

# The Virtue of Patience

Patience

December 26, 2021

I. Over the past two years, we have experienced changes in how we live and work, limitations on our movement within the city and travel outside the city, and restrictions that have effected relationships, family gatherings, church life, and the freedom to do as we please. In all of this, simple civility has lost ground and impatience has gained ground. And so on this last Sunday of 2021, I want to talk about patience as a reminder of what we can be and as God's people ought to be – in spite of the circumstances.

A. Four scriptures related to patience

1. **1 Corinthians 13:4** . . . Love is patient, love is kind . . .
2. **Colossians 3:12-13** . . . So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
3. **Psalms 37:7-9** . . . Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. [8] Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. [9] For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.
4. **James 1:19-20** . . . This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not achieve (*succeed in accomplishing*) the righteousness of God.

B. Prayer

II. Impatience and patience

A. We read in **1 Corinthians 13:4**, that love is patient, and love is kind. These two virtues, patience and kindness, go hand in hand. And I say this because impatience often abandons kindness for some other, more motivating response that we hope will have a better chance of getting what we want **when** we want it, or at least sooner than we'd otherwise get it if we continued to be patient.

1. And of course, in abandoning kindness, we also abandon love.
2. And in abandoning love, the only responses left fall within the sphere of selfishness, which naturally leads to being unkind to those around us when we give way to impatience.

3. **Psalm 37:8** gives some examples of unloving, unkind behavior driven by impatience when it says, “Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evil doing.”
    - a. In other words, impatience breeds the kind of attitudes, words, and deeds that fit the definitions of anger, wrath, and fretting.
    - b. And though impatience isn’t confined to these three evils, we can easily identify with these three manifestations of impatience, and that makes it easy for us to see the evil side of impatience.
    - c. Sadly, too many accept impatience as a normal response to certain situations. Yet once we do that, we not only accept, and even justify abandoning love and kindness when impatient, we become insensitive to how our impatience affects those around us and our relationship with them.
  4. What I am wanting you to see is that impatience not only increases selfishness and unkindness in our world, it damages relationships and corrodes our character.
    - a. Now you may be wondering how impatience corrodes your character.
    - b. It goes like this – when you resort to selfish, unkind responses when impatient, you feed the selfishness that is within you so that you become even more prone to abandon love and kindness the next time you become impatient.
  5. However, the opposite is also true. The more we choose patience so as to remain loving and kind, the more we are prone to choose patience, love, and kindness the next time our patience is tested.
- B. There is no question but that at first, patience is hard while impatience is easy. And impatience gets reinforced as a reasonable option when it gets you what you want when you want it.
1. So how do we feed patience and combat impatience? How do we become godly Christians in this area when it might mean being taken advantage of, having to wait for what is rightfully yours, having to do without what you should already have, watching others move ahead while you get left behind, serving instead of being served, and watching the ungodly benefit from their ungodliness while you suffer for your righteousness?
  2. The path to patience is made straight and reasonable when we believe that God is our provider and protector; that it is God who causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and who live according to His will (**Romans 8:28**); that every good thing given

and every perfect gift comes from above (**James 1:17**); and that it is God who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory (**Philippians 4:19**).

