

Nine Secrets of Healthy Relationships

Patience – Part Five

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) ²² But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

- The Fruit of the Spirit is really just the ability to have “Christlike reactions” to the people and circumstances of our lives. For example:
 - Love is the Christlike reaction to disagreeable people.
 - Joy is the Christlike reaction to depressing circumstances.
 - Peace is the Christlike reaction to distressing anxieties.
 - Patience is the Christlike reaction to difficult situations.
- We sometimes think of “patience” as simply being willing to wait, and that is certainly not a bad trait. Hurry is possibly the greatest enemy of spiritual life in our day. Hurry can destroy our souls. Carl Jung wrote, “Hurry is not OF the devil; hurry IS the devil.”
- North Americans are often guilty of what psychologists call “polyphasic activity,” or doing multiple things at the same time ... because we’re in such a hurry! **But God is never in a hurry – He has everything under control!**
- However, the word “patience” as it is used in the New Testament, really has no true equivalent in the English language. It is not just the state of “waiting” or “not hurrying.” Patience is much more.
- The word “patience” is sometimes translated “longsuffering” in the KJV. Patience is the powerful capacity of suffering long under adversity; it is the noble ability of bearing with either difficult people or adverse circumstances without breaking down; it is the characteristic of tolerance for the intolerable; it is a generous willingness to try to understand the awkward people or disturbing events that God allows to enter our lives; and most of all, it is the powerful attribute of remaining steadfast under strain.
- There are two Greek words that are translated “patience” in your Bible; they are very similar, with just a slightly different emphasis:

HUPOMONE

- “hupo” – “under” / “mone” – “abide”
- This word expresses the idea of being “under” a burden for a long time without succumbing to suffering, and without becoming fearful or despondent, all the while “abiding” (not changing!) in the face of pressure.
- This is a word picture of a beast of burden remaining steadily under control as it does heavy, strenuous work for its master without complaint.

MAKROTHUMOS

- “makro” – “long” / “thumos” – “anger”
- This word expresses the idea of anger taking a very long time to build before it is expressed, and being under strict control when or if it is ever expressed.
- This is the exact opposite of being “short tempered.” It is not denying that anger exists, but rather expressing it with restraint and without revenge.
- We have grown accustomed to hearing about angry, out-of-control people in the news, but God has a better way for us to deal with our disappointments, frustrations and difficulties! It’s called the power of the Holy Ghost, producing the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives!
- This aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit called PATIENCE is really the supernatural ability to deal with ongoing suffering and frustration without succumbing to ANGER against God or against one other.
- Since we can’t talk about patience without talking about anger, let’s talk about ...

HOW TO HANDLE ANGER

1. Realize the cost of uncontrolled anger

- **ANGER** is simply a strong emotion of displeasure arising from a feeling of injury. ANGER IS NOT SINFUL IN AND OF ITSELF, for the Bible tells us that God can become angry and even gives us permission to be angry WITHOUT SINNING.
- **Ephesians 4:26** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- But anger must be controlled! And you can’t control it once the adrenaline rush kicks in! You must control anger IN ADVANCE.

- Some dictionaries point out that the old English word “anger” originally meant “to choke” or “to strangle.” Sometimes, this is what we would like to do to someone else because of our anger! ☺
- However, we need to remember that this is what anger does to us! On the one hand, anger releases a rush of adrenaline that makes you feel powerful and can even temporarily overwhelm pain; but on the other hand, unresolved anger can literally strangle you inside.
- Many studies have shown that consistently angry people are vulnerable to **physical problems** like ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attack, colitis, arthritis, kidney stones, gall-bladder trouble – over 50 major illnesses in all! According to doctors, such inner tension accounts for 60 to 85% of all sicknesses today! **When you “swallow your feelings,” your stomach keeps score!**
- Whether anger is expressed through words and behavior or repressed through denial and internalizing, it is still damaging. Depression is defined as “anger turned inward,” and though it is bottled up for a time, it eventually will blow up in aggression.
- **ANGER ANNIHILATES NORMAL HUMAN RESPONSES!** And the physical damage caused by anger is only exceeded by the spiritual harm it causes. **UNRESTRAINED ANGER IS SIN!**
- **Five cases where anger is sinful ...**
 - when it explodes quickly, without time to think rationally
 - when the injury that causes it is only imagined, not real
 - when it is disproportionate to the offense committed
 - when it is directed against the innocent rather than the guilty
 - when it is prolonged over time and becomes revengeful
- **Proverbs 11:29 (LB)** The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left.
- There’s always a price tag when you get angry! And you can’t afford it! **ANGER DESTROYS RELATIONSHIPS!**

