

# CHAPTER 26

## Patience

### KEY IDEA

I am slow to anger and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### KEY VERSE

*Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*  
-Proverbs 14:29

BEGIN BY RECITING THE KEY VERSE AND THE KEY IDEA TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

### LESSON

#### INTRODUCTION

*Have you heard the statement, "Patience is a virtue"? What do people think of when they hear this statement?*

---

---

---

"Patience is a virtue." We're all familiar with that cliché, and many of us know that patience is listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 among the fruit of the Spirit.

>So there's no disputing that the Christian ought to be patient.

*Could you define patience if you were asked?*

---

---

---

*And, to make things more tricky, could you do so without simply citing examples of patience?*

---

---

---

A basic definition of patience as "waiting without complaint."

**Isn't it interesting that when we talk about patience today, we often refer to *impatience*? We say things like, "You are trying my patience." Or, "My patience is wearing thin." Or, "I'm just about out of patience with you." So much that has to do with our use of the word *patience* actually refers to our lack of it! --BANDY FRAZEE**

### WHY PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE?

When defined as "waiting without complaint," patience might seem to be a morally insignificant trait. What's so virtuous about not complaining?

> In itself, not complaining carries no particular virtue.

> Something else must be required to make one's lack of complaint virtuous. That something is *discomfort*.

< It's because a circumstance is uncomfortable for someone that we find refusal to complain remarkable and thus regard it as patience.

> So maybe a better definition would be, "to be patient is to endure discomfort without complaint."

Patience seems to utilize other virtues such as, self-control, humility, and generosity.

> It may be a combination of other virtues. One might say that patience is a virtue because it exercises several other virtues.



### THE VARIETIES OF PATIENCE

There are different contexts in which patience is demonstrated.

> One way to distinguish types of patience is based upon the nature of the discomfort involved. There seems to be three distinctions in regard to the varieties of patience.

< First is the patience needed when facing a nuisance of some kind.

^ A person or a set of circumstances irritates you, and you'd love to complain about it, but you hold your tongue, knowing that voicing your complaint would be petty or even make the problem worse.

< A second type of patience is called for when facing boredom.

^ Those who fall into a rut at work or at home often experience discomfort over the uneventful routine. Those who endure the plague of drab routine without complaint exhibit the virtue of patience.

< A third type of patience is the most serious and significant. It is the patience required when one suffers in some way, either physically or psychologically.

^ Whether you bear the burden directly or indirectly, the challenge is to endure that discomfort.

^ This doesn't mean you shouldn't call out to God in your distress. Scripture, in fact, advises us to do this.

} It's appropriate because the degree of discomfort in some situations warrants complaint.

What is a complaint? And which complaints are worthy?

> To complain is to make known an irritation or frustration about some matter.

< Usually we complain by speaking directly about the circumstance that bothers us, but this doesn't necessarily mean that it's always voiced out loud.

^ We also complain in nonverbal ways: a sigh, a huff, a shake of the head, or a roll of the eyes.

> Which complaints, then, are worthy?

< Raising objections about conditions that are clearly unjust or impractical and need to be changed.

} But grumbling over things that are merely annoying or goes against our wishes, is petty.

} Complaining about things that cannot be changed doesn't qualify as a legitimate protest.

< A worthy complaint is one that is neither petty nor pointless.

Complaint to God is inappropriate only when its cause is insignificant.

> Major physical and psychological afflictions are significant, so one's patiently enduring them may actually involve complaint.

< Complaining to God in prayer in such cases is not vicious but virtuous.

^ It is a useful complaint to someone who is sovereign and therefore in control of whatever concerns us.

^ The Psalms feature several examples of godly complaints. (See: Psalm 10:1; 44:24; 142:2; 88:15-18.)

There are two categories of patience that can be distinguished based upon the person (or persons) with whom we must be patient.

> Sometimes patience is human-directed.

> Sometimes patience is God-directed.

< In every Christian's life comes a time when they must wait upon God.

^ In these cases, we must be patient with God.

### WHY PATIENCE IS SO DIFFICULT

What is more difficult, exercising patience with God or other human beings? Both can be tremendous challenges, and it seems that none of us have perfected the art of patience. We even have difficulty being patient with ourselves.

