

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Psalm.103:8-14 “The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

Quote: Romans 2:4-5 “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and *longsuffering*, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

Often in the battle with my flesh I am compelled to thank God for His long-suffering. Like the ebb and flow of ocean waves it seems that I am dragged away from the “shore” of unhindered fellowship with God by sins that threaten to drag me under, only to be thrust shoreward once again as God faithfully forgives me of all confessed unrighteousness. It is this on-going cycle of grace and mercy on God’s part towards me in my weaknesses, “oh wretched man that I am,”¹ that causes me to marvel with deep thanksgiving at His longsuffering.

“The patience of God is that Excellency which causes Him to sustain great injuries without immediately avenging Himself. He has a power of patience as well as a power of justice. Thus the Hebrew word for the Divine longsuffering is (often) rendered ‘slow to anger.’”² Israel often tested the longsuffering of God with the most grievous offenses to His holiness, grace, goodness and mercy. As part of their worship, those involved in the rebuilding of Jerusalem recalled the longsuffering of God when Israel rebelled during the Exodus. “But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed Your commandments. They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they

appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, *slow to anger*, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them. Even when they made a molded calf for themselves, and said, ‘This is your god that brought you up out of Egypt,’ and worked great provocations. Yet in Your *manifold mercies* You did not forsake them in the wilderness....”³

Like the colors of a rainbow that are each a critical part of the whole, the longsuffering of God complements all of His other attributes as part of His essential and perfect glory. Responding to the anticipated objections of man to the sovereignty of God, Paul wrote, “What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, *endured with much longsuffering* the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”⁴

This same God, Who by His grace has saved sinners who struggle daily with their flesh, expects those with whom He shows undeserved patience to do the same with those who have offended them. To be longsuffering is to imitate God. In the context of exercising Christian liberty, Paul wrote, “Now may *the God of patience and comfort* grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵ Recalling his days as a “blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man,” Paul wrote, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, *that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering*, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”⁶ May we, too, see ourselves as the chief of sinners and praise God for His gracious longsuffering as we are patient with those who offend us!

God is Long-Suffering!

1 Romans 7:24 2 A.W. Pink 3 Nehemiah 9:16-18 4 Romans 9:22-24 5 Romans 15:5-6 6 I Timothy 1:15-16