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## Extreme Makeover: Spirit Edition (part 5)

Patience (Gal 5:22 NIV: *But the fruit of the Spirit is... patience...*)

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[Click here for the notes handed out in the bulletin.](#)

### INTRODUCTION:

How many of you have a little problem with patience? The rest of you must have a problem with lying!

I heard a cute story about a little boy in a department store. He stood at the end of the escalator and kept staring at the rail as it went around. Finally a store manager who thought maybe he was lost came up to him and asked: "are you lost son?" "Oh no," the boy replied, "I'm just waiting for my bubble gum to come back."... That's patience!

### Definition of Patience as Used in Galatians 5:22:

1. From the Greek word *μακροθυμία* - makrothumia (mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) long of NOSE or BREATH. Since anger is accompanied by rapid, violent breathing through the nostrils. This word translated patience means a slowness in avenging wrongs, endurance, steadfastness, perseverance, forbearance, long-suffering.
2. A Literal English translation: long of ANGER and slow to WRATH.
3. Patience with PEOPLE as opposed to patience with SITUATIONS.

Put all this together and patience means that we are to handle our anger with people slowly.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENCE:

If you were to conduct a very careful study of "patience" in Scripture, you would discover some interesting results.

1. In the Old Testament, patience (the Hebrew equivalent of *μακροθυμία* is "erek aph") is mentioned only 4 times; each time as a reference to the character of God.
2. In the New Testament, patience...
  - a) ...is an attribute of the SPIRIT - FILLED life.

Since patience is a characteristic of God, if we have the Spirit of God we too will show patience.

(C. H. Spurgeon) *I wish, brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate "the pearl oyster"—A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot reject the evil,*

*but what does it do but "cover" it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl! Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which otherwise would have harmed us.*

In 2 Corinthians 6 Paul describes his life as being filled with a long list of hardships, but notice how he finishes the list:

*2 Cor 6:3-7 NLT*

*We try to live in such a way that no one will be hindered from finding the Lord by the way we act, and so no one can find fault with our ministry. 4 In everything we do we try to show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5 We have been beaten, been put in jail, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. 6 We have proved ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, our sincere love, and the power of the Holy Spirit.*

When someone irritates you and you feel yourself getting impatient you need to realize that the problem is not the other person. The problem is you and God is giving you an opportunity to build your character by practicing patience.

b) ...makes the believer CREDIBLE.

In almost every reference to the attribute of patience, it is noted as a characteristic that brings credibility to one's calling and experience with the Lord. Paul writes:

*I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.-Ephesians 4:1-2*

Just so, in Colossians 1.10-11, Paul again notes how the fruit of patience in our lives demonstrates the credibility of our relationship with the Lord:

*And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way. . . . being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience .*

*-Colossians 1:10-11*

In this passage especially you can see the important role that patience has in living *a life worthy of the Lord*. Also note what it takes to enjoy patience: *we must be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might.* WOW!

If we want to have a phenomenal witness, we must be patient with the people around us.

*Your temper is one of your most valuable possessions. Don't LOSE it.*

Some of you have seen the story floating on the internet of a lady who shook her fist out the window at a driver and ranted and raved behind the wheel... police pulled her over, cuffed and frisked her. Checked out her identity on the computer only to apologize, saying they had made a mistake: "we saw your road rage, and then noticed the bumper sticker "I love Sunday School" and so we figured this must be a stolen car."

If you want to lose your witness, be impatient . . . lose your cool, blow your top, get angry. There is nothing quite like uncontrolled anger to really destroy your witness, your ministry, your leadership, your integrity and your credibility! Today I want to talk to you about practical keys to patience.

## KEYS TO PATIENCE:

### 1. RESOLVE to manage your anger (Proverbs 16:32).

Anger can be managed.

*Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*  
-Proverbs 16:32

But, you might object, “Anger works so well...I get the kids attention when I get really mad.” Remember the caution of the proverb...patience is worth much more than somebody who can aggressively get things done. Anger may work well in the short-term, but in the long-term it costs you all influence.

“But pastor, I can’t help myself; I just blow up; I’m a volcano.” I disagree in a most fundamental way... each of us *chooses* how to manage our anger. I can prove that you control your anger.... Example 1: Let’s say that you are really upset with the kids . . . I mean, you are mad at them. You’re pointing your finger, your voice is raised, you’re telling them about what it was like when you were a kid . . . how you walked 3 miles to school, in 4 feet of snow, up hill both ways. You are really upset and you’re on a roll! Just then, the phone rings, you pick it up and in the sweetest, kindest voice say: “hello, may I help you?”...and the kids wish they were on the other end of the phone line. Example 2: you are cut off by a Hell’s Angels motorcycle gang... do you shake your fist at them and yell out the window?

You control your anger. You pick when you are going to unleash the anger and when you are not going to. A church member came up to a pastor one time and began to explain how bad his temper was and how he just couldn’t help the way he’d unleash his anger and finished by saying: “It’s probably just the cross I must bear.” To which the pastor replied: “No, it’s not the cross you must bear, it is the cross your wife has to bear. It is *your* sin, it is *her* cross.”

