

Rick Suraci - Patience Patience Patience

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The title of the talk, I just want to rephrase a little bit. Patience, Patience, Patience. Just remember that. Be patient. How many times have we been told that by others, to be patient, or expressed it to someone else, or lectured ourselves, just be patient.

When we say that, what do we mean? Usually we think of patience as simply waiting things out. You know, it's raining and you can't start the game until the rain stops. So be patient. That's the kind of patience we generally, typically think about.

While this is a true facet of patience, our Christian patience requires us to go much, much, much, much further than that. The Bible actually teaches us about three kinds of patients, and that's why the title says patience, patience, patience. What we will find in our consecrated walk is that we have to exercise all three of these kinds of patients, and there are many scriptures that tell us why. So we're going to touch on the first two very, very quickly.

The Merriam Webster dictionary actually shows us the various definitions of patience in its defining. It says patience. The first definition is bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint. Its second definition is manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain, and its third definition is not being hasty or impetuous.

So let's define New Testament patients by going from the most basic to the most challenging brands of patients. So the most basic kind of patience, the most basic kind is to be appropriate. It's to be not reactive. Think of parenting a small child. Be appropriate, be not reactive.

That's exactly what the strong's definition of the word is. The highest model we have of that kind of patience is God's patience. In James 3:17, it says, but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle. That's that word for patience. Easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.

So God's patience is the highest example of that most basic kind of patience being appropriate. Elders in our Ecclesias who lead the flock are to be patient, as opposed to being one who adds to trouble. In First Timothy 3, chapter 3, verse 3, it says, describing the character of an elder in the class, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy, not greedy, a filthy lucre, but patient, and then the next words give it away. Not a brawler, which means somebody who is peaceable, patient, appropriate.

It's being calm. Every disciple of Christ should have this kind of patience that can be easily and readily observed. You know, it's great to say, yeah, I've developed that patience but the key question is, can anybody else see it in me? Philippians 4, verses 4 to 7. Rejoice in the Lord always.

And again I say, rejoice. Let your gentle spirit. That's the word. Let your appropriateness be known. To whom?

To all men. Let your appropriateness be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing but everything. By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God.

And the peace of God which passes, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So, brethren, our evenness depends upon our continual resetting of

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what we allow our minds to dwell on. Be appropriate. So this most basic biblical definition of patience is to wait with calm intention. It's a necessary foundation for everything else that true Christian patience will require of us.

We're not going to talk about this kind of patience. Just wanted to introduce it to you. The second kind. The second approach to patience is the most common in the New Testament. It is a deep, sound and powerful endurance.

And this is what we almost always think about when we think of patience. We think of patient endurance, and that's what the word means. Cheerful, endurance, constancy. Jesus teaches us that this kind of patience is broad and absolutely necessary for discipleship.

But we're all familiar with what Jesus said in Luke 21:19. He said, in your patience, in your cheerful endurance, possess ye your souls in your capacity to hold up under that strain of whatever is coming to you. That's where your life is defined. So this is a really important part of patience. The verb form of patient of that word is a good example of that is in James 5, 11.

Behold, we count them happy, which endure. That's the word. You have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. So when you think of endurance, James talks to us and says, you remember Job, right? What did Job do?

He bore up under a tremendous weight of adversity. So this cheerful endurance is a very important aspect of patience. Now, patience being defined here is that determination to remain in a difficult position. Now, let's pause for a second. Incidentally, we're not talking about this kind of patience today, but this is just still an introduction.

Okay? But think about having determination to remain in a difficult position. Who wants to do that? The point is, if it's something you should be doing, that's Christian development. To be determined to remain in that difficult position, to cheerfully endure, and to have fortitude based upon Your ability to continually remind yourself your own deliberate purpose.

We remain under duress, and we can actually thrive under duress when we understand our own deliberate purpose. This patience is an extraordinary endurance that finds its courage in crystal clear mental pictures of its expectations. One more scripture on this, because we're not talking about it. The Hebrew Christians were sterling examples. This kind of endurance in Hebrews 10, 32, 36.

Here's what the apostle writes. He says, but remember the former days when after being enlightened, you endured. Okay, they stood up under tremendous duress. You endured a great conflict of sufferings partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Wow, that's cheerful. Endurance, this perseverance. The second level of patience is that waiting with calm intention while bearing a painful or trying burden. This kind of patience is only developed through the challenging experiences of life. You don't get this kind of patience in a package from Amazon on your front porch.

