

Fruits of the Holy Spirit – Session 5

Patience **Galatians 5**

Timing: 30-45 minutes, then leading into ministry

Buzz groups: Suggestions are boxed, pairs or groups of 3-4 will work best

Illustrations: Suggestions are noted, but your own ideas and stories are preferable

Focus: Major on the one or two points most relevant to your group

Icebreaker: What are your 'pet hates'? ie "I hate it when..."

Introduction

Key Point: Our lives get better and better as we give our lives over to the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*" (Galatians 5: 22-23).

Introduce this week on *patience*

Key Point: God wants to grow His patience in us.

Key Verse: "*The fruit of the spirit is ...patience*" (Galatians 5:22)

How do you define patience? Why do you think that patience is important? How do you benefit when someone is patient with you?

Look up dictionary definition of patience.

1. Why wait?

The Point: The point of waiting is that it develops faith in us

- through faith and patience we appropriate God's promises to us (Hebrews 6:12-14)
- waiting tests and refines our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)
- as Christians, we are ultimately waiting for the Lord to return (James 5:7-8)
- in the meantime we can be encouraged by the prophets' examples and Job because the Lord is "full of compassion and mercy" (Read James 5:10-11)

Illustration: Ask someone in the group to give a personal example of how they have had to wait patiently for something that the Lord has promised to them individually and have been encouraged in the process of waiting. Ensure they tell either of God's fulfilment of the promise or that the faith they now have is of much more value than what they've been waiting for.

Application: On one side of a piece of paper, remind yourself of a promise God has given specifically to you that has been fulfilled. How long did you have to wait for fulfillment? Were you encouraged in the process of waiting? On the other side, note down a promise that He has given you that has yet to be fulfilled. Are you confident of it being fulfilled? How can you be encouraged whilst waiting?

2. How to wait?

Buzzgroups: briefly describe to each other how your life would be look if you were a more patient person. What would the benefits be?

The Point: God is patient with us and forgives us, so we should have the same attitude towards others.

Read Matthew 18:21-35

- Jesus encourages us to be generous in forgiving others (21-22)
- God wants us to imitate his patience, which is a consequence of understanding the extent to which we are forgiven (contrast 26-27 & 29-30)
- Jesus warns us of the consequences if we fail to treat others with patience and forgiveness (34-35)

Illustration: Ask someone in the group to give an example of a time when s/he has been hurt by someone else and have had to make a conscious decision to forgive. What did s/he feel? How did s/he forgive? What were the benefits of forgiving?

Application: What prevents you from being patient or forgiving? How can you be more confident of God's forgiveness in your life? Read Luke 23:32-46 during a coffee break this week and write down your thoughts – turning them into prayer asking for patience.

3. How to change?

The Point: We all need to work with the Holy Spirit to change in this area.

Key verse: Romans 12:1-2

“For what it's worth” share some of the ways in which, very practically, you work with the Holy Spirit to become more patient. These should come from you and be personal – perhaps they're commitments to change you have made as a result of preparing this talk. Ideas include:

- starting a journal as a safe way of venting frustrations so they don't build up pressure inside
- deciding to speak well of others at work and “promoting” them in the eyes of your boss, rather than ‘adversarially’ competing with them for that elusive next promotion
- writing down three things you need to say sorry for to your parents/friends/spouse/work colleagues and then doing it
- committing to go to the 7am next prayer meeting at church to renew your prayer life.

Application: What would this be for you? How can you practically work with the Holy Spirit to become more patient?

Ideas for Ministry

- Ask the Lord to make us more sensitive to what he has done for us, and to give us the courage (irrespective of feelings) to have patience and forgive others.