



THE
FRUIT
OF THE
SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5

A CULTURE OF REACTIVITY

“Western culture has become so chronically anxious that our society has gone into an emotional regression...The anxiety is so deep within the emotional processes of our nation that it is almost as though a neurosis has become nationalized...Societal regression is about the perversion of progress....At the same time that a society is ‘pro-gressing’ technologically it can be ‘re-gressing’ emotionally.”

Edwin Friedman

Friedman's "Vicious Cycle"

1. Reactivity
2. Herding
3. Blame displacement
4. Quick-fix mentality
5. Lack of differentiated leadership

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another... Now the works of the flesh are obvious...hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy.

Galatians 5:15, 19

**PATIENCE IN A
CULTURE OF REACTIVITY**

What is Patience?

Macrothymia: patience with people

Hypomoneo: patience with
circumstances

Christian Patience:

A non-anxious inner presence that waits with God as he works out his redemptive purposes in his redemptive time.

The Patience of God

Yahweh—Yahweh is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth...

Exodus 34:6

God's patience creates time and space for growth, maturity, change, repentance.

But Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. He prayed to the LORD: “Please, LORD, isn’t this what I said while I was still in my own country? That’s why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to become angry, rich in faithful love, and One who relents from sending disaster. And now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live...Then God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “Yes,” he replied. “It is right. I’m angry enough to die!” So the LORD said, “You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than 120,000 people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?”

The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

Jesus Christ came. He walked towards the 'full stop.' He lost his mobility. He was nailed down! He is not even at three miles an hour as we walk. He is not moving. Full stop! What can be slower than full stop - nailed down. At this point of full stop, the apostolic church proclaims that the love of God to man is ultimately and fully revealed. God walks slowly because he is love. If he is not love he would have gone much faster. Love has its speed. It is an inner speed. It is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It is slow yet it is lord over all other speeds since it is the speed of love.

Kosuke Koyama

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

CULTIVATING PATIENCE

Patience was not a virtue dear to most Greco-Roman people, and it has been of little interest to scholars of early Christianity. But it was centrally important to the early Christians. They talked about patience and wrote about it; it was the first virtue about which they wrote a treatise, and they wrote no fewer than three treatises on it.

Christian writers called patience “the highest virtue,” “the greatest of all virtues,” the virtue that was “peculiarly Christian.” The Christians believed that God is patient and that Jesus visibly embodied patience. And they concluded that they, trusting in God, should be patient - not controlling events, not anxious or in a hurry, and never using force to achieve their ends.

Alan Kreider

Internalize God's patience with you

Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And his master got angry and handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed. So My heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.

Matthew 18:32-35

And He told this parable: “A man had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He told the vineyard worker, ‘Listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it even waste the soil?’ “But he replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. Perhaps it will bear fruit next year, but if not, you can cut it down.

Luke 13:6-9

Grace + Truth + Time

Learn the impulses of a farmer

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

James 5:7-8

**Commit to a lifestyle of
non-retaliation**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse...Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone. Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord. But If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Romans 12:14, 17-21

Bless

Forgive

Non-retaliation

Graciously oppose

Let wrong-doing grow weary from your patience.

Tertullian