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It comes through development. It comes through having the experiences. That's why we have trials. One of the many reasons. The deeper our development of this perseverance, the more we become like Jesus.

We're not talking about this kind of patience, okay? We introduced the first two, and they are incredibly important, and the reason we spent a little bit of time on those first two is to realize that what we're going to be spending our time on is critical, but it has to be in the context of the rest. So we're keeping the rest there and saying, okay, we understand this. Now, what the two aspects of patients we've thus far discussed show us primarily how to manage things that come to us from the outside in.

That's what those first two kinds of patients are about. Dealing with an experience, dealing with a circumstance, dealing with something that has come to you. This third aspect of patience really focuses us on appropriately handling things that require restraint from the inside out. Big difference. Same general subject.

So we want to be careful. To understand this, let's look at Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22 and 23. Galatians 5, 22 and 23. This is the listing of the fruit of the Spirit, and I know many of you brethren can recite these just like this.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such things there is no law. So this fruitage of patience In Galatians, Chapter 5 is a newly developed discipline based on selfless love and spiritual things. This is a different kind of patience. This isn't the bearing up under the weight of a trial.

This isn't waiting for something to pass. This is different. This is the inside out. Patience. The word literally means.

And here's a good word for you, Longanimity. Well, we're going to skip over that. Use another word. But that's what it means. It means forbearance.

Okay? The word means forbearance, and it's used very specifically in the New Testament, and to me, what got my attention, to actually give this discourse is the fact that it's this kind of patience that's listed in the Fruit of the Spirit. I thought, well, wait a minute. I always think of the other kinds.

I need to pay attention to this. This is the kind of patience that. That is forbearance. What is forbearance? Let me give you an example of forbearance that some of you may be.

May relate to. Has anybody here ever had. You don't have to raise your hands. This is just hypothetical. Ever had a student loan?

Okay. You know, you go to college, you get student loans and all of that. Well, when Covid hit. What happened to student loan payments? They went into forbearance.

What does that mean? That means you still owed the money, but they froze it in time and said, we will not take what is legally ours from you for a period of time. Now, matter of fact, this month, those student loans that went into forbearance came out of forbearance, and now they said, okay, you now need to continue to pay us as though nothing happened. So this is two and a half, three year, whatever period of time was where the legality of collecting what was rightfully the loan company's money was put aside.

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There was a restraint. They didn't take what was rightfully theirs. That's what this word forbearance means. It's on a legal. That's in a legal perspective, but in a personal perspective, it's holding back what you may rightfully have an ability to have or do or say, because there's a higher purpose.

That's the kind of patience that we want to spend some time on, okay? And you know, it's. It's. There's. There's different forms of the word.

And just for your notes, It's Strong's number. 3115, 3116 and 3114 we've got, the noun is 15, 3116 is the adverb and 3114 is the verb. So we're going to look at this kind of patience for the rest of our time together and understand what does it mean, and remember the fruit of the Spirit. What God's spirit in you develops is love, agape, love first joy, peace and forbearance.

That's the kind of patience that's part of the fruit of the Spirit. Let's look at forbearance in action. Let's look at the parable of the ungrateful servant, and we're just going to drop in on this very quickly. Matthew 18 just, we're going to look at verses 26 to 27.

We all, we're all familiar with the parable. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, remember, this is the slave that owed so much, and the master was saying, okay, you have to pay me, and here's his reaction. He says, please, please have patience, have forbearance.

Just, just if you can just wait, I will repay you everything, and the Lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him his debt. So now he wasn't asking for forgiveness of debt, he was asking for extra time. He was asking for that which he owed to not have to be paid quite yet that's what he begged for. He was given much more than that.

So patience, long suffering is willing to be non reactive and appropriate. It also tells us to be willing to wait for a situation to completely unfold, to be disciplined in holding back. This patience gives the benefit of the doubt. It can only truly be displayed through a humble spirit. So the first big lesson is if you're going to learn forbearance, you have to have humility.

Because the two don't work unless they are together. Forbearance can't work in a Christian setting without humility. God's forbearance is our primary example in Romans 1. Romans chapter 1 was all about the blatant idolatry and sensuality of the pagan world around them. In Romans 2, Paul urged the Christians to, with long enduring temper, refrain from improper judgments.

So we're going to touch on just a few verses In Romans chapter 2. Romans 2, verses 1, 2 and 4. Romans 2, verses 1, two and four. Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For in that which you judge another you condemn yourself.