3. Or as David said in **Psalm 37:7&9**, “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him . . . For those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.”
  - a. What David is saying here is that resting in the Lord and waiting patiently for Him to act on your behalf is the path to patience.
  - b. However, resting and waiting patiently requires trust – trust that God is good and that He will take care of you **even** when you are being taken advantage of, or having to wait for what is rightfully yours, or having to do without what you should already have, or having to watch others move ahead while you get left behind, or having to serve instead of being served, or having to watch the ungodly benefit from their ungodliness while you suffer for your righteousness.
4. Admittedly, this is the hard part – from the human, self-interested, I want what I want when I want it perspective.
  - a. However, from a godly, eternal perspective, and from the perspective of love, and from the perspective of being a loyal member of God’s kingdom, and from the perspective of putting good into our world, and from the perspective of loving our neighbor as ourselves – waiting on the Lord becomes easier and easier the more you do it.
  - b. The reality is, patience is an outgrowth of resting in the LORD and waiting patiently for Him to bring about the greatest good possible – no matter how long it takes.
5. As David said in **Psalm 37:9**, “Those who wait for the LORD will inherit the land.”
  - a. To inherit anything you have to be alive, and the person who has the items you are inheriting has to die. This two person example is a powerful picture of reality under God’s care and protection.
  - b. Those who took advantage of us, who made us wait for what was rightfully ours, who made us do without what we should already have, who moved ahead while we got left behind, who made us serve them when we should have been the ones served, and who benefitted from their ungodliness while we suffered for our righteousness, who frustrated and irritated us day after day – **they will die** but **we will still be alive** to inherit all that they left behind.

- c. This is God's justice, God's protection, God's response to their evil behavior and our resting in Him and patiently waiting for Him to act on our behalf.
- C. This brings us to **Colossians 3:12-13** – which we read at the beginning. This scripture gives us directions concerning what we need to intentionally do in order to gain the trust in God required to build patience and learn to wait patiently on Him.
1. **Colossians 3:12-13** . . . So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
  2. **(Vs 12a)** So, as those who have been chosen of God (*This is for believers, for it is within believers that God works in these ways.*), holy and beloved,
  3. **(Vs 12b) put on** (*This is the intentional part – God gives us the responsibility to PUT ON those virtues and character qualities that change us from untrusting, impatient, self-centered, unkind people into godly Christians who are known for our patience. But being responsible and carrying out our responsibility are two different things – which is why I say we must act intentionally to carry out this responsibility.*)
  4. **(Vs 12c)** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (*Notice, patience is at the end of that list – most probably because the other qualities are essential to even wanting to be patient and wanting to add good to the world rather than more disappointment, hurt, and sin – in spite of the cost to us.*);
  5. **(Vs 13)** bearing with (*be patient with*) one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (*These are the practical expressions of patience in a relationship where the other party repeatedly fails us or hurts us or disappoints us or frustrates us. And though this can be hard – especially from the human perspective, it is possible with God's help and work within us.*)
  6. Therefore, God's word says this in **Romans 12:21**, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
- D. Now you may be thinking that I've oversimplified this whole matter and implied what is impossible, or at least really hard, is possible.

1. We read in **Proverbs 16:32**, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”
  2. Solomon’s point is that it takes more preparation, more determination, more perseverance, and more power to control impatience and its manifestations than to capture a well fortified, well defended city.
  3. And why is the one so much harder than the other? Because conquering a city only requires defeating and subduing that which is outside yourself, while conquering impatience requires defeating and subduing that which is within – and in this life you will face no stronger or more formidable or more stubborn opponent than yourself.
  4. But don’t despair, what is impossible with humans is possible with God. He has the power you need to change and grow and trust and love and wait patiently.
- E. If you are looking for further motivation to conquer impatience, consider this – **impatience damages reputations**, and I am specifically speaking of your reputation and my reputation. The reality is, impatience damages your reputation, while patience builds it and solidifies it. Therefore, if not for God’s sake and the sake of those nearest and dearest to you, work at being patient for the sake of your own reputation.

### III. Conclusion

- A. I want to conclude by reminding you that patience is one of God’s character qualities (**Romans 2:4**), that it is a fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**), that it is a manifestation of love (**1 Corinthians 13:4**), and a manifestation of faith in God’s care, provision, protection, and justice (**Psalms 37**), and patience is a manifestation of Christ-likeness (**Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-13; 1 Peter 2:18-20**).
- B. Therefore, when faced with a situation that tries your patience, I urge you to remember these words from **2 Thessalonians 3:13**, “Do not grow weary of doing good” and **Hebrews 12:3**, “Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”