

Divinely Blessed & Restored

DO YOU HAVE FRUIT FILLING? ©

The Lord Has Filled You With the Fruit of the Spirit!

Series IIII

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

The month continues a series on the Fruit of the Spirit. Over 2000 years ago, we received the greatest expression of love anyone could ever have given – a gift that cost the giver **"everything"** and for the **"receiver,"** it is a gift that will last forever, and ever, and ever! **What was this gift?** The gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. John 3:16 KJV tells us: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but shall have everlasting life."* KJV

This gift, as with any gift, requires our acceptance. Once accepted, we are "born again", not physically, but spiritually, which means we are changed - *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Corinthians 5:17 KJV) and our life will begin to exemplify the Fruit of the Spirit. This month we will look at the fruit of "longsuffering".

Longsuffering is defined by the American Collegiate Dictionary as long and patient endurance. As I thought about longsuffering, "steadfastness" kept coming into my spirit. Steadfastness is fixed in direction, firm in purpose, unwavering. Steadfastness is what we need if we are to have a spirit of "longsuffering". For me to be "long" in patience and endurance, I am going to have to be unwavering and firm in my position in whatever the situation. My Pastor, the late Joseph B. Barlow, Jr. once called it "stick-to-it-ness". If I had to pick one characteristic essential to being longsuffering, I would say "patient".

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Why is patience so difficult for us? We are beings who seek solutions to life situations today - not tomorrow. We are a fast-paced society where everything is instant! We have allowed the world's expectations to become our measuring stick for God! Still, God instructs us to wait patiently for **HIS** plans to unfold, and that is exactly what we must do.

“ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31 NIV

As Christians, we must realize that our waiting times are God's times of molding and shaping our character. No matter what we are going through, no matter how long the wait, we must hold upon the promise of God's faithfulness to us. While difficult to do, we have some excellent examples of longsuffering. As Christians facing the challenge of endurance with patience is not new, it goes back to the time of Abram and Sarai. We can learn much from them about longsuffering! Although both are listed in Hebrews Hall of Faith as individuals of great faith, they were challenged in waiting on the Lord! When Abram was 100 years old and Sarai was 90, the Lord reminded Abram of his promise to him, that he was going to have a son, and that his wife Sarai would bear this son. Both thought that would be incredible because of their age, but God was true to his word and Sarah bore a child and he was named Isaac. Look at David he was 16 years old when he was anointed as King. However, he did not take the throne until he was 30. During those 14 years, he was hunted by King Saul, persecuted, and homeless. I am sure he wondered if the Lord had forgotten him, but during that time, the Lord was developing his character and he became one of the greatest kings of Israel. Look at the woman with the issue of blood, she waited 12 long years for the opportunity to be healed, but she kept the faith.

I do not know what situation you are going thru in your life right now, but there is somebody that is waiting; there is somebody that has been waiting for a while and has become disheartened. But as James 5:11 tells us "What a gift life is to those who stay the course! You have heard, of course, of Job's staying power, and you know how God brought it all together for him at the end! That's because God cares, cares right down to the last detail" (MSG). Let this be your encouragement when you are tempted to give up. Hold on. Be strong. Keep the faith. When you do, you will be realizing the fruit of "longsuffering" in your life. Amen.

HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST?

Our purpose in this article and daily scriptures is to encourage a heart-to-heart relationship with God. If you do not know God in a personal way, we invite you to make the first step today to receive God's love and the salvation that only Jesus Christ can give. Here are five steps you can take to receive salvation:

1. Recognize you are a sinner and need salvation. The Bible tells us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
2. Repent of your sins. Sin separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them you are forgiven. The Bible says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
3. Believe in Jesus. God sent His Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. The Bible says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life: (John 3:16).
4. Receive His Salvation. Jesus Christ is a gift you must receive and welcome to live in your heart. He promises: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God: (John 1:12).
5. Confess your belief verbally. The Bible assures "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved: (Rom. 10:9).

You now have been born again! Tell some else your good news and connect yourself with a church home as soon as possible. God Bless and Keep You!

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