For you who judge practice the same things That's a pretty strong statement, and we know that God's judgment, that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. So we've got this example of the looking to the outside and saying, oh, those things are bad, and Paul is saying, be careful, don't be pointing fingers because you both, you're all human. It's too easy to judge.

That's what the apostle is saying in those verses in 1 and 2. What we're being told here is to hold back. Maybe you have a right to say or do something as a result of what you've seen. But we're being told to hold back because. Because God, in his spiritual wisdom, he holds back.

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Verse 4. Or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and tolerance and patience? Forbearance. This is the forbearance of God. Not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance.

Let's think about this. God Almighty, the creator of all things, is self-restraining. He holds back. He forbears his spirit within us, helps us rise above our fleshly desires and deeds, along with a long-tempered approach to best manage life's inconsistencies. Our forbearance also has to do with waiting for the unfolding of God's plans and prophecies.

Such waiting has to be with a steady heart and a steady mind. James 5, 7, 11 and this word for forbearance or patience comes three times in these words. So every time you hear patience, it's the word for forbearance. Therefore, be patient. Have forbearance, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

Then, then James gives an example. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it being forbearing until it gets, it gets the early and latter rains. So let's pause there for a second. The farmer can't act too soon now. He may say, I really want to get going.

I want to get my hands in that dirt. I want to. I want to start the next phase. But he waits because he has to let things unfold appropriately. So the farmer has to hold himself back.

That's what James is saying. Verse 8. You too be patient. You too have forbearance. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. Why do you bother judging one another when our Judge is here? You shouldn't be doing that. Hold back.

Restrain yourselves. Waiting for God's plan to unfold can make us impatient, and sometimes we can get impatient with one another. If we have this lack of forbearance between us, let's take it as a warning sign. Again, the prophets are an example.

Let's go back and still in James chapter 5. Now we're going to verse 10 as an example. Brethren of the suffering and patience and forbearance. Take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured.

Now this is that other word for patience, that endurance under great weight. So you see the two of them now working together. Together. Okay, so let me just read verse 10 again as an example. Brethren, suffering of suffering and forbearance.

Take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured who, who bore up that great weight. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, and the Lord is full of compassion and merciful. So here James shows us that the forbearance and the endurance of the prophets worked together.

Forbearance and endurance absolutely go hand in hand. How many times did a prophet go and preach to the people and the people didn't heed it. They walk away and they just. It's like this is the word of the Lord. Aren't you listening?

They had to hold back and do it in God's own way. Forbearance is holding back from that which you can rightfully claim. Holding back from judgment of those around us in a godly way. Holding

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back our weariness in waiting for God's plan to flourish. The Old Testament prophets were strong examples in all of this.

You know, just a side note, and I know that you're all aware of what happened yesterday and the Hamas attacks upon Israel and this setup, this pre planned terrorist setup to try to take Israel down and out and who knows what's going to happen there, and we look at this and we say, how long, O Lord, how long? So you look at those things and we don't understand. It seems like it takes forever and we sometimes want to step out of line. But forbearance says wait, wait for the power and plan of God to unfold in its own way.

Forbearance is required in every aspect of our discipleship. So let's dig a little deeper. Now there are three times in the New Testament where the word for forbearance is used in conjunction with, with another very specific word. This combination of words deepens the meaning of Christian forbearance. Okay, so we're getting a sense of it.

Now we want to go even deeper. So I'm going to define this other word. First we're going to give a couple of examples and we're going to go to the three times that the two are used together. So this other word essentially means to stand firm. It's Strong's number 430.

And the first example of holding oneself up in a firm way of standing firm is Jesus after the Mount of Transfiguration. Now, a man begged for Jesus to heal his son who was demon possessed, and no one could else could cast out this demon, and so here's where this word appears. Luke, chapter 9, verses 41 to 43. Again, this is just an example of how the word is used.

Jesus answered and said, you unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? The word for put is this word for standing firm or standing up. Then Jesus says, bring your son here, and in verse 42, Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his Father, and they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

What was Jesus saying? How long shall I put up with you? This was a message of standing firm. Firm. We need to learn to stand firm as follower of Christ when we see unfaithfulness surrounding us in our world.

That's what Jesus saw. Jesus saw a massive amount of unfaithfulness. How long do I stand in this context? And of course the answer is as long as is necessary according to the will of the Father. But it's a message to stand firm even if the things around you are not.

