



## Introduction

At District Assembly this year, our DS invited us to consider how vital it could be to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit. What would our witness look like in the world if we were people who were following Jesus, allowing God's grace to help us, and being filled with the Spirit so we bear fruit? To accomplish this we need to partner with God. She said, "While we don't believe in works righteousness, we also don't believe in passive discipleship. We get our hands dirty in the soil with our God who is the gardener." This document is a way for us to partner with God in our own transformation! Each month you will be provided with a variety of tools to help cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit. You can use these personally or with a group.

The format is a shared spiritual practice and then a three-fold invitation to go deeper--deeper in Scripture, deeper with others, and going deeper with self. You will also find a variety of book recommendations to help you to explore the fruit that is being studied each month.

The truth is Galatians 5 says the "fruit" of the Spirit, not the "fruits." This matters because we are to allow God to help us cultivate all of them, not just the easy ones, not just the ones we like, but we are to be people who bear all the fruit of the Spirit. Join us on this adventure with God as we seek to go deeper together.



## Shared practice:

Often people say, "Don't pray for patience, it might be answered!" Well, this month we are praying for it and hoping God will hear our prayer. This month our shared practice is our prayer practice and it also helps us to grow in patience with others and self. What might happen if we were to pray this prayer and allow it to shape how we live? Let's try praying this together for the next 30 days:

God, grant me patience

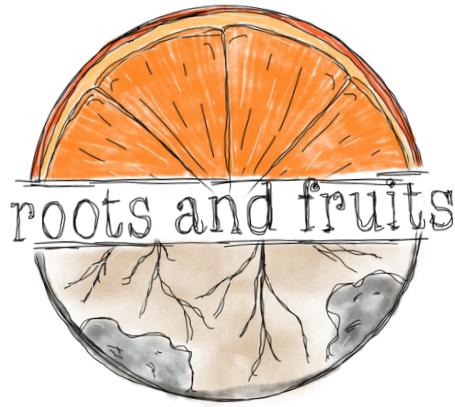
God, grant me patience with the children in my life. They might be mine, or they may belong to someone else. That doesn't really matter, because they belong to You. Help me to bend down and listen. Help me to take time to know them well. Help me to lower my voice and show kindness. Help me to remember that Your kingdom is made up of such as these. Help me to see them as You see them. Grant me patience with children.

God, grant me patience with the annoying people in my life. Remind me that I might just be the annoying person in someone's life and let that knowledge open me up to empathy and grace. Help me to see more deeply than surface behavior, to listen more closely to what is really being said, to seek to know the "why" of what is happening, and to love. Help me to see them as You see them. Help me not to be annoying. Grant me patience with annoying people.

God, grant me patience with myself. Too often I beat myself up for not changing fast enough, for doing that one thing that one time a long time ago, or for doing it today. Too often I expect more than I should from this body and mind. I don't want to make excuses for bad behavior, but I also need to be freed from unhealthy expectations that keep me from Your love. May I have patience with myself as You are patient with me. Help me to see me as You see me. Grant me patience with myself.

God grant me patience with You. Sometimes I want You to get to work in particular ways much faster than you do. Sometimes I want to push ahead and hope You will catch up. Help me to trust Your timing. Your timing. Your timing. Give me a trust that doesn't make a lot of sense. Help me to see as You see. Grant me patience with You.

God, grant me patience.



# Going Deeper with Scripture & Prayer:

## The Fruit of the Spirit of Patience



With Scripture: The Bible Project has another good video to consider:

- How could seeking to be "slow to anger" help us to know God better and to allow God's grace to help us also be slow to anger?

This month consider writing out the places where you are struggling to be patient. Present them to the Lord in prayer. When you feel yourself growing impatient in a situation, take a deep breath, ask God to help you, and see what may happen as you interact with others.

# Resources to Cultivate Patience

**From the Church of the Nazarene--**When God Takes Too Long, by Joseph Betz--One of the greatest frustrations of the Christian life is having to wait for God to act. We wait, sometimes for years, for our prayers to be answered, for our deepest longings to be fulfilled. Some devoted Christians get stuck in dead-end jobs even though they feel certain they could serve God in greater ways if only He would open the opportunity. Why doesn't He? Some wait for a godly spouse, some couples wait for the gift of children, and some, who have dedicated their lives to serving the Lord, wait in disappointed bafflement as their work seems to yield no fruit. Why? As Christians, we yearn to serve the Lord, to step forward and obey Him like the great heroes of the Bible, but we are confused, waiting for clear orders, kept at a distance by the invisible barriers of God's silence, His inaction, or His unhurried pace.

In *When God Takes Too Long*, Joseph Bentz examines the mysteries of God's timing and shows Christians how to thrive in the midst of one of life's greatest frustrations--waiting. He offers those who have been discouraged by a life of waiting a chance to alter not only their perspective on waiting, but also their actions in response to it, transforming this frustration into a positive force that will enrich and change their lives.

**When God Takes Too Long** addresses:

- How not to wish (or wait) our lives away
- How to better understand the nature of time
- How to master the discipline of waiting
- How to cast off the boundaries of time to view our lives from an eternal perspective

**Other Resources:**

"Christians Need to Recover the Lost Art of Patience," by Tyler Edwards