



"When I understand that everything happening to me is to make me more Christlike, it resolves a great deal of anxiety."

—A.W. Tozer

21-Aug-26

Pre-Feast Aggravations

As the [Feast of Tabernacles](#) approaches, our to-do lists grow longer and longer. For me, as a landscaper with the seasons about to change, many things begin to happen all at once. The Feast becomes a deadline for getting crucial things done before having to take off for eight days or more.

My clients' grass must be cut and trimmed, hard surfaces blown off, weeds sprayed—regular maintenance jobs continue. But every year, before the Feast arrives, my goal is to have most, if not all, of the shrubs on the properties we maintain trimmed and ready to go dormant until next spring. I also try to aerate and overseed the grass on most of our properties before leaving. Getting all this work done before we leave ramps up the stress.

Then, of course, there are the personal things to take care of before leaving. We must make hotel reservations and perhaps book a car and a flight. If not, we must check out the car, stop the mail, and provide for the pets' needs. Among other tasks, we clean or dry-clean our church clothes, pack our suitcases, and then load the car. Before we get on the road, we need to remember to put the house in "vacation mode," so we do not waste money cooling empty rooms and heating water no one will use.

We always look forward to [God's holy days](#) with great anticipation, yet a million little aggravations can try us along the way. Sometimes, we feel that if something could go wrong, it will! The pressures of Feast-time preparations, like those before [Passover](#), become a perfect time to evaluate how well we are making progress in practicing the [fruit of the Spirit](#). Chances are there will be things that test our patience—including trials of family and friends—and a few more may crop up when we get there!

Among the fruit of the Spirit in [Galatians 5:22-23](#) appears longsuffering. Various Bible versions use three different English words to translate the underlying Greek word, *makrothumia* (*Strong's* #3115): "longsuffering," "[patience](#)," and "[forbearance](#)." Because they are so closely related, these English words are mostly interchangeable, but each has its nuances.

About a dozen Greek words can be translated into these three English words. For instance, *hupomone* (*Strong's* #5281) is frequently translated as "patience," but not always, as it is sometimes rendered as "endurance," a fourth similar English word! In [Hebrews 6:12](#), *makrothumia* appears as "patience," but elsewhere, *hupomone* is used (see [James 1:3](#)), often translated as "endurance" or one of its synonyms, "perseverance" (see, for instance, [Hebrews 10:36](#); [12:1](#)).

Sometimes, it is hard to grasp what the translators had in mind. "Patience" seems like a softer word than "longsuffering" because human beings do not like to suffer—and most assuredly, we do not want to suffer long! *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* comments:

Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy. . . . Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. It is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope.

The critical point is not that we suffer, but how we act while suffering. Do we take it patiently? Something that gets my dander up is poorly designed machinery—or should I say trying to repair it! Why does my car battery now

need six cables? Why did the manufacturer have to put that last bolt just out of reach?

Since some translations use "forbearance" in [Galatians 5:22](#), it deserves a mention. While "forbearance" brings out a whole new set of Greek words, it is synonymous with being patient and longsuffering. While we can be patient in longsuffering, we can also "bear up under" or "hold up" in the face of suffering or provocation. We often hear people ask, "How are you holding up?" and that gives us a sense of its meaning.

We have already seen that endurance is part of this mix of words. "Tolerate" is another word we can add. It means "to accept or endure, especially someone or something unpleasant, disliked, or disagreed with, with forbearance." *Hupomone* seems to be the most general of the Greek words, covering most of these nuances.

We do not like to think about suffering, much less longsuffering, but the Bible assures us we will face it as followers of Christ. Paul writes in [II Timothy 3:12](#), "Yes, all who desire to live godly in Christ [Jesus](#) will suffer persecution" (emphasis ours throughout).

Human suffering falls into three basic categories. First, people suffer from natural disasters such as storms, fires, earthquakes, and floods. We have seen plenty of those over the years all over [the world](#). The news is often filled with stories of people who have lost everything, and it is not hard to see their suffering. They may never return to "normal" life.

Second, people suffer from limits to their physical abilities, such as disease or dismemberment, or impairments to their mental state. Lately, there has been no shortage of such suffering. Some form of this category of suffering has probably touched each of us.

Third, people suffer from the actions and behaviors of human beings, which can include self-harm. While the first two categories can be devastating and difficult to overcome, the third is perhaps the most difficult to endure. It is far more personal.

When we suffer at the hands of a family member or a brother in the church, it can test everything we believe. Many Christians have had heated arguments with members of their extended families over God's truth, and they probably still think we are crazy and involved in a cult. Yet, strangely, when they have a Bible question, they ask us!