The next example of this particular word for standing firm is the apostle Paul encouraging the Thessalonians. This is in second Thessalonians, chapter one. I'm sorry, chapter one. We're going to pick up with the last latter part of verse three and read verse four. Your faith is greatly enlarged, and love of each of one of you toward one another grows ever greater.

Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance. There's that perseverance bearing up under the weight of a trial and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure, in which you stand firm. There's a standing that's being described here. Stand firm as a follower of Christ when faced with persecution and afflictions. So this word, we're trying to get it so we understand how it's used scripturally, so that when we look at how the two words are used together, it would make more sense for us.

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Our third example of this particular word is the Apostle Paul urging the Hebrew Christians to stand firmly in their faith in light of needing the book of Hebrews as a guide for spiritual growth. Because we know Hebrew Christians were so stuck on the law that they had a hard time replacing Jesus into the center of their lives because the law was there. Laws of physics say two objects can't occupy the same space. Hebrews is written to push the law aside so Jesus could occupy the appropriate place in their hearts and minds. They needed that guidance.

And so in Hebrews, chapter 13, verses 20 to 22. Just going to start with just the first part of verse 20, then go to 21. Now, the God of peace equip you in every good thing to do his will. But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly, Bear. Stand firm with the message of standing firm here is, as a follower of Christ, when our faith needs instruction and encouragement, we need to stand firm in the receiving of that instruction, of that encouragement, of that guidance, of that direction.

Stand firm with it. So we've got this standing firm when the things around us are not firm, when we're faced with persecutions and afflictions, and when we ourselves need to be instructed. So we've applied this standing firm context in those three areas. Now let's examine standing in relation to forbearance. How do the two fit together?

Paul had just told the Ephesians how deeply he had prayed for them in his imprisonment while they were dealing with some core belief issues challenging Jewish and Gentile Christian fellowship. So in Ephesus, there were issues. There was a little bit of a sectarianism going on there that shouldn't have been. Jewish Christians were leaning one way, Gentile Christians were leaning another way, and Paul is saying, this is not appropriate.

We should all be leaning into the center together. In Ephesians 4, 1-6, we're going to see this standing firm with this forbearance. So Ephesians 4, verse 1. Therefore, I, prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you have called, which you have. To which you have been called.

I'm sorry. Walk like a disciple of Christ walks. That's his first message here. Then in verse two, with all humility and gentleness, with forbearance, patience, showing tolerance, standing firm with forbearance, standing firm, showing tolerance for one another in love. What kind of love is that?

That's agape love. Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, in forbearance, standing firm with selfless love. This is how you overcome the difficulty of this group going this way and that group going that way. Then he goes on, in verse four, there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called, and one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in all.

So the first lesson of putting these two words together is to forbear, have self restraint and stand firm in Christ with. With the brotherhood, hold yourself back. How many times have you been in a circumstance where you just wanted to tell somebody something and maybe you had a right to do it, but deep down you knew it would be better if you didn't? That's forbearance. That is, it's forbearance if you didn't say it.

Okay, we need to understand how important this kind of patience is. Forbearance is a divining characteristic of discipleship and also divining characteristic of selfless love. Now remember, it was in the fruit of the Spirit, right? Love, joy, peace, forbearance. Well, you know where else this word appears in one of those big lists that's so incredibly important in the Scriptures?

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First Corinthians, chapter 13. That's the love chapter, right? Let's take a look. First Corinthians 13, verse 3 to 7. If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

And then the apostle says, let me explain this to you. Love is patience, Love is forbearing. That's the word. Love is full of self restraint, holding myself back. That's so that's how he starts to define agape love.

That's how important this is to us. Love is patient. Love is kind. It's not jealous, it does not brag, it's not arrogant, it doesn't act unbecomingly, it's not doesn't seek its own, it's not provoked, it doesn't take into account a wrong suffered. It doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but it rejoices with truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. How did it start? Love is forbearing. It is from the inside out, self restrained. Forbear.

Restrain yourself from natural reactions and responses and instead choose to stand firm in Christ because He taught us how to Stand firm in love to selflessly love is to first and foremost commit to restraint as we put others first, even if they may view our Christianity a little bit differently.

Selfless love is a primary driving force as we apply the patience of self restraint and standing firm for Christ regarding issues of Christian interpretation. Standing firm for Christ holding back. See, when I hold brother Rick back, I am much better at standing firm for Christ when I let brother Rick lead. Not so good a picture. Forbearance applied in love is required when dealing with whatever issues we may have within the body of Christ.

