

## Fruit of the Spirit: Peace and Patience

### Hook:

Who here has ever had a bad day? When we have a bad day what are usually the first things we seem to lose track of? The list of things could be quite extensive, but for our purposes, we are going to examining two things that seem to take us down this road to frustration faster than we could have ever imagined. Today, we continue to explore the “Fruit of the Spirit” we are going to discussing the impact that two of the more elusive “fruit” can have on our life. Let’s review them, shall we?

**<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

- Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

We’ve talked about what love and joy which mean . . . Now, we find ourselves dealing with the next couple of fruit on the list. However, unlike love and joy, the circumstances of Peace and patience are not always pleasant. Now before we get too far into this lets remind ourselves that these fruit are meant to nourish our soul and lead us to a whole and happy life. Good, now that we have that out of the way, I am going to speak some truth into the room. The unfortunate reality of peace and patience is that they are most often used in times of suffering and they come to us as a result of suffering. Peace and patience are also hard to cultivate apart from suffering, and on top of that they also seem to flee us when we need them most. Yet, with proper understanding and a little experience we can begin to wield them as effective weapons against all the unpleasantness that seems to find its way into our life. **Despite of their unpleasant circumstances, Peace and Patience have the ability to lead us into deeper relationships, help us to cope with pain, and teach us the depth of God’s love and power.** The question we have answer is how do we get there?

### Book:

Peace and Patience will ultimately lead us to a place where we can handle “struggle” but they also can be fleeting and hard to come by when we most need them. Anybody want to take a guess at why that is?

**It could be any numerous list of things but for most of us I think it comes down to two things:**

- 1. A lack of understanding**
- 2. A lack of experience**

That being said, let’s start by clearing up some of the murky water we find ourselves in. In Galatians the two words used to describe peace and patience are :

**εἰρήνη** - of Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is

**μακροθυμία** - patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance 2) patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

Now, as we look at this words its important note the differences in what thy communicate verses how we understand them. Peace is not the temporary feeling you experience after you've put the kids to bed after the long day. Peace is not what pastor Richard maybe experiencing as he sits on a cold mountain top in search of Bull Elk, peace is not what Andrew experiences after he finally gets Dumisani to put the drumsticks down so that he can regain his hearing. **Peace is where we come to understanding our role in this world and our role in the establishment of Gods kingdom.**

Patience on the other hand is a little bit easier for us to grasp. Patience is not simply enduring an undesirable circumstance, relationship, or feeling. I am not being patient when I simply endure the annoying behavior of the kids on Wednesday night. Patience is not when I become exasperated with my fiancé because she won't stop asking me for a puppy. Patience is not enduring the riding with my grandma to store hoping that she won't drive around for hours searching for the closest spot in the whole place. **Patience is about endurance and consistency, patience is enduring a situation, while also maintaining hope that it will eventually change for the better.**

**Aaron Stokes – As I was recovering from my time in war, I had to learn that I can cry for peace as much I want, but ultimately I will never feel peace until it reaches the very depth of my soul. For me, it's be a struggle to be patient, I want peace so badly, but my pursuit of peace is about more than an end to the wars of man. It is ultimately about how I relate to God.**

**Romans 5:1-5**

**James 5: 7-11**

**Took:**

Peace and Patience affect our **interactions with God, ourselves, and others** (Romans 5:1-2, James 5:9)

Few things will affect our ability to interact with God and others more so than our ability to come to peace with the relationships in our lives. When it comes to relationships, peace and patience work like a cycle and without embracing each aspect, the cycle cannot be complete. Not being at peace with God creates turmoil in life, were not sure what to do, moral codes seem to evaporate, we most often feel like something is missing from our understanding of the world. We then seem to lose our patience with our world and with ourselves. Apart from God it is impossible to be at peace or to be patient with our self. Not being at peace and losing patience with our self also creates turmoil in our life. Not being content with who we are as individual prevents us from being content with others. If we aren't comfortable with others that's going to lead to a lonely and fearful life filled with turmoil. Peace in our heart comes in a cycle, we've got to have all three experiences or something is going to feel like it is missing and our life will reflect that. Once we are at peace with who we are, we'll then be patient with ourselves. Once we come to peace with our own development, we learn to be at peace with others and be patient with them as they develop also. God made us to be relational beings and when our relationships are off kilter

it affects the way we experience the world. Whole relationship with a perfect God, our messed up self, and other broken people is only possible through personal transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peace and Patience come with **experience** (Romans 5:3-4, James 5:10-11)

As uncomfortable as it may seem Peace and Patience are most often developed through experience. The reality is that sometimes our lives are difficult. There are days where we get stuck at one point in the cycle and it throws our entire life out of whack. We have a fight with our wife and we begin to question our ability to be a husband and then that leads to question whether God has really blessed your marriage. This might sound a bit extreme but in reality it is how our mind works. Undoubtedly, at some point most humans will have unpleasant experiences, things that test their patience and challenge their sense of peace. Those things can be a result of conflict with God, conflict with our selves, or conflict with others. Over time, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to maneuver through these situations but the only way this happens is by experiencing the situation and going to the root of the problem. Once we have gotten to the root, whether that root lies within our relationship with God, ourselves or others we can begin to respond appropriately and restore the balance to our life. Scripture reveals to us that peace and patience are not always natural traits, but rather traits that must come with experience and being aware to the work of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Peace and Patience reveal **God's plan in a unique way** (Romans 5:5, James 5:7-8)

Whether we believe it or not, God has the ability and power to control our world. Yet, his love and desire for authentic relationship with humanity keeps him from doing so. We all have the ability to set our own plan and control our own life. The reality is that humanity has to choose the path it takes, humans can choose to follow God and embrace his plan or we can choose to blaze our own. God's plan focuses on restoring humanity to the way he created so that we can experience his love. Most of humanity's plan most likely centers around us and achieving our own selfish needs for wealth, recognition, and power. One path seems easy and natural the other seems difficult and gives the illusion of captivity. God's plan will happen in his timing and on his terms, humanity's plan happens on its terms and seeks to feed the desires of instant gratification. When humans choose God's plan they are choosing to live in peace and have the ability to exercise patience with the world around them. While difficult, this path ultimately gives humans the ability to experience God's work in a unique way. This is only possible with the help of a transformative sense of peace and patience that can only come from God.