2. Reflect before reacting

- **Proverbs 16:32** He that is **SLOW TO ANGER** is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

- **James 1:19-20** ¹⁹Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **SLOW TO WRATH**: ²⁰For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
- **SLOW ANGER – MAKROTHUMOS (“long anger”) – PATIENCE!**
- **BUT I HAVE RIGHTS, TOO!** Patience is our defense against the frequent minor frustrations of life. Selfish, immature individuals who give themselves too many rights are constantly plagued with anger, since so many of their ‘rights’ are violated. Giving up those rights to God and expecting fewer things to be perfect will result in less anger, and greater joy in life.
- **Proverbs 29:11 (LB)** A stupid man gives free reign to his anger; a wise man waits and lets it grow cool.
- Anger delayed gives it time to cool down. Thomas Jefferson said, "When you're angry you count to 10 and when you're very angry, count to 100." Why? The longer you hold your temper, the more it improves. Remember: mind in gear before mouth in motion!
- Remember that anger is always the **SECOND** emotion in any experience. If you can reflect long enough to figure out the first emotion, you can deal effectively with the situation!

3. Release your anger appropriately

- **Ephesians 4:26 (GN)** If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin.
- Being patient does not mean denying your anger! It means releasing it properly. Most people tend to release their anger in ways that take them farther from their goal than they were before they got angry!
- Many psychologists propagate a myth that says, “You’ve got a bucketful of anger in your life and if you’ll just dump out the bucket it will be empty and then you can be happy.” They actually have developed techniques like “ventilation” and “primal scream” to allow people to mentally “vomit” and let it all hang out!
- But the Bible lets us know that the human heart can produce an unlimited supply of anger! You don’t have an anger bucket, you have an anger factory! And anger always causes more anger in others!

- We are all irritated by different things and we all release our anger in different ways. Some people are skunks – everyone knows when they are upset. Others are turtles – they just pull back into their shell.
- There are four possible ways to respond to anger. Three are wrong!
 - **REPRESS** it (holding the resentment inside)
 - **SUPPRESS** it (pretending the resentment doesn't exist)
(most people who say they are depressed are really angry, either repressing or suppressing their anger)
 - **EXPRESS** it (uncontrolled negative reactions)
(just because you don't blow up doesn't mean you're not expressing your anger – that's why there are pouters, manipulators, cynics, addicts, etc.)
 - **CONFESS** it (ask for God's help!)
- **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. Repattern your mind

- **Romans 12:2 (NLT)** Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.
- God knows His own creation! We need both "abiding under" (hypomone) patience and "long anger" (macrothumos) patience, or life will make us perpetually angry about something!
- Long term change in the heart of man does not happen through resolutions, promises, or self-help techniques. It can only happen through the power of the Holy Ghost! Nothing else can transform the way you think and act!
- The Holy Ghost helps you control your anger by dealing with the root cause – the real reason you are angry. Jesus can replace your hurt, your pain, your frustration, your fear, your rejection, your insecurity, with His love. **The Holy Ghost helps you control your anger by replacing it with the Fruit of the Spirit called PATIENCE!**

- **Romans 15:5 (NLT)** May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other.
- **Colossians 1:11 (NLT)** We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need.