If properly exercised, okay, if properly exercised, we'll stand firm in Christ and not ourselves. Just what we were just saying. Colossians 3, 12, 13. So as those who have been chosen by God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Forbearance bearing, Standing firm.

Those two words again. Forbearance. Bearing with one another and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forbear and stand with. That's the key.

I can stand with you more fully, more completely if I hold me back. That's what this is teaching us. When we have complaints about or issues with each other, we need forbearance. We need compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness so we can pray properly, forbear, and therefore stand firm in Christ as we stand with those of the brotherhood with whom we may have challenges. Now, having said this, I am not at all intimating that you don't talk about the problems.

On the contrary, this is how you are able to approach talking about the problems. This is how you're able to reason through them by holding yourselves back. That's what the Scriptures are telling us as we stand firm in Christ. This opens the door for even higher basis for fellowship. An even higher basis for fellowship.

Let's keep it keep on with Colossians chapter 3. Now let's go to verses 14 to 17. Beyond all these things, put on love agape. Selfless love. See how this self restraint and selfless love are just like tied in together.

It really makes incredible, incredible sense. Beyond all these things, put on selfless love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were

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called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom and teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

You see the unity, the beauty of this being together after the forbearance and the staining is applied. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God our Father. Forbear and stand firm in Christ, brethren. This leads to strong and mutually uplifting fellowship in Christ. Did you notice how the forbearance is always the part that comes first?

There's a reason for that because it takes internal personal effort, and you know what? Nobody can tell if you're forbearing but you, and you know, don't you? You know when you let it loose and when you.

You hold back and use restraint. The Scriptures are telling us, be careful with this. Forbearance is required for those in positions of spiritual responsibility and leadership. Oh yeah, it's required for all of the brotherhood, but it's especially required this combination for those in positions of spiritual responsibility. Second Timothy, chapter four, verses one and two.

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is the judge of the living and the dead, and by his appearing in his kingdom. He's talking to Timothy. Preach the word, Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great forbearance and instruction. See this self restraint, brethren, is a must.

Leadership within the body of Christ is only about the word of God and never about personal feelings or personal agenda. Second Timothy, chapter four. Now let's go to verses three to four. For the time will come when they will not endure. They will not stand firm.

So you see again, forbearance and standing firm show up in the same context. They will not endure sound doctrine, but be wanting to have their ears tickled. They will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. Brethren, we've seen that through the gospel age, haven't we? It's called nominalism.

It's called being in Christ in name only and not adhering to what Christ actually taught. In conjunction with the entire Bible. Forbear and stand firm in Christ. This approach. Two more minutes, brother.

He's looking at me. Be patient. Restrain yourself a little bit and we'll get through this.

Forbear and stand firm in Christ. This approach to shepherding leads the leaders to be impervious to outside influences and maintain a pure focus on the truth of the Gospel. Rather unfortunately, we have many examples of this forbearance in the Old Testament. These are worthy studies. The Hebrew Christians were exhorted to have the forbearance of the prophets in their experiences.

And I'll just read in the interest of time. Hebrews 6, verse 11. We desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end. So you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and forbearance, inherited the promises. How did they inherit the promises?

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They had faith, but what else did they do? They restrained themselves so that God's will, God's way, God's spirit, God's plan, God's providence, God's wisdom could be in that place. Brethren, it's such a key if we take ourselves out so that the space is made, so God's direction can be with us. How often did the prophets have to wait for God's instruction? When all seemed lost or chaotic, how often did they have to wait?

Our self restraint is one of the most important qualities that we should develop as Christians and our final scripture. First Thessalonians 5, 14, 22 we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak. Be patient, forbear with everyone, forbearance with everyone. Then he goes on to show what forbearance looks like. See that no one repays another evil for evil.

But always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice, always, pray without ceasing in everything. Give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances.

Be examples of everything. Carefully holding fast to that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Hold yourself back. So brethren, summing this up, patience can mean simply waiting with intention, as well as waiting with intention while you are heavily burdened.

But it also means forbearance, the quality of self restraint. For disciples, this quality comes into play when we want or have a right to something, or when our emotions are getting the best of us. Mastering this kind of patience, this forbearance is difficult, but it's a necessary trait of every disciple of Christ. Remember the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, forbearance.

Remember when the apostle defined love, he said, love is first and foremost forbearance. Let us forbear.