

Spirit Fruit: Patience



“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Can Hyu Learn to Wait?

Hyu was having a terrifically bad day. It started after breakfast, as he waited in the car for his sister, so Mother could drive them to school. Lian was dragging her feet, and Hyu’s temper began to build. “You’re sooo slow!” snapped Hyu to Lian as she climbed in next to him.

Today was supposed to be a great day! Hyu wanted to be given the role of Gunky Germ in the school’s hygiene awareness play that he had helped to write. Roles would be assigned first thing at school, and it would be the end of the world if he was late!

Finally, Mother pulled out of the driveway, but before they got far, a neighbor had pulled a dumpster into the road, effectively blocking the way. “MOOOOOOOM! TELL THEM TO MOVE! BEEP THE HORN! I’m going to be l-a-t-e!”

Mother politely beeped the horn, and Hyu harrumphed. They arrived at school as the first classroom bell of the morning was ringing. Hyu barreled up the stairs and down the corridor—but it was too late. The role of Gunky Germ had already been given to Melinda.

“Noooooooo!” Hyu exclaimed.

“There’ll be a next time,” said Teacher Feng to Hyu. But Hyu knew he was bad at waiting.





Nothing happened fast enough for Hyu—not his brothers or sisters getting into the car, not their car getting to Granny’s summerhouse, not the days till summer vacation, not the time it would take to wait for the next good role in their school’s drama club. How would he survive in the days and weeks and months and years to follow?

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It is easy to be like Hyu and desire all good things right away—without having to wait for them. Or to be impatient with others or with ourselves when things don’t go the way we desire. But when we allow impatience to get the better of us and influence our actions and words, we can hurt others and make ourselves unhappy, too.

Patience—like the sun, good health, or good weather—is most clearly noticed when it is missing. When things don't work out the way you desire them to, patience can help you to face those situations with a calm and collected attitude, and enjoy things in the meantime.

The good news is that patience is a fruit of Jesus' Spirit in our lives. Knowing who Jesus is, and knowing of His love and care for those who trust in Him, helps us be patient during times when we are tempted with impatience.

Here are three aspects of patience that we can ask Jesus to help us grow in:





1. Patience with others

Perhaps you can think of someone who makes you feel like grinding your teeth or clenching your fists. You can't seem to control your reactions toward them, and no matter how hard you try to be nice, it's just difficult. Two thousand years ago there were probably people who were difficult to be around or to like, yet nowhere in the Bible do we find Jesus saying something hurtful, or being impatient with those who wanted to talk with Him.

If we are spending time with Jesus, we can ask Him for patience, and He will give us the power to be considerate of others and patient with their shortcomings, even with those who are difficult to have

patience with. In John 15:7 He tells us how this happens: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and

it will be given you."¹ We can ask Jesus to help us be patient and kind toward others, and He will help us.

Another Bible verse to remember during times when we're faced with someone who it's difficult to be nice to is, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."²

¹ NIV

² Proverbs 15:1 NIV

2. Patience with ourselves

We also need to be patient with ourselves when we make mistakes, or don't progress as quickly as we would like, or don't achieve the goals we set for ourselves, or when we are working toward getting rid of bad attitudes or overcoming bad habits, or trying to establish good habits. If everything came quickly and easily for us, we wouldn't have the humility needed to be patient with others, or the ability to wait for things that take time in order to get the best results. It would also cause us to rely more on ourselves and not remember to look to God for help.



When we face a difficulty in our lives or something happens that requires patience, we should let that situation cause us to turn to God. Psalm 27:14 tells us, “Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.”³

Learning to exercise patience also teaches us endurance, and often makes our hearts steadfast, and more eager to take the steps necessary to reach the goal we are striving for; it helps to form good character in our lives. “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”⁴

³. NLT

⁴. James 1:4 KJV

3. Patience with God's plan for our life

Sometimes things happen in our lives or in the lives of others that don't seem to be fair, or that try our patience. Your friends may all seem to be having a more exciting or easier life than you. Or perhaps you're going through a rough time at school, or you don't have friends and you worry that things won't get better.



When you're feeling that way, it may feel difficult to think positively and stay upbeat. The apostle Paul knew a thing or two about having faith in the face of the difficulties of life—he was thrown into prison and beaten on numerous occasions. But despite all this, Paul articulated why we can have patience and wait for God to work things out: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”⁵

King David also had a tough life and lots of enemies, and look what he said: “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.”⁶

⁵ Romans 8:28 NIV

⁶ Psalm 37:7–9 NIV

Bite-sized: When we remind ourselves of Jesus' promises to us of all things working together for our good to those who love Him, we can have patience despite difficult and trying things that happen in our lives.

Memorize it: So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.
(Galatians 6:9 NLT)

Action: Think of the years of training a runner needs to have before being able to run a marathon and finish in good time. The runner needs patience that with time, practice, and hard work he'll get faster; his race times will improve as he puts in the hours of necessary training. Think of one thing you need patience for in your life right now, and meditate on the desired end goal. Your hard work, endurance, and perseverance will help you run your personal race with patience and faith so that you can achieve your desired goal.

