

The fruit of the Spirit is...longsuffering

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“The fruit of the Spirit is...longsuffering...” (Gal. 5:22)

Longsuffering is the virtue that bears up patiently and even triumphantly under the aggravations of life. While it may refer to a patient response to adverse circumstances, it usually refers to a merciful endurance of the provocations of people.

God is longsuffering with man. Think for a moment of the gross sinfulness of the human race at the present time—the legalization of prostitution, the popularization of homosexuality, the laws permitting abortions, the breakdown of marriage and the home, the wholesale rejection of moral standards, and, of course, man’s crowning sin—the utter rejection of God’s Son as only Lord and Savior. One could scarcely blame God if He were to wipe out mankind with a stroke. But He doesn’t do it. His goodness is designed to lead men to repentance. He is not willing that any should perish.

And His will is that this longsuffering should be reproduced in the lives of His people as they yield to the Holy Spirit. This means that we should not be quick-tempered. We should not fly off the handle easily. We should not try to get even with people when they have wronged us. Instead we should display what someone has called “a kind of conquering patience.”

When Corrie and Betsie ten Boom were enduring indescribable sufferings in the concentration camp, Betsie would often say that they must help these people after they were released. They simply had to find a way to help them. Corrie thought, of course, that her sister was planning some program to rehabilitate the victims of the Nazis. It wasn’t till later that Corrie realized that Betsie meant her persecutors. She wanted to find some way to teach them to love. Corrie commented, “And I wondered, not for the first time, what sort of a person she was, this sister of mine...what kind of road she followed while I trudged beside her on the all-too-solid earth” (The Hiding Place, p. 175).

The road Betsie followed was the road of longsuffering. And Corrie walked it too, in spite of her humble disclaimer.

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