### 2. REALIZE the cost of unmanaged anger (Proverbs 11:29; 14:17,29; 15:18; 29:22).

*The word anger is one letter away from DANGER*

The Bible is very specific about the damage that uncontrolled anger causes.

a) Unmanaged anger causes ARGUMENTS:  
*A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension.-Proverbs 15:18*

b) Unmanaged anger leads to doing things we later REGRET:  
*A quick-tempered man does foolish things.-Proverbs 14:17*

c) Unmanaged anger always makes the problem WORSE:

*As twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.-Proverbs 30:33*

d) Unmanaged anger becomes HABITUAL and will control your life:

*A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty;*

*If you rescue him, you will have to do it again -Proverbs 19:19*

e) Unmanaged anger is SINFUL:

*An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.*

*-Proverbs 29:22*

Unmanaged anger destroys relationships. Eventually, no one will trust the hot-tempered person. Although you may feel that when you get angry with your kids, they straighten up a lot quicker - in the longer term it creates resentment and distrust.

3. RELATE to those who are patient (Proverbs 22:24-25).

*Do not make friends with a hot tempered man. Do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.*

*-Proverbs 22:24-25*

Anger is a contagious and learned behavior. Those people who blow up are people who have been around people who blow up. We learn how to do it by watching others do it.

4. REFUSE to retaliate (Proverbs 29:11; Ephesians 4:26).

*A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. -Proverbs 29:11*

*If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin.-Ephesians 4:26*

Haven't we all had these moments when we have said something and five minutes later we say: "Oh, I wish I hadn't said that." I like the story of a fellow who was so angry at his father that he vented all that anger by writing him a merciless, ruthless, hate-filled letter, signed it, put it in an envelope and gave it to a friend to mail it. His friend realized that he was just angry at the time and likely didn't really mean many of the things he wrote, so he didn't mail it . . .he just put it in his pocket. The next day, the man cooled off and went to his friend in remorse saying: "Oh, I wish I hadn't sent that letter. I'd give anything to get it back . . . I'd give \$50 to get that letter back." The friend replied: "How about \$100."

Sometimes we are not fortunate enough to get the letter back. Sometimes we let the words get out and aren't able to take them back. If we'll only delay, if we'll only refuse to retaliate, to vent the anger.

I love the story of the lady who was living in Seattle Washington and taking the ferry boat home from work. She had just finished a long exhausting day so she went to the snack bar to get herself a little treat: a Kit Kat candy bar. She found a seat where she could sit down, pulled out her newspaper and settled in to relax and enjoy her Kit Kat. As she went to reach down on her

lap to get it, it was gone . . . the guy beside her had it unwrapped and was just finishing off the first two fingers!

She was so appalled at his rudeness, that she grabbed the last two fingers, stuffed them into her mouth and gave him a dirty look and marched off.

She was so upset that this man had helped himself to her Kit Kat that she just couldn't unwind so she went up on to the deck to get some fresh air. As she turned a corner, who should she bump into, but the same man? This time he had just un-wrapped a big juicy cheeseburger. He hadn't even taken a bite. Without a word, she grabbed it out of his hand. Took a big bite out of it and then threw it with all her might over the railing, into the ocean. Its contents just sprayed everywhere before hitting the water. Now she felt like justice had been done.

By this time the ride was over. She walked to her car to get in. Reached into her purse and . . . sitting on top of her purse was . . . her Kit Kat Candy Bar.

Thomas Jefferson, in his book Rules for Living, wrote:

*When you are angry count to 10 before you speak and when you are very angry, count to 100.*  
-Thomas Jefferson

75 years later Mark Twain revised the advice and said:

*When you are angry, count to 4. When very angry, SWEAR.*  
-Mark Twain

Now 100 years after Samuel Langhorne Clemens, today's culture might advise:

*When you are angry, SWEAR. When you are very angry . . . VENT."*

Some people in the social sciences today claim that anger just needs to be vented. Just do the primal scream, or pound the living day lights out of a pillow. The theory is that we are a bucket of anger and if we just empty the bucket, then everything will be fine.

The problem with that theory is this:

*We are not a bucket of anger . . . we are an anger FACTORY.*

There is now clinical research available that indicates anger venting may be helpful in the short term--it may feel real good, just to let it all out--but, in the long term, venting leads the factory to produce ever greater amounts of anger.

5. RENEW your mind (Romans 12.2).  
*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.-Romans 12:2*

Your beliefs will control your behavior. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23.7).* We are so used to believing that we are what we are and that uncontrolled anger is somehow beyond the grasp of God's transforming touch. The culture of the street infiltrates into our culture through popular music so we rise up in anger if anybody "disses" me. We see the street way of dealing with anger through seeing it on TV. You strike back, you swear, you get revenge, you let it rip . . . *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be*

*transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12.2). The greatest “break-through” always starts as a “break-with”. Break with, once and for all, the belief that this is just the way I am, and nothing can change me. The Holy Spirit has the power!*

6. RECEIVE by faith the power of God’s Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:11; Galatians 5:22).  
*...you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in EVERY WAY . . . being strengthened with ALL POWER according to his GLORIOUS MIGHT so that you may have great endurance and PATIENCE.*

*-Colossians 1:11*

APPLICATION:

Don’t give up! Renew your mind through believing that patience is possible, even for me.

*Will you renew your mind and rely on the Spirit today?*