> First, why is patience with other people so difficult?

< There is a psychological explanation called "egocentric predicament." It is the natural human condition of being immediately aware only of one's own thoughts and feelings.

< A second reason why patience is such a challenge is that none of us struggle with precisely the same temptations as do other people. Nor are our particular strengths and weaknesses the same as those of others.

< We do not know what it is like to have others' individual weaknesses.

^ Things we have no trouble controlling, others may have difficulty controlling.

^ We do not know how hard others work to have control over certain areas of their lives.

^ The result is the temptation to become impatient with them.

> Why is patience toward God so difficult?

< The explanation boils down to, again, our tendency to see things only from our own point of view.

< Other reasons may figure in to the difficulty of waiting upon God.

^ Patience with God involves faith. To exercise faith is to surrender final control of one's life.

< Patience with God is also a challenge because sometimes it's not at all clear whether it *is* God we're waiting for or whether we should even wait on him at all. Sometimes it's simply unclear whether God wants us to wait or take another course of action.

< Finally, there's no guarantee that God will act to satisfy our desires.

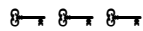
^ Most situations that regard our patience aren't in regard to specific promises of God.

^ Although he has told us he will meet all our needs, he hasn't guaranteed that all of our desires will be satisfied.

### HOW PATIENCE IS DEVELOPED

It's been said that nothing teaches like experience. To some degree this is true of the virtues.

- > Pain and suffering teach us endurance and empathy.
- > The experience of mercy and forgiveness inclines us to be more merciful and forgiving.
- > We gain moral maturity each day because each day brings some difficulty that we must overcome.



### **GOD IS PATIENT WITH US**

*But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Psalm 86:15*

God is patient, we are not. We are learning patience. God is patience. We are developing patience. God is displaying his.

*God loved the people of Israel and had a wonderful plan for them. The Israelites, on the other hand, struggled to trust God even after he proved himself to them over and over in mighty ways.*

*The Israelites had spent four hundred long years in Egypt, but now the land God had promised to Abraham for his descendants was ready. But the people had to step forward in faith. God would accomplish the rest. In the book of Exodus, we read how God through Moses led the people out of Egypt, and how God even parted the Red Sea.*

*In the book of Numbers, the people are poised to enter the promised land. They send twelve spies into the land to scope out the situation. Upon their return, the spies report: the size and strength of the enemy is great. Except for Joshua and Caleb, all the spies give in to their fear and say “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” After the report is given to the people they make their decision. They would rather go back to Egypt and subject themselves to slavery than trust God to lay hold of a life of freedom. (See Numbers 14:1-23, 30-33, pgs. 407-409 in BELIEVE)*

*Although God didn’t wipe out the rebellious Israelites as they deserved, he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years — one year for each of the forty days the spies explored the land. Nevertheless, God patiently demonstrated his commitment to his covenant with Israel and established the next generation in the promised land.*

*God’s patience extends beyond the Israelites to all people. God is just. In Peter’s second letter he tells his readers about “the day of the Lord” when Christ will return and bring to consummation all things. This will be the day of judgment for unbelievers but the day of redemption for believers. God demonstrates his patience towards all humanity by delaying this ultimate and final judgment to give more people an opportunity to reach out and take hold of his forgiveness.*

### **FROM 2 Peter 3:1-18**

*<sup>8</sup> But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> 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. ... <sup>11</sup> ... You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup> as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. ... <sup>13</sup> But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.*

*<sup>14</sup> So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. <sup>15</sup> Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation,*

Peter is writing regarding the world's mocking about the return of Jesus.

- > Since he had not come yet, the skeptics said this was evidence that there is no Christ and there is no Second Coming.
- > In reality, Peter tells the people that the fact that Christ has not yet returned is a display of God's patience.
  - < Jesus has not returned because he is continuing to wait for others to come to repentance.
  - < God is patient because he does not want anyone to be eternally lost.
- > One meaning of "patience" is the "capacity for calm self-possessed waiting." (Illustrated Oxford Dictionary)
  - < God has promised that there will be a day when sinners will receive their final condemnation, but God is waiting in order that more sinners might accept and obey the Gospel.

