

The Fruits of the Spirit Lesson 5 1Q 2010

The Fruit of the Spirit is Patience

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts? The first paragraph tells us that there are two Greek words that mean patients, one connotes endurance in trial and the other long suffering or greatly tempered.

Do you see differences in these two aspects of patience?

Read last two paragraphs, “A patient person...” thoughts?

How do we develop patience? What does it take to experience this fruit of the Spirit? The lesson suggests it takes, practice, God’s grace and a willingness to put aside self and let the Holy Spirit lead.

Thoughts about that? What would be necessary in order to practice patience? Circumstances which try our patience? What would those circumstances look like? Would we call them trials?

Are there practical things we can do to cooperate with God to experience greater patience?

All of the fruits of the Spirit are what is experienced as a natural result of our humanity operating as God designed. More specifically the fruits of the Spirit are what is experienced when the brain/mind operate as God designed.

Impulsivity, irritability, lack of self-restraint, impatience, selfishness all occur when prefrontal cortex (PFC) is impaired and limbic system is dominant.

What activities help move us toward God’s design of a healthy PFC and a calm limbic system moving us toward greater fruits of the Spirit, and what activities damage PFC and inflame limbic system moving us away from the fruits of the Spirit?

- Activities which promote good physical health are good for the PFC and calm limbic system – so regular exercise, healthy diet, water, sunshine
- 7.5-8.5 hours of sleep per night
 - Sleep deprivation impairs PFC undermining reason, judgment, patience and self-control, increases irritability
- Alcohol and illegal drugs impair PFC
- Theatrical television watching activates limbic system and decreases PFC activity
- Lies about God, distortions about God increase fear (limbic system firing) and decrease activity in or damage PFC
 - God is a God of love but must kill you if you don't love Him
 - God is a God of love but we are all predestined by God for salvation or damnation
 - The problem with sin is that it makes God mad and if Christ isn't there to protect us from God we are in trouble
 - The more sin you commit the more God is going to use His power to inflict pain and suffering on you in the end
 - God doesn't send His angels with you into a movie theater
 - God sent an earthquake to punish Haiti
 - God sent AIDS to punish homosexuals
 - God doesn't want us to think, just believe, asking questions reveals a lack of faith
 - Others?
- Meditation on a God of love causes growth in the PFC (specifically the ACC) and calms the limbic system, any other god-concept results in inflaming of the limbic system and greater fear.
- Altruistic endeavors causes growth in PFC and calms limbic system. Selfish endeavors inflames the fear centers.
- Harmony with God's law of love
 - Lying, cheating, murdering etc. increases fear and damages PFC
- Over studying
 - Intemperance in study is a species of intoxication; and those who indulge in it, like the drunkard, wander from

safe paths and stumble and fall in the darkness. The Lord would have every student bear in mind that the eye must be kept single to the glory of God. He is not to exhaust and waste his physical and mental powers in seeking to acquire all possible knowledge of the sciences, but is to preserve the freshness and vigor of all his powers to engage in the work which the Lord has appointed him in helping souls to find the path of righteousness. {CG 396.4}

What can we do to cooperate with God to experience greater Spiritual fruit?

- Exercise
- Eat healthy food
- Drink water
- Sunshine
- Regular sleep regimen
- Avoid toxins/poisons/alcohol/drugs
- Avoid theatrical entertainment
- Avoid over taxing the mind with too much study
- Come back to the true knowledge of God and meditate upon His character daily
- Trust God with your future
- Engage in service to others (give of self)
- Live in harmony with God's law

SUNDAY

Patience is an attribute of God – read memory verse at the top

The first two paragraphs describe God's dealing with Nineveh and how patient he was. What do you think about a God who is patient?

Was God patient with Lucifer?

God in His great mercy bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he

retained in heaven. **Again and again he was offered pardon on condition of repentance and submission.** Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. But as his dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, **yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office.** But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker. {GC 495.3}

Thoughts? Was God patient with Lucifer? What about the idea Lucifer could be reinstated after lying, bearing false witness against God without Christ dying to pay his legal penalty for breaking God's law?

How does Satan twist the beauty of God's patience against God?

Almost the exact same paragraph as above is found in PP followed by this:

A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. **Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms.** If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He persistently

defended his own course, and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, "the light bearer," the sharer of God's glory, the attendant of His throne, by transgression became Satan, "the adversary" of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship. {PP 39.2}

How does Satan turn God's patience against Him? First by alleging God is weak and will ultimately give in and allow Satan his way. But there is another way God's patience is misrepresented –

Turn to FRIDAY's lesson and read first paragraph –

In His dealings with the human race, God bears long with the impenitent. He uses His appointed agencies to call men to allegiance, and offers them His full pardon if they will repent. But because God is long-suffering, men presume on His mercy. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." **The patience and long-suffering of God, which should soften and subdue the soul, has an altogether different influence upon the careless and sinful. It leads them to cast off restraint, and strengthens them in resistance.** They think that the God who has borne so much from them will not heed their perversity. If we lived in a dispensation of immediate retribution, offenses against God would not occur so often. But though delayed, the punishment is none the less certain. There are limits even to the forbearance of God. The boundary of His long-suffering may be reached, and then He will surely punish. And when He does take up the case of the presumptuous sinner, He will not cease till He has made a full end. {3BC 1166.1}

Thoughts? How is God's patience turned against God and God's goal to heal and save sinners? By deceiving people that it doesn't matter, we can repent at any time, wait until our deathbed etc.

But how can the above passage, which rightly points out the folly in misunderstanding God's patience also be misunderstood to introduce another error?

Turn to WEDNESDAY's Lesson

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts?

