

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS – PATIENCE

Preliminary

- (a) Believe what I am saying is from the Lord – you have to decide.
- (b) It is for each one's benefit and therefore everyone's.
- (c) It will only be so if it is received and acted on.

1. Introduction

- (a) Who believes that God has a destiny and plan for each of our lives?
Who believes that He wants to train and develop us into that destiny?
- As important as our professional training CPD? – Driver – Musician - ?
Who amongst us is actually engaged in personal training in line with God's plan?
- (b) We need to get beyond the spoon-feeding phase to our own responsibility for training. Sunday meetings and house-groups are helpful, but they are not enough. **Matthew 5 v.6:** Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
As the deer pants for the water ... Deer in a zoo or deer in the wild? The first has buried talent; then second invested talent.
- (c) Here is one aid to maturing in Christ which is simple, measurable and one which the Holy Spirit will willingly help you achieve.

2. Proposal

There are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5 v. 22-23**). We all have them in embryo, but they need developing. With the Holy Spirit's help, choose one fruit and ask Him to train you in this over the next year. He will be your instructor and your examiner – you can never fail – just take the test again and again, etc. After nine years you should be perfect! This is serious – we all need to move on to maturity. Many Christians are at the milk stage instead of the solid food, which is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (**Hebrews 5 v.13, 14**)

3. My Choice – The Fruit of Patience

I have only been on this for a few months, but already I am really getting the benefit. It has the wholehearted support of the Holy Spirit and my wife Sarah. I have found that as I set my heart on this, the Lord has given me revelation on patience, and how I relate to it personally. Perhaps aspects that other people have noticed, but to which I have been blind. Even this talk involved patience as it was going to be on 5th March but snow prevented the service taking place.!

4. What the Lord Has Shown Me

- (a) Patient endurance leads to revelation (**Rev 1 v. 9-10**).
Waiting leads to hearing; leads to obedience; leads to faith – e.g. story of elders from Chester.
- (b) Don't go directly for patience – go for resting in and waiting on the Lord – patience will grow from that.
- (c) Wait for God to answer. If He doesn't answer immediately, He always answers eventually. Like **Habbakuk 2 v. 1-3**. wait at your post. **Romans 8 v. 25-26:** But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

- (d) God Himself is patient (He personifies **all** of the fruits) – **2 Peter 3 v.15**. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. Cf: Be holy as I am Holy. **1 Peter 3 v. 18-20** – Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison.
- (e) You will receive what God has promised (**Hebrews 6. v.11-12**): We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Having specific promises for the future is a massive incentive to live a faith-filled life. Job said “What prospects do I have that I should be patient? (**Job 6 v.11**) (**James 5. v.10-11**) There is a reward for waiting patiently on the Lord.
- (f) Patience will lead to wisdom and understanding (**Proverbs 14 v.29**): A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.
- (g) Patience leads to success on the battlefield (**Proverbs 15 v.18**): A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. **Proverbs 16 v.32**: Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.
- (h) Patience is vital for fellowship. **Ephesians 4 v.2**: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **1 Thessalonians 5 v.14**: And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. It is also vital for evangelism.
- (i) Patience leads to faith – **James 5 v.7-9** – particularly with prophecy, let the word develop within you, and speak when you get the ‘green light’ of God's timing.
- (j) Patience gives direction. (Andrew's Norwegian dream). **Proverbs 3 v.5-6**: Trust in the Lord with all your heart ... He will direct your paths.
- (k) What do you lose when you learn patience? Impatience, anger, insecurity, discord, lack of peace, lack of vision and direction, hasty or bad decisions, wrong timing, critical attitude, etc.
- (l) One approach which I have found helpful is that, after identifying your personal fruit of the Spirit is to go through a concordance and write down all the Biblical references to that fruit. Then start praying over what you have written and watch out for life-changing revelation.

5. Long Term

God knows the plans He has for you ... (**Jeremiah 29 v.11**)

There is a strategy for your life ready for you to flourish in if you will give yourself wholly to the Lord. Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you (**James 4 v.8**) By learning patience, we allow the Holy Spirit to choose the timing and to truly reign in our lives.

We receive a Word or a vision from God by waiting on Him, and once we know we have that word, we can wait patiently and expectantly for that word to be fulfilled. Cf: Elijah on Mount Carmel watching out for a cloud the size of a man's hand.

Look at Moses:	Phase 1	Privileged and envisioned
	Phase 2	Impatient, but still envisioned.
	Phase 3	Blown it – out in the desert – no vision.
	Phase 4	Re-envisioned at the burning bush – fulfilled destiny.

Romans 11 v.29 God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. This applies to all of us - today you can reconnect into God's plan for you. If you have lost your vision, ask God to reinstall it for you. If you've never really had a clear vision for your life, ask God to reveal it to you - it is there waiting. David is also a good example of patiently waiting. It took fifteen years from his being anointed as King before he became King, and he patiently resisted the temptation to speed the process.

God is on **your** side - He is longing to lead you into maturity, but He patiently waits for you to take the first step. Today can be for you a day of re-connection into God's plan for your life.

6. **Serving Suggestion**

As a sign of your determination to be responsible for your maturity as a Christian, why not choose one of the fruits of the Spirit and enter an agreement with the Holy Spirit to train you and examine you over the next year? This is a challenge, but we thrive on challenge, and as you seek to come closer to the Lord, He will impart to you an ongoing vision to inspire and motivate you.

7. **Ministry**

Are you aware of God's calling on your life? If not, come forward for prayer. If you need a reconnection into your calling, or a sharpening of focus - come forward. As you draw near to God in this way, He will fulfil His promise to you of drawing near to you and of bringing you into the fullness of His calling.