

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

LESSON 04 - LONGSUFFERING

Text: Galatians 5:22-23

Introduction:

1. The great battle of our lives here upon Earth is between the flesh and the Spirit.
2. Ultimately, this is a conflict over who will reign and rule in our lives – man (the flesh) or God (the Spirit).
3. When we choose to walk after the Spirit, we will bear His fruit in our lives.
4. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.”

I. The Meaning of Longsuffering

- A. The Greek word is *makrothumia* (μακροθυμια) and it means, “patience, forbearance, fortitude, endurance, steadfastness, constancy, perseverance; slowness in avenging wrongs.”
 1. It is translated as both “longsuffering” and “patience.”
 2. The Hebrew word literally means, “long of nose or breathing;” thus, “slow to wrath.” (Cf. Psalm 86:15)
- B. The verb from of this noun is *makrothumeo* and it is translated as “patient,” “patience,” “long,” “bear,” “endured,” “longsuffering,” “suffereth,” and “patiently.”
- C. A similar (and interchangeable) Greek word is *hupomone*, which means “patient” or “patience.”
 1. This word also means, “steadfastness, endurance, perseverance; a patient enduring.”
 2. In the New Testament, it refers to “the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.”

II. The Measure of Longsuffering

- A. The longsuffering of God...
 1. It is seen in the story of the Flood (1 Peter 3:20; Genesis 6:3).
 2. It is seen in those who reject Him (Romans 9:21-25; 2:1-4).
 3. It is seen in the opportunities for salvation (2 Peter 3:8-10, 15).
- B. The longsuffering of the faithful...
 1. The example of Abraham (Hebrews 6:11-15)
 2. The example of the prophets (James 5:10-11)
 3. The example of Paul
 - a. God’s longsuffering (1 Timothy 1:15-16)
 - b. Paul’s longsuffering (2 Corinthians 6:3-6; 2 Timothy 3:10-11)

III. The Manifestation of Longsuffering

- A. Longsuffering toward life...
 1. It takes time to grow and mature (James 5:7; Luke 8:15).
 2. We must never give up (Galatians 6:9).
 3. We must continue to trust in the Lord (Matthew 6:33).
- B. Longsuffering toward man...
 1. The unity of the church depends upon it (Ephesians 4:1-3).

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2. We must be as longsuffering to others as God is to us (Colossians 3:12-13; 2 Timothy 4:2).
- C. Longsuffering toward Heaven...
1. Patience goes hand in hand with hope (Romans 8:24-25).
 2. We must patiently wait for the Lord (Psalm 37:7; 130:5; Lamentations 3:25-26; Hebrews 10:35-37; James 5:8).
- IV. The Connection to Love
- A. Longsuffering is the opposite of being short-tempered.
 - B. Paul defines longsuffering in terms of love (1 Corinthians 13:4).
 1. "Love suffers long."
 - a. It means, "Not to lose heart."
 - b. "To persevere patiently and bravely in ...misfortunes and troubles."
 - c. "To be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others."
 - d. "To be slow to anger, slow to punish, and slow in avenging."
 2. "And is kind"
 - a. "Love is the overplus of patience" (Morgan).
 - b. When you've had all you can stand, respond with kindness.
 - C. Think of God's merciful response to King Ahab (1 Kings 21:25-29).
 - D. God is longsuffering because He loves.
 - E. Longsuffering is love's habit.