

Fruits of the Spirit(Longuffering)

Mankind has been locked in an ongoing discussion about the tomato. Some argue that it is a fruit and others argue that it is a vegetable. Now allow me to clear the air; Webster declares that it is a fruit. This is comparative to what people say about Christians. It is believed that once you give your life to Christ all your suffering will disappear, no more heartaches, no more pain. But this is not true, we will undergo trials and tribulations as long as we are housed in these earthen vessels. Job declared that man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward (Job 5:7).

Let's examine another fruit of the Spirit and it is **Longuffering** (Gal. 5:22-23). This a compound word which has two words linked together. If the words were separated they would have different meaning, but when linked together they take on another meaning. *Long* is defined as a measurement of length or a lasting period of time. *Suffering* is defined as pain or distress. But when you define longuffering it means to continue in this state for a long period of time.

I. Longuffering is a Trait of God.... "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9)

- God operates differently than man- "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord "(Is. 55:8)
- God is holding justice back and allowing mercy to operate- his mercy endureth forever.
- God is waiting for us to come to a point of repentance.

II. Longuffering Does Not Surprise.... "When we work with you we told you that you should suffer tribulation" (I Thess. 3:4)

- Things that should not surprise us- Houston Rockets in last place, Rich is still getting rich and the poor is still getting poorer
- Longuffering should not surprise us- The word told you that a man born of a woman is but a few days and full of trouble (Job 14:1).
- It was predicted that persecution will come if you live Godly in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:12).

III. Longuffering Is Not to be Ashamed.... "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed" (I Peter 4:16)

- Mankind is ashamed of different things such as- cars we drive, clothes we wear, houses we live in, our looks, etc.
- The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:41)
- We should take a stand like the Apostle Paul when he said that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.