In theory, this all works. Yet, we're still missing something, theory sounds really good but what we are talking about here is more than theory. It is a transformation in how we approach the struggle and conflict we see in our world. It's going to require that we change the way we think and the way that we act.

**Look:**

Let Peace and Patience **lead you into deeper relationships**

We live on a lonely world where the majority people claim to have “0” close friends or confidants. Some of that can be attributed to social media, transient culture, slower family development, but a large part of it is that relationships take time to develop and many of us feel as if we don’t have time to build deep and meaningful relationships. We are always pushing to pursue the next great thing or achieve the next step in our life. Often this comes at the cost of our own contentment and relational health. Peace and patience help us to combat this reality of our world. When we learn to be at peace with where we are at and to pursue God instead of pursuing success, we’ll be giving ourselves the time to cultivate meaningful relationships. Then, by the work of God’s grace, we’ll be able to be more patient with what is taking place around us and our relationships with God, ourselves, and others will have the footing they need to develop in a deep and meaningful support cycle. However, without peace with God, ourselves, and others we will be unable to see the benefits of a focused, patient, and determined life. If one part of the cycle is off balance, everything is off balance and we prevent ourselves from experiencing the gift of a deep and meaningful relational life. Are you at peace with God? Are you content with your place in life? Are you at peace with the people closest to you? If not, maybe it is time to take that step and take care of business so that you can restore balance to your life. Take a patient step towards peace and let the Holy Spirit deep relationships with God, yourself, and other

Let Peace and Patience **help you cope with pain**

Let’s be honest, sometimes this world we live in is not the prettiest place. Bad things happen and pain most certainly is a part of our world, but our beliefs on peace and patience ultimately play apart as well. When a family member dies, or our parents get divorced, or our child just doesn’t want to follow the rules, when the person we care about most decides they no longer care about us, where do we turn? What do we do? In the world we live in it is easy to lose our sense of peace and as a result lose patience with all the bad we see in ourself, in others, and sometimes in God. That is why Christians believe that God is actively working to restore our world to the peace it once knew and that true peace starts in our heart and moves outward to influence the world. Peace is the work of God and without peace it is incredibly hard to be patient in the midst of suffering and it is only with those two things that we can begin to cope with all that we experience in this world. As you think about all the pain that you experience around you and the decreasing tolerance you have, maybe it is time to ask yourself if you have really made peace with and trust God? Maybe it is time to come to peace with yourself and some of the pain you have experienced. Maybe it is time to make peace with someone else for the pain we caused them. Once we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into a place of peace, it will also be easier to display extend patience in times of suffering.

**Story of a Friend**

Let Peace and Patience **teach you about the depth of God’s love and power.**

The reality of life is that sometimes it sucks. This, however, does not change the most basic fact of the Christian faith. God loves you now, he loved you before you walked in the door of this church, and he will love you after you leave this church. No matter what. This does not change the fact that life sucks, but what it does do is give us something to believe in. When struggle comes our way we are not being

punished, we are not being tempted, we are being transformed. Peace and patience while difficult give us a unique insight into the Love of God. Why? The love of God is what motivates peace and patience. History has shown us that God, as Christians understand him to be, is patient with humanity and his greatest hope is to see peace restored to the relationship between him and humanity. Even when struggle comes, when peace and patience become necessary, God loves you. Peace and patience in the midst of uncertainty and unpleasant experiences give us unique insight into this reality. All too often we associate peace and patience with the “good life” when in reality they most often come in the midst of a bad experience. If we can live at peace with God, live at peace with our selves, and live at peace with others our circumstances will not dictate our feelings. If we can be patient with God, patient with ourselves, and patient with others we will not just talk or hear about Gods love, we’ll experience Gods love. Even when we feel unloveable, when others appear unloveable, and when we feel we can’t love God peace and patience have the ability to show us the reality. They have the ability to show us that God loves us even when the world around us is not at peace and seems impatient. God loves us through the good, but especially through the bad and the ugly. We just have to believe it, live at peace with that fact, and be patient with him as he guides us through the experience.

### **Conclusion:**

Peace and Patience are most often needed in the most unpleasant places. They are needed in the times where we are hurt, where it seems that evil is winning, and that God is absent and uncaring. However, they are two of the most essential aspect of our journey for that reason as well. Life will not always be pleasant and easy to deal with, but God will always love us and he will always see us through. This is the reality of peace and patience. They are the eternal qualities that lead us through the very difficult, but temporary discomforts of our broken world. They are the subtle reminders that Jesus has already won and that evil, while present, has very little control over us or our world. Peace and patience allow us to come to terms with our reality and through the Holy Spirit, gives the strength to embrace that reality. They help us not only to persevere through struggle, but to thrive in struggle. We just have to be willing to let the Holy Spirit transform the way we see God, the way we see ourselves, and the way we see the world around us.

### **Pray**