

Becoming More like Christ (II): Patience, Kindness, Goodness

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” (Romans 15:14)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God’s patience leads us to repentance, and to bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.2. Goodness and kindness are attributes of God, and we are to bear His image.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is patience.2. God is kindness.3. God is goodness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God’s patience molds and shapes us to persevere under trials.2. Learn to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us show kindness and goodness to others.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Patience
- B. Kindness
- C. Goodness

Life Application: My Action Plan

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We are weak, but with the help and encouragement of God’s Spirit, our heart will change into one that is willing to extend patience, kindness, and goodness to the people around us.

Introduction: Becoming More like Christ

We learned last week that spiritual growth is a lifelong process that requires our effort and dedication towards growing in the fruit of the Spirit (Eph 4:14–15; Gal 5:22–23). Today, we'll be studying three more character traits of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: patience, kindness, and goodness. These are not easy traits to develop, but if we abide in Jesus Christ (Jn 15:5), then the Holy Spirit will help us to bear them. Therefore, to grow spiritually and become more like Christ, the first step is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But aside from this, what can we do to produce these characteristics? Let's go into more detail about each to see how to develop them in our lives.

A. Patience

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry." (Ps 40:1)

Can you think of the last time you became impatient? Who or what caused it? Is there someone or something that always makes you lose your patience? Perhaps a slow piece of technology, a family member who never "gets it," or the chores we always seem to get stuck with? There are a lot of things that make us impatient, especially when we get upset or frustrated with people who let us down, or when something we depend on runs into problems. We probably have also become impatient even with God when we pray for His help, but He doesn't answer our prayers.

To most people, having patience in any of these situations means being able to wait out the situation until it passes, or even simply enduring until a solution presents itself. But true patience according to the Bible isn't simply a game of waiting or a test of endurance. True patience affects how we feel and act while we wait. Do you get irritated or snappy when you've been waiting for a long time? Or do you remain calm—or even joyful—while working your way through a problem or chore? The way you act or feel is the marker of whether you have true patience in the Spirit.

The Patience of God

Part of God's nature is His patience. The Greek word for "patience" used in Galatians, chapter 5, is *makrothymia*, which can also be translated as "longsuffering," "steadfastness," or being slow to anger. Let's read a few verses that can help us understand the patience of God.

- 2 Pet 3:9 (NIV) – "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
- 2 Pet 3:15 (NIV) – "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation[.]"
- Rom 12:12 – "[Rejoicing] in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer[.]"
- Jas 5:7–8 – "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."

God's patience means coming to repentance and receiving salvation. A person who is patient in the Spirit is someone who can endure pain or suffering without becoming angry. They are able to persevere through a trial even as they willingly wait for God's timing. They may have the power to become angry or avenge themselves, but they instead choose to exhibit compassion. Proverbs 16:32 says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." A person who is able to control their temper and abide in patience is better than a mighty warrior. To help us understand this characteristic better, let's look at a few examples in the Bible.

1. **Abraham:** God promised Abraham that a nation would be born from his son. Despite the twenty-five-year wait before Isaac's birth, and the fact that he would never actually see this nation in person, Abraham was fully convinced that God would do what He had promised (Rom 4:18–21). He waited patiently for Isaac's birth, and for the fulfillment of God's promise.
2. **David:** David was probably ten to fifteen years old when he was anointed by prophet Samuel. Between the time he served Saul and his time in exile due to the threat to his life, David had to wait for nearly fifteen years before he became king (2 Sam 5:3). He waited patiently for God's timing, ignored any opportunities to kill Saul, and through his actions, became a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22).
3. **Job:** Job lost everything in a single day, yet he waited on God's restoration and understood that God was in control even in the midst of his suffering and affliction. We don't know how long it took for him to regain what he had lost, but the Bible says of him, "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" (Jas 5:11).
4. **Jeremiah:** Jeremiah began his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, and served through five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (626–586 B.C.). For more than forty years, he warned Judah to repent. None listened, but he patiently continued to call the nation to repentance throughout his entire time as a prophet.

