

The Spirit of Freedom-VII

Longsuffering

1. **Col 1:9-14**: Our redemption in Christ compels us to a worthy walk, fully pleasing the Lord (fruitful, knowledge, strength--patience and longsuffering)
2. Longsuffering: Self-restraint that does not hastily retaliate against a wrong (opposite of wrath and revenge).
3. Wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God, **Jas 1:19-20**.
4. So, must put on longsuffering (patiently address life), **Col 3:12**.

I. LONGSUFFERING IS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, Gal 5:22.

A. **Long-Tempered** (*makrothumia*: *makro*, "long"; *thumos*, "wrath, temper").

1. "Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy" (Vine 377).
2. "Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope, 1Th 1:3; it is not used of God." (Notes on Thessalonians, Hogg and Vine, 183, 184)
3. "The power to see things through" (Barclay, Flesh and Spirit, 92).

B. Longsuffering Focuses on our **Attitude** and **Expressions** Toward Our Fellow Man. (God is longs. toward us; so we are to others.)

II. THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD.

A. Longsuffering is **God's Character** in Dealing with Man, **Exo 34:6-7**.

1. In longsuffering, God shows mercy, grace, goodness and truth.
2. Yet, longsuffering it will not allow God to overlook sin, **34:7**.
3. cf. God didn't quickly retaliate in anger, although He punished sin, **Neh 9:16-21**.

B. What God's Longsuffering **accomplishes** (its effects):

1. It is the sinner's warning against complacency/hardening of heart, **Exo 34:7**.
 - a. Longsuffering of God is not a license to sin. God is just – He will punish sin.
 - b. cf. Flood: God's judgment preceded by period of warning (expression of God's longsuffering), **1 Pet 3:20 (Gen 6:3)**.

- c. Mockers, **2 Pet 3:3-4**. God will judge/destroy ungodly (**2 Pet 3:4-7**)
- 2. It is the sinner's opportunity to repent, **Rom 2:4**.
 - a. Without God's longsuffering, repentance would be impossible – all would be immediately destroyed!
 - b. "The patience of God waits when the impatience of man would long since have acted in destructive anger" (Barclay, 95).
 - c. God is not slack (slow) in punishing, but is long in giving the sinner an opportunity to change, **2 Pet 3:9**.
- 3. It is meant for our salvation, **2 Pet 3:15**; **1 Tim 1:15-16**.
 - Man's unrepentant sin turns it into condemnation (**Gen 15:16**)

III. WE ARE TO BE LONGSUFFERING (our character), **2 Pet 1:4**.

- A. The **New Man** has a **Long-Temper** toward Others, **Col 3:8-10**.
 - 1. It is part of our calling, **Eph 4:1-2**.
 - 2. An expression of real love, **Col 3:13 (1 Cor 13:4)**.
 - 3. Its companion is forgiveness, **Col 3:13; Eph 4:31-32**.
- B. A Mark of True **Discipleship**, cf. **2 Cor 6:4-6** (apostles).
- C. **Specific Areas** Where We Must be **Longsuffering**, **1 Ths 5:14-15**.
 - 1. By not repaying evil for evil (**5:15**).
 - 2. When sinned against – forgive, cf. **Lk 17:3-4**.
 - 3. When preaching the gospel (**2 Tim 4:2**).
 - 4. Home: Dealing with conflict; disciplining children (**Col 3:19, 21**)
 - 5. At work (**1 Pet 2:18-20**).
 - 6. During trials (**Rom 12:12, 17-19**).
 - Make longsuffering our very way of life (**Eph 4:1-2**). HOW?

IV. HOW DO WE DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN LONGSUFFERING?

- A. **Give Ourselves Fully to Christ**, **Col 3:1-2, 8 (12)**.
 - 1. Put away wrath as a way of dealing with others (intimidation).
 - 2. Be preeminently committed to live for Christ.

B. Increase Love for God and for Others, 1 Cor 13:4.

1. Quality of love: increase love to improve longsuffering.
2. Eliminate self-vindication and self-justification, replacing it with the ability to suffer long (endure wrongly).

C. See the Wisdom and Power of Longsuffering, Prov 14:29; 16:32.

1. **Prov 14:17:** You can be right, but a “short temper” compromises your effective use of the truth (gives a reason to adversary to accuse you and ignore the truth you seek to promote).
2. **Prov 15:18:** Helps settle strife (**Eph 4:2-3**).
3. Longsuffering is evidence of humility; Temper is prideful.

Conclusion

1. Longsuffering of God waits today as in the days of Noah, calling sinners to repentance and salvation (**1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:9, 15**)
2. But, God will not wait forever before He punishes our sin.
3. We must live as new people in Christ, true disciples, giving ourselves fully to Christ, increasing our love while seeing the wisdom and power (spiritual profit) of being longsuffering.