

LONGSUFFERING: The Fruit of the Spirit #5

Matthew 17:15-18 (ESV) ¹⁵said,“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. ¹⁶And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, **how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?** Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.

RELATIONSHIPS

- the two greatest commands
- the meaning of life
- all that lasts

“Love never ends.” 1 Cor 13:8

1 John 4:16 (ESV) ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

The problem is... “We all stumble in many ways.” James 3:2

I. LONGSUFFERING: *makro* (long) *thumeo* (boil with passion) long-tempered

Vine’s on longsuffering:

“...that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, is associated with mercy, and is used of God.”

What Is the Difference Between Mercy & Grace?

Both are part of love, but have different meanings.

- **Mercy** is not punishing when it is deserved.
- **Grace** is giving blessings that are not deserved.

To suffer long is to be merciful. To be show kindness is to be gracious.

“Love suffers long and is kind.” “Love shows mercy and is gracious.”

II. CHALLENGES TO THE SPIRIT

People Irritate

- act rudely
- publicly embarrass
- unreasonable / unfair
- act hypocritically
- break promises
- selfish, lazy at work
- don’t pay debts

People Injure

- gossip
- put evil constructions on words and actions
- spread false reports
- exaggerate faults
- judge motives
- misrepresent truth

Haughty, Proud

- know-it-all, condescending
- selfish, rude, inconsiderate, no regard for neighbor
- disrespect authority
- lord it over, self-willed, must have own way
- won't apologize

Vengeful, Malicious

- harsh, judgmental words
- act and speak hatefully
- laugh at those who struggle
- won't reconcile, hold grudges
- return evil for evil

III. LONGSUFFERING IS A PRIMARY CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD'S NATURE.

Exodus 34:5-7 (NKJV) ⁵Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. ⁶And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NKJV) ⁸But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 1:14-17 (NKJV) ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. ¹⁶However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to [£]God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

IV. LONGSUFFERING MUST BECOME A PRIMARY CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR NATURE.

Luke 6:40 (NKJV) ⁴⁰A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

Colossians 3:12-13 (NKJV) ¹²Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NKJV) ¹I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

YOU AND I HAVE NO EXCUSE.

Romans 2:1-5 (ESV) ¹Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. ²We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things. ³Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? ⁵But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.

V. APPLICATIONS IN THE CHURCH

Suffer long with personalities of others
Suffer long with weaknesses of others
Suffer long with impositions put upon you
Suffer long with poor judgment of others
Suffer long with poor handling of matters
Suffer long with everything in everybody
(mercy is needed to restore those in sin)

VI. APPLICATIONS IN THE HOME

We see frailties and weaknesses and errors in family members **repeatedly**.
It’s easy for **repetitive behaviors** to get under our skin.
“It’s been long enough! They ought to **know better!**”
“I’ve seen this kind of behavior too long and **I’VE HAD IT!**”

Sarcastic remarks
Hateful comments
Arguing & Yelling
Complaining
Criticizing

What happened to self-restraint in the face of provocation?
Again, you and I have no excuse. Humility is required.

CONCLUSION

How Do We Respond When Provoked?

Rumination – Think ourselves to death.

Repression – I’m fine! Really, I’m just FINE!

Retribution – I don’t get mad, I get even!

Reconciliation - Longsuffering (mercy) is one key. Another is humility.