The trials and the waiting that each man endured was God's way of successfully testing and shaping their characters. Let's read Psalm 103:8–12. When we see how patient God has been with us in repeatedly forgiving us when we sin, what right do we have to become impatient with anything or anyone? The things that drive us crazy seem like nothing compared to what God has to put up with every day! So, we should pray for the Spirit's patience. With His power, any trials or tests that we endure will shape our spiritual character, filling us with God's patience and making us more like Christ. Ultimately, God's patience refines our faith so that we can also display the same patience toward others, especially to those who are in need of His salvation.

B. Kindness

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph 4:32)

Kindness isn't simply a matter of being nice or getting along with others. True kindness according to the Bible is part of God's divine nature, and is produced by the Spirit. It is an active demonstration of love and care, and is a characteristic born only out of selflessness. We can see this in the example of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated kindness beyond what humans can achieve on their own. As humans, we tend to prioritize our own needs. Jesus, however, consistently placed the needs of others over His own.

If we examine the gospels, we can easily see that Jesus was kind to the wicked and ungrateful, and provided for the people's needs without expecting anything in return (Lk 6:35). He gave hope when He saw suffering, healed those in despair, and gave the greatest gift of freedom from death—all while knowing that these same people would reject Him and later crucify Him. This is kindness from the Spirit: selflessly acting to meet the needs of others.

Kindness in the Spirit

David wrote, “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings” (Ps 36:7). We have all experienced firsthand the kindness of God. It is out of His kindness that He meets all of our needs, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual. Although at times He may rebuke, correct, or discipline us, out of His kindness He still provides for us and cares for us. The Bible clearly explains that we should show the same kindness towards others:

- Rom 11:22 (NIV) – “Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”
- Col 3:12 – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering[.]”
- 2 Tim 2:24 (NIV) – “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.”

From these verses, we can see that kindness is a divine attribute of God. This is why we need the Spirit’s help in producing it. Let’s examine an example of kindness in the Spirit. Let’s read 2 Samuel 9:1–3.

David had vowed to look after Jonathan’s family members (1 Sam 20:15–16). It was common practice for new kings to exterminate all members of the previous ruler. This was to avoid leaving any possible descendants to revolt against the new king and reclaim the throne. Now, years later and long after Jonathan’s death, David proactively sought one of Saul’s descendants, not to remove any threat to his power, but to show the “kindness of God.”

Let’s read 1 Samuel 20:4–13. From his psalms, we know that David was a person who had felt the kindness of God in his life. This affected him so deeply that he felt compelled to show that same kindness to others around him. He showed this in his actions towards Mephibosheth, and in the most royal way possible; David not only restored Saul’s lands to Mephibosheth, but also extended to him the privilege of living at the royal palace and eating at the king’s table, as if he were David’s own son!

Today, we are like Mephibosheth. We are spiritually crippled because we were born into sin, until God saved us out of His kindness. We should ask for the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can extend this same kindness to those around us just as David did, especially to those who are not saved. Ask yourself: is there anyone I can show this kindness towards?

C. Goodness

“He is good; his love endures forever.” (2 Chr 7:3 NIV)

We often say something like “he’s a good man,” or “she did a good thing,” but what do you think “goodness” means? What does it mean to be “good”? (*Allow students to answer.*) The dictionary has many definitions of the word¹: *Of a favorable character or tendency; Suitable, fit; Agreeable, pleasant; Amusing, clever; Deserving of respect: honorable; Virtuous, right, commendable; Competent, skillful.*

Looking at this list, it is apparent that no one person can be all of these at one time! A husband may treat his family well, but argue with his co-workers. A daughter may be thoughtful and considerate towards her friends, but ignore her parents’ words entirely. In these cases, are they good people?

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “good,” accessed November 26th, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/good>.

Because there are so many meanings to goodness, it's easy to say that everyone has some sort of goodness within them. But God's goodness is much more specific than the way we understand it.

The Goodness of God

Let's turn to Psalm 34. Verse 8 says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good." God's goodness is something that we can see, touch, and feel. The psalm can be divided into the following sections: vv. 4–7, 8–10, 15–18, 19–22. For each section, with a partner or as a class, write down what particular action God takes that reveals His goodness. (*Teachers: If your class is large enough, divide the students into groups and assign each group a section.*)

- vv. 4–7: He will deliver us.
- vv. 8–10: He will provide for us.
- vv. 15–18: He will hear our prayers.
- vv. 19–22: He will redeem us.

