

LESSON FOUR



PATIENCE

**BIBLE READING(S):***Romans 12:10-21**Luke 23:34***ELEMENTARY LESSON**

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is also patience. Patience is being able to deal with pain or difficulty without giving up or becoming frustrated and angry. Patience can come in many forms, like when you're waiting for Christmas day to come, or when your sister is making you angry but you don't want to give in to her. That is, there is patience that means waiting, and patience that means being gracious (giving grace) towards other people. Today we're going to focus specifically on patience towards other people. Let's read a passage in Romans where Paul talks about loving other people and being patient with them.

— Read Romans 12:10-21

Wow! It's hard to be nice to people who aren't nice to us, which is what Paul means when he asks us to "feed our enemy if he is hungry." The Bible was originally written in Greek. The old Greek word for patience means "to suffer a long time." That doesn't sound fun at all! It's definitely something that requires the aid of our very best helper, the Holy Spirit. In terms of patience with other people, this sometimes means that we have to endure difficult things, like when people wrong us, aren't nice to us, and aren't kind. Sometimes they're not even doing anything wrong; they're just annoying us. Patience means we don't wrong them right back and aren't mean right back. It means we're gracious.

This is really hard to do. When someone says unkind words to us, we really want to respond with equally unkind words. When someone hits us, we want to hit them back. Even adults deal with this. It's really hard to have patience and keep from being mean right back. By asking us to be patient, God is asking us to take the more loving route. But the more loving route is usually the harder route, that's why patience is a lot like long-suffering. It's not easy to do and we really need the Holy Spirit's help to be patient with others.

Paul says a lot in this passage about how the Holy Spirit helps us with patience. In verse 17,



he says “repay no one evil for evil.” This means that our response to unkindness should not be more unkindness. There are a few ways we can practice patience in a situation like this. First, we can pray for those who are unkind to us. It is very hard to be angry at someone when we’re talking to God about them. Second, we can forgive them, because Jesus has forgiven us, that is, He has not held our sin against us because He paid for it with His death on the cross. Sometimes, forgiveness is granted before it’s felt. That means we can stop holding someone’s wrong against them, but still feel sad and frustrated in our hearts. We just should not lash out against them.

Here’s the reality of all of this: it’s really hard to do without the Holy Spirit. Really, really hard. The sin in our hearts not only causes us to be unkind to others, but it makes it difficult not to be unkind back. The good news is that whether or not we’re unkind, Jesus still loves us. His love for us is not dependent on our good behavior, and still he asks us to share the Fruit of the Holy Spirit with others.

Jesus Himself is perfectly patient and we are not, that’s why the Holy Spirit can help us have patience. When Jesus was dying on the cross and the Roman soldiers were being cruel to Him, even then He was patient. In Luke 23:34, it says that Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That is an incredible example of patience with unkind people.

Patience is not easy, and even when we aren’t patient with our friends and family, the Bible says that God is merciful to forgive us. His love for us doesn’t change, but we do have the Holy Spirit to help us be patient, just like Jesus.

OBJECT LESSON

***Do this with an adult!* You’ll need: a cookie sheet (to protect your work surface), a lighter, a small pitcher of water, and two pieces of paper each folded into a tent.**

Say: When the Bible says to be patient with those who wrong us, it is saying not to fight meanness with more meanness. That’s like saying don’t fight fire with more fire. Let’s try that out and see what happens.” Light the top of one tent. Say: “Ok, let’s see if I can put this out by fighting it with more fire.” Light the other tent and hold them up to each other. At this point, both should be alight. Say, “Oh no! Looks like trying to fight fire with fire just made MORE fire. Now let’s see what happens when we choose the more peaceful, patient



option. Let's try water." Proceed to dump out the water onto both tents, extinguishing the flame. Say, "Having patience with our enemies is like that. When we respond to meanness with meanness, it only adds to the badness in the situation, but when we respond with patience, the Holy Spirit helps us extinguish the meanness altogether."

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving us patience with our enemies. We know that this is something we can't do on our own and will never do perfectly, but we know that you, Holy Spirit, will help us be patient. Thank you that our Savior, Jesus Christ, was perfectly patient so that we don't have to be. Amen.

JOY CHALLENGE

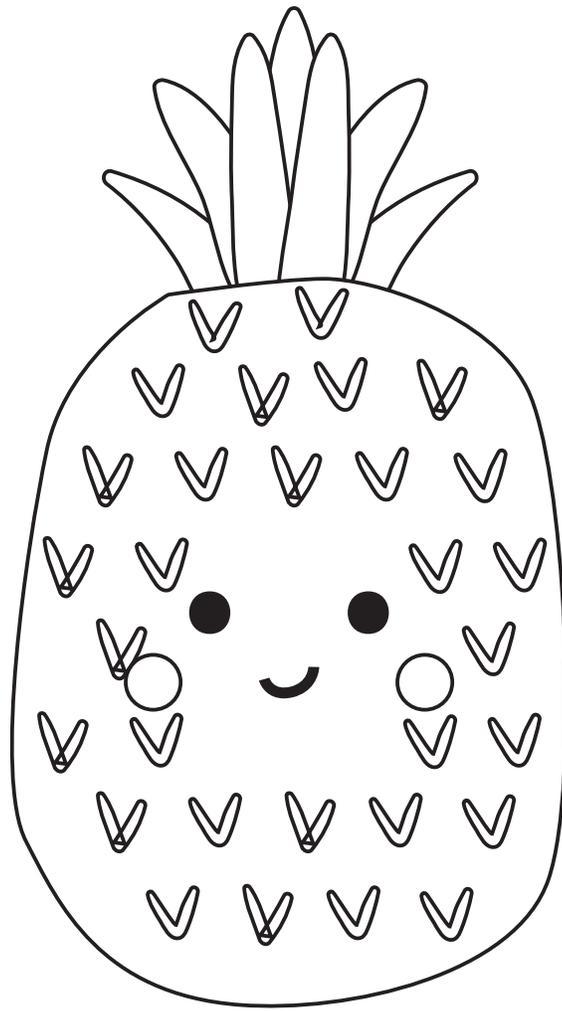
Take a video of your toys showing patience to one another when one is mean to the other.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When do you most often need to have patience towards someone in your life? Why is this hard for you?
- What are some ways the Holy Spirit gives us patience? [He helps us pray for them, forgive them, etc.]

SONG RECOMMENDATIONS

- "Love God, Love People" by Danny Gokey
- "Make Us One" by Jesus Culture
- "Love Your Enemies" by Kyle Sigmon



PATIENCE



*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
against such things there is no law.*

GALATIANS 5:22-23



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Dear _____,

I miss you! I hope you are doing well. I have been learning about the fruit of the Spirit in church & this week we are learning about PATIENCE. I wanted to write you a letter & see if you could write me back - I am learning to be patient, but I hope I get to hear from you soon! I love and miss you!

Love, _____

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