

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: OCTOBER 11-17, 2025

SERIES INFO

Rotten: In a world of fake smiles, quick tempers, and shallow love, we're all producing something. Every word, every choice, every action plants something in someone's heart—either life-giving or toxic. But the Spirit grows something different: love when hate comes easy, joy when life feels heavy, peace in the chaos, patience when you're pushed, kindness in a cruel world, goodness when nobody's watching, faithfulness when others walk away, gentleness in a culture that shouts, and self-control when everything says give in. That's not surface-level. That's transformation. And it might be the very thing that marks the difference between being ruled by the mess around you and being fueled by something greater.

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

What's one situation that instantly tests your patience every single time?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest "takeaways" you had from the message this week about the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of patience within you?

DISCUSSION

God Has Long Nostrils

Scripture: Exodus 34:6 and Psalm 86:15

God's character can be described as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and faithfulness. Our trust and dependence on God are built on His unchanging and enduring attributes. The Hebrew phrase *'erek 'appayim* means "long of the nose," "long in breathing"- or "slow to flare in anger." Have your nose ever flared and your breathing quickened when you are angry. God is slow to anger, meaning He takes a long breath before reacting. God, unlike us, doesn't have a "short fuse" - He takes a long breath toward mercy before judgment. For God, patience looks like this: slow to react, and quick to extend grace.

- How do these verses shape or reshape your view of God's character? When you think about your relationship with God, do you automatically go to God's patience with you or God's anger when you might fall short or fail?

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- How can understanding God's patience transform how we treat difficult people or aggravating situations in our lives?

Practicing Patience With Others

Scripture: Ephesians 4:2

Spiritual patience (Greek word: *makrohymia* - meaning "long suffering") is the Holy Spirit enabling you to have the ability to endure people (and all that they can bring you) rather than getting super frustrated at the circumstances surrounding them. It means to remain kind, forgiving, and encouraging when others are difficult, slow to change, or even hurtful to us. Having patience with people is being compassionate (long suffering). Cultivating patience in tough circumstances is all about having endurance (perseverance).

- Think about a person who is testing your patience the most right now. (If they are in the room with you ... you might not want to call them out!) Is there a possibility that God is using this relationship to grow His image in you and for you to reflect His character to them?
- Can you illustrate a time when someone showed great patience toward you?
- What does it look like in a practical sense of "bearing with one another in love"?

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Practicing Patience With Myself

Scripture: Romans 2:4 & 2 Peter 3:8-9

We now turn to the concept of being compassionately patient with yourself. If God is patient with you, should you not practice patience with yourself? Does God not give us space to grow and repent? Of course He does. Many believers are harsh with themselves when it comes to their spiritual growth, but God's patience toward us invites us to have some self-compassion that leads to growth rather than shame. While we should never take for granted God's graciousness, we can know that God's patience with us is redemptive. While He could judge us, His delay in doing so can only be understood as graceful waiting that gives us the opportunity to repent. Spiritual patience does not mean ignoring sin in our lives. It means fostering an awareness of how God sees us as His beloved. He operates on a different timetable than us—one that is motivated by compassion. His ultimate desire is not to punish us but that we might reach repentance and find salvation.

- How can we cultivate having patience with ourselves without mistaking God's patience as His approval of sin? Does God's patience ever run out?
- Why do you think God chooses patience (with us) as a way to lead people (us) to repentance?

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Reflect on God's Patience

- **In your reactions:** before reacting in anger or frustration, this week, practice imitating God's patience by "taking a long breath." (count to ten!)
- **In your relationships:** practice extending grace even when you have been wronged - remember how patient God has been with you.
- **In your waiting on God:** when you pray for God to intervene in some way, remember that God's slow timing in response is not neglect—it's nurture. He sometimes shapes our character through delayed answers.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the riches of your kindness, patience, and love. Forgive me for presuming upon Your mercy or mistaking Your delay of answering my prayer as indifference. Help me to live my life to reflect Your patient love—slow to anger, quick to forgive, and full of grace. May Your kindness soften my heart and lead me to true repentance. In Jesus' name. Amen.