God's goodness stems from His justice and His mercy, which can both be seen in His actions towards us. Jesus once said to a young man, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God" (Mt 19:17). God Himself is the source of goodness, and He is the only one who is truly good. Therefore, to understand goodness, we need to understand what makes God so good. Micah 6:8 says, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

The original Greek word used for "goodness" in Galatians 5:22–23 is *agathōsynē*. This word means "uprightness of heart and life." Therefore, to produce goodness in our lives means doing what is right in God's eyes. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong. This should show in our actions, such as actively helping the church or our community, or going the extra mile to pray for those who have mistreated you. It means standing up for what is right and having the courage to reach out to a brother or sister who is weak in their faith. It means telling the truth even when there may be repercussions. These are ways we can demonstrate the goodness of God.

God's goodness exceeds our imagination. No one can really claim to be "good" when compared to the almighty Lord, because He is perfect and fulfills every aspect of the word. But when we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, we can produce this same goodness. We only need to long for Him and ask God to fill us with Him! When we do, we will manifest this fruit in our lives through our actions by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God with the help of God's Spirit.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the characteristics of a person who is patient in the Spirit?** A person who is patient in the Spirit is a person who can endure pain or suffering without becoming angry. He or she is able to persevere through a trial. He or she may have the power to become angry or avenge themselves, but instead chooses to exhibit compassion.
- 2. How did Jesus demonstrate kindness?** He was kind to the wicked and ungrateful, and provided for the people's needs without expecting anything in return (Lk 6:35). He gave hope when He saw suffering, healed those in despair, and gave the greatest gift of freedom from death—all while knowing that these same people would reject Him and later crucify Him.
- 3. How did David extend kindness to Mephibosheth?** He restored all the land that belonged to him; he gave him the highest privilege of living at the royal palace: he would always eat at the king's table, just like one of the king's sons.

4. **How would you define the goodness of God?** It is something that we can see, touch, and feel, and is something that stems from His justice and His mercy.
5. **What does it mean to produce goodness in our lives?** It means doing what is right in God’s eyes. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong.

Life Application

Teachers: The below activity has been included as a printable worksheet for students on the last page of the teacher’s guide.

My Action Plan

After learning more about these three characteristics of the Spirit, how would you rate yourself for each? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), circle where you think you’re at on the scale, then explain to the class why you chose that number.

<i>(Have none at all.)</i>			Patience				<i>(Have a lot in my heart!)</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Kindness									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Goodness									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Whether we feel like we have a lot or none of these traits, we can always practice and improve upon them! Let’s go over each and see how we can act out each of them in our lives.

1. Patience

We learned that the essence of patience is putting others first in our actions, even if it means not getting upset with our loved ones, friends, or waiting patiently for God’s will during a trial. What obstacles in your life hinder you from doing this? We know that we would like to be more patient, but often can’t do it on our own. When we try, we are probably just bottling up how we really feel and putting up a front. This is why God promised us the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He can help us obtain this patience. However, there are steps we must take on our own to demonstrate that we want to pursue this fruit.

- a. Identify someone or something you are often impatient with.
- b. Reread the passages recording the patience of God (2 Pet 3:9 NIV; 2 Pet 3:15 NIV; Rom 12:12; Jas 5:7–8). If God can be patient with us even when we don’t deserve it by any standards, we can pray for His Spirit to fill us with His patience.
- c. Pray for God to help you change your attitude. Come up with and complete an action plan to help you do this. To help you think of one, finish the following sentence:
 “Next time I feel impatient about _____, I plan to _____.”

2. Kindness

In Jeremiah 9:24, the Lord says, “But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight.” Jesus Christ exemplified this kindness in His life and taught us that God delights in the kindness that we show to others, making it an important trait to develop (Mt 10:42).