God is not impulsive. The Bible repeatedly has demonstrated that God exercises much long-suffering toward those deserving punishment (Romans 9:22). (Examples include: Adam and Eve, Noah's generation, Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses and the children of Israel, Ahab, the nation of Israel, the world's treatment of Jesus, etc.)

- > God is still being patient with the world and its rebellion against him. (Rom. 2:4-5)
  - < Potential for salvation rests in God's patience.
  - < He is patient toward the world even when they use that patience as a reason to mock, rebel and blaspheme.
- > God is patient toward you and me as he is developing and refining us, stretching and growing us.

**If God had been a man, He would have taken His hand and wiped out this world long ago; but God has that patience which bears with all our sinning and which will not cast us off. In our lives, in our attitude to and dealings with our fellow men, we must reproduce this loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God toward ourselves. -- CALEB COLLEY**



### **BEING SLOW TO BECOME ANGRY**

*One of the primary ideas behind the virtue of patience is taking a long time to overheat. The Greek word carries the idea of a thermometer. If a spiritual thermometer were placed in our mouths as we faced a difficult situation how long would it take for our temperature to rise? As we mature, we learn to control our anger and practice patience in all circumstances.*

*Young David was a threat to King Saul. While it was not David's goal, he was popular with the people of Israel. King Saul burned with anger and jealousy towards David. For the next several years, he pursued David, hoping to capture and kill him. David, forced to become a fugitive, proves he is a "man after God's own heart" when he waits on God's timing instead of taking matters into his own hands. (See 1 Samuel 24:1-26, pgs. 411-412 in BELIEVE.)*

### **SUMMARY:**

*Saul came back to pursue David after he had fought with the Philistines. Saul entered into a cave to relieve himself. By coincidence, David and his men were hiding at the back of the cave. As Saul fell asleep, David's men told him that this day God is going to hand Saul into his hand. But David only cut a corner of Saul's robe.*

*After cutting the corner of Saul's robe, David felt guilty. He felt that it was wrong to do that because Saul is the Lord's anointed king. Then, David rebuked his men and stopped them from attacking Saul. Later, Saul woke up and went away. David and his men also went out of the cave.*

*David shouted to Saul from behind. David bowed down to Saul on the ground. He questioned Saul for listening to others telling the King that David wanted to harm him. He showed him the corner piece that he*

*cut off from Saul's robe and proved to him that he could have killed him just now in the cave but he didn't. He asked God to deal with King Saul for what he had done to him.*

*Saul wept and he was conscience stricken. He knew that David was kind to him even though he wanted to kill him. He confessed that he wants to kill him because he felt he is his enemy. He knew that David will be the next king. He made David swear that he will spare his surviving descendants after his death so that there will always be someone to carry a name for his father's family. David swore the oath. After that, King Saul returned home and David went to his stronghold.*

*Saul returned home, but his jealousy remained. As the days passed, Saul allowed his anger against David to fester and grow. Once again Saul led three thousand troops on a mission to capture and kill David. (See 1 Samuel 26:1-25, pgs. 412-414.)*

*The Ziphites informed Saul that David was hiding in the hill of Hakilah. When Saul heard this, he traveled to the Desert of Ziph with 3,000 men. Saul set up his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah. David remained in the desert. David sent out scouts to find out if Saul had already arrived.*

*When David learned that Saul had already arrive, he asked Ahimelech and Abishai, which of them want to follow him into the camp. Abishai said he will go. David and Abishai sneaked into Saul's camp while he and his men were asleep.*

*Abishai told David that this day God had handed Saul to him. He asked for David's permission to kill Saul with one strike of the spear. But David rebuked him and said that Saul was the Lord's anointed king. David said God would handle Saul's death. Saul would die over time or be killed in a battle if he had sinned against God. After that, they grabbed the spear and water jug near the head of Saul and slipped out of the camp.*

*After they sneaked out of the camp, David went to the top of a hill in a distance and called out to Abner (a leader in Saul's army). He rebuked Abner for not guarding King Saul's life efficiently. David asked Abner if he can search for the spear and water jug near Saul's head. Saul recognized David's voice and he called out to him.*

*David replied that he is not worthy to be pursued by him. He reassured King Saul that he had no intention to kill him. Saul's pursuit of David kept him from being able to live in his homeland, which brought David great sadness. King Saul admitted that he had sinned and he invited him to join his service again.*

*Then, David told Saul to send his men to come and get the spear. He hoped God will deliver him from all the troubles since he did not take King Saul's life.*

David was the chosen heir to Israel's throne, but he spent years dodging King Saul's angry pursuit.