Perhaps the most famous example of suffering in the Bible, apart from Christ's, is Job. He was a well-known and well-liked man who feared [God](#) and had all that life offered. But, at Satan's instigation, God allowed the Devil to take everything he had except three worthless accusers called "friends" and a nagging wife. On top of it all, [Satan](#) was allowed to afflict the poor man with painful boils.

What Job endured from his friends, his wife, and his boils is among the best examples of longsuffering in the Bible. Job may have wavered, but he never surrendered. By Job 38, the Lord has decided that the trial has gone on long enough, and He begins to speak. By Job 42, after God reveals how great He is compared with a puny man like Job, the man says, "I repent." Job could not [see God](#) until He opened his eyes to what He really is like!

But the story does not end there. In [Job 42:7-9](#), the Lord orders Job's three friends to take seven bulls and seven rams to Job so he could offer a burnt offering for them and pray for them. God was not pleased with the foolish things they had said about Him to Job. And Job's friends seem to have hurried to do as God said.

Then verse 10 relates: "And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." Note that God restored Job's losses *when* he prayed for his friends. God forgave his friends when Job prayed for them, but it seems He waited to reward Job until after he prayed for those who had accused him of [sin](#) and gave him terrible advice. Perhaps this was a final test of the genuineness of Job's [repentance](#).

One detail remains unmentioned. There is not a single word about Job's wife after her "Curse God and die!" tirade in [Job 2:9](#). We can be sure she, like his three friends, did not get off scot-free, as the saying goes. What happened to

her? Did she live to bear Job ten more children, with all the patience, longsuffering, and endurance that required? If so, was this God's patient way of dealing with her attitude? He was working with everyone involved in the situation.

The apostle James provides some advice we should heed, and it all revolves around the general subject of patience:

Therefore *be patient*, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer *waits* for the precious fruit of the earth, [*waiting patiently*](#) for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also *be patient*. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and *patience*. Indeed we count them blessed who *endure*. You have heard of *the perseverance of Job* and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and [*merciful*](#). (James 5:7-11)

Will we be patient in longsuffering like Job, enduring until the end? If we follow Job's example, we can expect God's blessing to follow in due time.

- Ronny H. Graham

New Transcripts

[1863s: Barely Breathing](#)

Given by Joseph B. Baity on 14-Mar-26

[1885s: Breaking the Chain Through Forgiveness](#)

Given by Jared M. Ellis on 18-Jul-26

[1889: Are You Part of the Spiritual Unity?](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 15-Aug-26

[BS-TC08: The Commandments \(Part Eight\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 14-Jan-89

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Patience With Growth](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Fruit maturation takes time, from 90 to 150 days. Waiting for the fruit is just part of the story; while we wait, we must also work, including thinning and pruning. In our fellowship, we see people maturing at various stages. We must be tolerant with one another, realizing God works with us all individually and particularly. As Leviticus 23 indicates, agricultural symbolism is replete in the sacrifices and ceremonies involving the Wave Sheaf offering and the Feast of Weeks. Christ represented the wave sheaf while we represent the loaves, ground down, baked—picturing our corruption with the leaven symbolizing sin. The two loaves picture God's called-out ones. Pentecost culminates a period of spiritual harvest, depicting the maturation of the Church, from the time of Christ's death, resurrection, and second coming. God is focusing during this time on the maturation of His called-out people. God stresses during this period what His people are commanded to do for the fruit we produce. No one can do it for us. Pentecost emphasizes the Christian's work under God's supervision. Traditionally, God gave us the Law on Pentecost (or Shavuot). Later in history God gave His Holy Spirit on the same date, enabling us to keep the Law. We have Jesus Christ in us at all times. God works in us to will and to do. Ruth, symbolizing the Church, worked diligently in the fields of Boaz (who symbolizes Jesus Christ), producing fruit, leading to the eventual birth of Christ. The growth took many years and much work. Thankfully, Jesus Christ gives us ample time to bear fruit; however, infertility—not bearing fruit—is never an option. As Jesus is patient with us, we should be forbearing with others in the Family of God, helping them to overcome.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Longsuffering](#)

by Martin G. Collins

Longsuffering, or patience, the fourth fruit of the Spirit, is a much needed virtue in a fast-paced, impatient world. This Bible Study highlights the basics of this godly attribute.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 21-Aug-26) will be **Angelic Responsibilities**, given by **Martin G. Collins**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday (EST)** and all day Saturday.

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