

Spirit Fruit: Patience and Kindness

Last week, we were reminded that Jesus clearly declared that those who followed him, abided in him, would bear “fruit that will last.” (John 15:16b) The Apostle Paul specifically names this fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

Think about the 9 listed fruit in groupings of 3. Love, joy, and peace have been considered “inner attitudes with God as the source.” Patience, kindness, and generosity (goodness in the NIV) as “relational qualities expressed to others.” And the final three, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as “personal qualities that guide individual conduct.” Let’s focus on patience and kindness for this lesson.

Patience

The Greek word for patience is “*macrothumia*” which is a combination of two words. “Macro” meaning long and “*thumos*” meaning temper – which is to say that anger takes a long time to build before it is expressed, and if it is, it is under control. The one who is patient is long-tempered rather than short-tempered.

Patience is self-restraint in the face of provocation. It doesn’t quickly punish but thinks before it responds, and IF it responds, it responds appropriately. Thinking of the example of Jesus – how did he express patience, to whom and under what circumstances? (Matthew 4:1-11, John 8:1-11, Mark 10:35-45)

Kindness

Certainly, there is a kindness in being patient. God through Christ Jesus is full of lovingkindness (*hesed*). The mercy and grace showered on us is an expression of the kindness so characteristic of Jesus in his earthly ministry. Think of specific examples when Jesus showed kindness that few expected him to show in the particular moment. (John 4:1-30, Matthew 11:2-6, 28-30, Luke 12:22-34)

Be reminded that true kindness does not dissolve into an “anything-goes” attitude. Just as we would not consider it good parenting to allow children to have their own way regardless of consequences; kindness is also expressed in setting boundaries and holding others accountable in a responsible and considerate way. Think of occasions when Jesus in his love and kindness held others accountable and their lives were made better because of it.