I **suffer <430>** you? bring him hither to me.*

Mark 9:19: *He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I **suffer <430>** you? bring him unto me.*

Luke 9:41: *And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and **suffer <430>** you? Bring thy son hither.*

Acts 18:14: *And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should **bear <430>** with you:*

1 Corinthians 4:12: *And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we **suffer <430>** it:*

2 Corinthians 11:1: *Would to God ye could **bear <430>** with me a little in my folly: and indeed **bear <430>** with me.*



2 Corinthians 11:4: For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well **bear with <430>** him.

2 Corinthians 11:19: For ye **suffer <430>** fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

2 Corinthians 11:20: For ye **suffer <430>**, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

Ephesians 4:2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, **forbearing <430>** one another in love;

Colossians 3:13: **Forbearing <430>** one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

2 Thessalonians 1:4: So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye **endure <430>**:

2 Timothy 4:3: For the time will come when they will not **endure <430>** sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Hebrews 13:22: And I beseech you, brethren, **suffer <430>** the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Recommended additional study:

Endurance:

Ep. 1159: How Can I Persevere When Life Gets Tough? (Part I)

Understanding how to apply perseverance through trials and afflictions

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1159-perseverance/>

The Kingdom:

Ep. 1285: When Jesus Prayed, "Thy Kingdom Come," What Did He Mean?

Digging into the deep, broad and scriptural meaning of God's kingdom

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1285-thy-kingdom-come/>

Parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube:

- What is patience? <https://youtu.be/ho2sBUUjWNs>
- What is self-control? <https://youtu.be/vDI-g3Gqr3Q>

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1286: Does Patience Really Matter?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1286-patience/>

See:



1. What are five aspects of patience listed in the Merriam-Webster dictionary?
2. What is the first approach to patience in this episode? Explain how the thought of “gentle” ties into patience. How does this apply to leaders of the flock? Contrast being “patient” with being a “brawler.” How does this definition of patience (Strongs Concordance #1933 - gentle) apply to all true Christians? (See James 3:17, 1 Timothy 3:3, Philippians 4:4-7)
3. What are the definitions of the next kind of patience presented? (Strongs #5281 [noun]/#5278 [verb])? Explain how they are each used in James 5:11. How does this kind of patience relate to Job? In what way did the Hebrew Christians show this kind of endurance? (See Luke 21:19, Job 13:15, Hebrews 10:32-36)
4. In what context does Galatians 5:22-23 put the next form of patience, (Strongs #3115 [noun]/#3114 [verb]/#3116 [adverb])? How does the Parable of the Ungrateful Servant fit this definition? Why does the peace of God help with this patience? Why is it dangerous for us to judge someone? What is a future job of the faithful Christian that will require forbearance? How were the prophets and Peter examples of patience? (See Matthew 18:26-27, Romans 2:1-4, James 5:7-11, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Acts 2:14-41)
5. Explain the three examples of Strongs #430 - “to bear,” and their lessons in “standing firm.” What happens when #430 (to bear, stand firm) and #3115 - (long suffering) are used in the same verse? (See Luke 9:41-43, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, Hebrews 13:20-22, Ephesians 4:1-6)
6. How does the beginning of 1 Corinthians 13:3-7 define love and patience? How do you see these two qualities in the relationships in your life? How do they apply in our relationships with our brethren? What does a healthy group of brethren look like? (See Colossians 3:12-17)
7. According to Paul instructing Timothy in leadership, those with spiritual responsibilities must have what? How does it help leaders in hard times? How did Jesus give us an example of this? (See 1 Timothy 4:1-5, John 2:13-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22)
8. Think about your life. How do you do the each of the following: (1 Thessalonians 5:14-22)
 - a. Encourage the fainthearted and help the weak
 - b. Be patient with everyone
 - c. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good
 - d. Rejoice always
 - e. Pray without ceasing
 - f. In everything give thanks
 - g. Quench not the spirit
 - h. Hold fast to that which is good
 - i. Abstain from every form of evil