



BEING LIKE JESUS? There's a Longsuffering Spirit to Share

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13).

Once again, Jesus becomes our example of righteousness through the most difficult of challenges. We are to adopt His nature by kindly and gently tolerating others, even with the ultimate goal of forgiving them for some wrongdoing directed at us. Not an easy thing to do! However, this is "being like Jesus." Do we really want to be like Jesus?

This spirit of suffering wrong for righteousness' sake manifests itself through a longsuffering spirit. Longsuffering is an interesting word because to fulfill it, we must "suffer long" with others who might not seem worthy to receive it. But isn't that the point? If someone were worthy, they wouldn't need our extended patience! So, a spirit of longsuffering is that of being gentle, unassuming, humble, mild, patient, peaceful, tolerant, and unpretentious. Ultimately as presented in our Scripture text, it is that of forbearing and forgiving.



Longsuffering Spirit through Forgiveness

The concept of being longsuffering involves having a forgiving nature and being able to forgive those who have wronged us, just as Christ forgave us. This means letting go of any hurt, anger, or resentment caused by the actions, beliefs, or words of others. Christ suffered greatly but still forgave those who wronged Him, and as followers of Christ, we, too, must strive to emulate this behavior. It is not always easy, especially when we feel like we have been unjustly treated. But through the power of the Holy Spirit and by following the example set by Christ, we can learn to live a life characterized by forgiveness. By doing so, we honor Christ and his teachings and bring peace and harmony to our own lives and relationships with others.

We all experience being wronged at some point, whether it be through someone's actions, words, or beliefs. It can be hurtful and difficult to overcome, and it is natural to feel angry and

resentful towards the person who wronged us. However, it is essential to remember that even Christ, who was sinless and innocent, was wronged in the most profound and unjust way possible. He was betrayed, arrested, and crucified, yet He still chose to forgive those who wronged him. Even though we, too, have been wronged, we can also find the strength and inspiration to let go of our anger and resentment. This does not mean we condone the wrong that was done, but rather, we choose to release it and move forward in a spirit of forgiveness and love, just as Christ did.

Longsuffering Spirit through Endurance

Next, a longsuffering spirit reveals itself through endurance. Peter says this, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:” (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Endurance, in this sense, is not merely putting up with something. It’s a matter of patiently and humbly waiting even in light of wrongdoing. It is momentarily experiencing the wrong for the better good that might be realized for Christ and others through our suffering. Peter speaks about Christ having no deception in His words or demeanor. What He said and did was real, coming from a holy nature manifesting itself in real moments of honorableness concerning others. Jesus knew how to accept the hostilities hurled at Him and how not to respond similarly. Christ refused to react with bitterness. Instead, Jesus committed these situations to the Father, who will judge all things properly and bring them to their proper end. In other words, there is no need to seek self-justification when all of this is handled at the judgment.

Longsuffering Spirit through Self-Sacrifice

The spirit of longsuffering is characterized by self-sacrifice, as demonstrated by the ultimate act of love and forgiveness shown by Christ. Peter speaks of Christ, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24a). This statement expresses the extent to which Christ’s sacrifice went: even to those who scorned Him. Jesus personally paid the ultimate and eternal price for the very ones who hated Him. Yet, this self-sacrifice shows the depth of love and forgiveness that is our example.

As followers of Christ, we are called to embody this same spirit of personal surrender, and not just about forgiving others, but in all areas of our lives. It means putting others before ourselves, even when it requires a personal wound. It involves choosing to love and serve others, even when uncomfortable or difficult. This spirit of longsuffering is not just about having a forgiving heart but about being like Jesus! Do you really want to be like Jesus?



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