Read fourth paragraph, “It might be argued that...” thoughts? Was waiting generations before losing patience an option for the antediluvians? Is it an option for angels? Will it be an option in the new heaven and earth?

Does God run out of patience? Is that the problem? If God could be patient just a little longer then we would have a greater opportunity for repentance? Is the problem God's limited patience?

This is a classic misunderstanding projected into writings based on a preconceived idea about God – namely that He must eventually punish. The statement from Friday's lesson doesn't state that God loses His patience. It states “There are limits even to the forbearance of God.” The question - What are those limits and how does God punish?

You see many people who hold to a god-concept in which God is the all powerful Sovereign of the universe who walks softly but carries a big stick. They like to take these quotations and not balance them with statements from the same author who explains what such words mean. So, what are the limits and how does God punish?

- We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {1SM 235.2}

I recently discovered some people criticizing my use of this passage. They claim it only applies to the consequences of sin in this life and not to what happens to the wicked in the end. Amazing twists people go to in order to believe God is the source of death and inflicts pain and suffering on His creatures. So let's read some more:

- After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."
- "I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way; They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."
Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

What are the limits of God's forbearance? Is there some inherent limit in God, He can only take so much and then His patience runs out or is the limit in the ability of His creatures to be healed?

Thoughts?

When Satan was cast out of heaven, what was the limit of God's patience? Did God have some divine limitation on His internal patience or was there something about the condition of Lucifer that meant no further patience on God's part would afford any benefit?

From ST January 9, 1879, paragraph 7: "It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. **They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable.**"

Is it the same with the wicked in the end? So when we talk about the forbearance of God having limits, what is the limit? The ability of His creatures to be healed!

God has given in His word decisive evidence that He will punish the transgressors of His law. Those who flatter themselves that He is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that "the wages of sin is death," that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression... {GC 539.3}

God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalms 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; **yet all the manifestations of retributive**

justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being. {GC 541.2}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And **all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes.** {GC 541.3}

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. **The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will?** {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to

the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they have never trained the mind to love purity**; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction**, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. **The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that **the wicked are incurable**. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. {GC 543.1}

And what does God do to the wicked in the end? How are they punished?

- **God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God,**

existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us. Only by receiving His life through self-surrender is it possible, said Jesus, for these hidden sins, which I have pointed out, to be overcome. It is possible that you may bury them in your hearts and conceal them from human eyes, but how will you stand in God's presence? {MB 61.2}

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. **To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire.** If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you. {MB 62.1}

- The **sinner's own thoughts are his accusers; and there can be no torture keener than the stings of a guilty conscience**, which give him no rest day nor night. {DA 223.3}
- **The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.** {DA 107.4}

Thoughts? What is God's justice? What is the punishment and penalty for sin? What causes the wicked to suffer? It is time we in our church stop promoting lies about God, stop making God out to be the source of pain and suffering and death.

Back to SUNDAY's lesson

Read third paragraph, "If someone were to ask..." well said! What do you think about this paragraph?

Where would we ever get an idea that God is angry or quick to punish or loses His patience?

Is it important to read widely and include the entire inspired record?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “The church is made...” thoughts?

What do you think the lesson means by the spiritually mature? I was confused because I thought the mature were those who possessed the fruits of the Spirit, which would include patience, therefore to be impatient would be evidence of not being mature? Do you see how confused I am?

Or is it perhaps, the lesson is confusing spiritually mature individuals with those who are Christianized, experienced cultural Christians, those who now all the rituals, rules, norms, what foods to eat, clothes to wear, days to keep holy, adornments to avoid, and how to give eloquent public sermons and prayers?

- It is possible to have just enough religion to deaden the conscience, deceive the senses, and ruin the soul; just enough outward appearance of sanctity to have a name to live, while we are dead. {YI, September 20, 1894 par. 5}

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “Patience in the church...” – thoughts? Questions? What does it mean “had to pray”?

TUESDAY

Read third paragraph, “We are prone to think...” thoughts?

Some really good points in this paragraph, like never condemning those who don’t accept certain doctrines, and not being judgmental. How are we doing?

What is our attitude toward those who don’t accept the Sabbath? What is our attitude toward those who wear jewelry, eat pork, or drink alcohol? Do we judge? Do we condemn?

Why are doctrines important and what mistakes do we often make with doctrines?

Doctrines are only important as they inform us about God and connect us to Him. If they fail to do this they are irrelevant to our salvation.

A danger with doctrines is that we can set them up as standalone elements with proof texts and go out and promote the doctrines and never actually reveal the truth about God. Such a systemized religion is a distortion and obstruction to knowing God. This is what the Pharisees did in Christ's day and what much of the religious world does.

Our doctrines must always be avenues into the heart of God, lead us to a greater intimacy with God or be discarded!

Can we do this with all of our doctrines?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The Greek word..." thoughts? How are trials related to our character development?

Will you ever develop any strength or skill without exercise? In the gym will you develop muscle strength without lifting weights? And in order to get stronger must the pressure, or difficulty, or weight increase? Does this have bearing on our character?

As a musician will you become more accomplished without practice? Will the difficulty or trial or complexity of the music have to increase?

Does this give us insight into why the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was placed in the Garden of Eden as a "test"? Was it for them to be tripped up and fail? Or was it necessary for Adam and Eve, as free sentient beings, to examine the issues of God's trustworthiness and actually exercise their own wills, minds and

choose loyalty to God? One of the purposes of the Tree was for their maturity and growth!

Does this apply to our lives today?

But read last paragraph, "This does not mean..." very important to remember that not every trial or difficulty in this world is there because we need it to grow.

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 3 read a discuss