We learned today that kindness is an active demonstration of selfless love and care. Let's read Matthew 25:34–40. From this passage, we can see that kindness is something that can be seen and heard. It means willingly and selflessly giving something up—such as our time, our effort, or material possessions—for someone else. So how do we grow in kindness? Take a look at the following steps:

- Ask God to open our eyes and hearts to see if someone is in need of kindness.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us empathize with those who are hurting or need help. Ask God to soften our hearts so that we can extend His gentleness and kindness to the one in need.
- Put forth an effort to make ourselves available to help this person, even if it's just setting aside some time every day to pray for him or her.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the wisdom to know of any further action we should take.

Now consider: Who can I show kindness to this week? Come up with a plan and share it with the class.

Goodness

From the original Greek definition, we can see that goodness is not simply acting with compassion. It means courageously doing what is right in God's eyes, even if there are consequences that we may face. But as humans, it is often difficult for us to know what is right in God's eyes. Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16–17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." To act with God's goodness requires that we dedicate time to studying God's word and deepening our relationship with Him (Rom 15:14). This will help us to understand how to act in difficult situations and learn to stand fast in our faith.

Have you or someone you know ever faced a difficult decision involving your faith? For example, maybe you have been encouraged to participate in bullying a classmate or asked to lie for a friend. At home, maybe you have noticed your family arriving at church late each week or noticed your sibling straying in their faith. Try discussing possible actions that you can take. If you can't remember any specific situation, try coming up with any plausible scenarios that may challenge your sense of what is good in God's eyes. What actions could you take that would help you remain upright in God's eyes?

Memory Verse

"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Romans 15:14)

Meaning

God desires for us to be filled with two things: the goodness of God, and the knowledge of His word. Having both of these affects our servitude for the better. They make us better equipped to admonish one another and build each other up in faith.

Conclusion

We all know that we should treat others with patience, kindness, and goodness. But we may find that time and time again, we turn a blind eye to other people or simply cannot muster up the strength or courage to care. We are weak, but with the help and encouragement of God's Spirit, our hearts will change into one that is willing to extend patience, kindness, and goodness to the people around us. Let us pray for the Spirit to move us so that we can become more like our Savior.

Lesson 4 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, what does God desire us to be filled with? Why?
The goodness of God, and the knowledge of His word. Having both affects our servitude for the better. They equip us to admonish one another and build each other up in faith.
2. "And be _____ to one another, _____, _____ one another, even as _____ in Christ _____ you." (Ephesians 4:32)
kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, God, forgave
3. Describe the patience of God in your own words.
See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section A: Patience.
4. How did David demonstrate kindness in the Spirit?
Despite it being standard practice for kings to eliminate the family line of previous rulers, David not only actively sought out Saul's remaining family members, but also treated Mephibosheth like royalty, as if he were David's own son.
5. What does it mean to produce goodness in our lives?
It means doing what is right in God's eyes, not our own. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong.
6. Is there someone you have been impatient with lately? What do you need to do in order to show more patience and kindness towards them?
Personal answers.
7. Who can you show kindness to this week? Come up with a plan, then record what you did below.
Personal answers.

Lesson 4 Life Application Worksheet

My Action Plan

After learning more about these three characteristics of the Spirit, how would you rate yourself for each? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), circle where you think you're at on the scale, then explain to the class why you chose that number.

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- a. Identify someone or something you are often impatient with.
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We learned today that kindness is an active demonstration of selfless love and care. Let's read Matthew 25:34–40. From this passage, we can see that kindness is something that can be seen and heard. It means willingly and selflessly giving something up—such as our time, our effort, or material possessions—for someone else. So how do we grow in kindness? Take a look at the following steps:

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- Put forth an effort to make ourselves available to help this person, even if it's just setting aside some time every day to pray for him or her.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the wisdom to know of any further action we should take.

Now consider: Who can I show kindness to this week? Come up with a plan and share it with the class.

3. Goodness

From the original Greek definition, we can see that goodness is not simply acting with compassion. It means courageously doing what is right in God's eyes, even if there are consequences that we may face. But as humans, it is often difficult for us to know what is right in God's eyes. Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16–17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." To act with God's goodness requires that we dedicate time to studying God's word and deepening our relationship with Him (Rom 15:14). This will help us to understand how to act in difficult situations and learn to stand fast in our faith.

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