> Despite having two different opportunities for vengeance, David resisted the temptation and spared Saul's life. He chose to let God be charge of Saul's life, and his eventual crowning as King of Israel.

> David not only achieved his objective through patience; he also observed that God's way was always best.

< David left behind a marvelous testimony of God's faithfulness for us.

^ He was committed to waiting upon the Lord, and as a result, he had the Father's approval and blessing.

^ We cannot underestimate the reward of living in God's favor. That isn't a special state reserved for "giants of the faith" like David. All who obediently endure until the Lord acts on their behalf have His favor.

> David trusted in God's faithfulness, he endured hardship with patience. We, too, can expect to be blessed when we wait upon the Lord.

*Saul eventually dies in a battle against the Philistines. When David gets word of Saul and his son Jonathan's death, he refuses to celebrate victory for himself but grieves the loss of Israel's king. David waited for God to work out his plan. In the course of time, David became king of his own tribe, Judah; and seven years later he was crowned king of all Israel. David's son Solomon took the throne of Israel after David's death. In Proverbs Solomon shares from his amazing reservoir of God-instilled wisdom. Here is what he wrote about the virtue of patience.*

***Proverbs 14:29***

*29 Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*  
Patience brings greater understanding. When we are hasty in our reactions because of anger, we do not get the full picture of what is happening, thus we do not have a good understanding of what our response should be or should have been.

***Proverbs 15:18***

*18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.*  
Reacting with anger to a person is usually responded with more anger until it escalates into a conflict. Our responses to those who are angry need to be quickly thought through with wisdom and calmness and not from a reactionary reflex.

***Proverbs 16:32***

*32 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.*  
Contrary to the many who would say it is good to vent one's anger, Proverbs advocates being patient.  
> The teaching here is simply that a person who can take charge of his own conduct, discipline and command his own behavior, having complete control of his appetites and passions is greater than any world conqueror or military hero.

***Proverbs 19:11***

*11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.*  
In many cultures, any sign of disrespect to a man is a challenge to his honor, and he can regain it only by fighting whoever insults him. Here, patience and overlooking slights bring honor to a man.

***Proverbs 25:15***

*15 Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.*  
Diplomacy with peers or superiors means using tact even while trying to persuade them.  
> With a gentle tongue, or words delivered in a gentle language, one can remove hardness and roughness from the mind of men. It can work upon, influence, and bend men, whose wills are obstinate and stubborn, and make them pliable; thus breaking down their hardness, like breaking a bone.

*James offers this advice to use in our relationships with others—particularly those who “push our buttons.”*

***James 1:19***

*19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,*

Listen (“quick to listen”). Wait (“slow to speak”). Respond (“slow to become angry”).

> How many of our conflicts would dissolve or never even happen if we:

- < Listened to *really understand* a person’s concern or complaint,
- < Waited until ...
  - ^ Our initial impulse passed (which is typically wrong)
  - ^ We have prayed about the situation
  - ^ We have asked clarifying questions
- < Responded with patience, graciousness, honesty, clarity, and, if possible, brevity.

Let’s look at these three points even closer

> **Listen.**

- < Being quick to listen is a mark of humility. It considers someone else more significant than one’s self (Philippians 2:3).
- < Listening to understand before responding is a sign of being willing to consider the advice of others (Proverbs 12:15), and to seek God’s understanding (Proverbs 3:6).

> **Wait.**

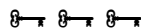
- < Waiting before responding is often a way God calls us to love others (1 Corinthians 13:4).
- < Waiting to speak allows us to get past our initial response which often brings an impulsive reaction (Proverbs 10:19).
- < Waiting allows us the time to seek God for wisdom and discernment.
- < Waiting allows us time to ask clarifying questions that often don’t come in the heat of anger or reaction.

> **Respond.**

- < When we respond it is import that our words are full of grace (Proverbs 16:24; Ephesians 4:29).
  - ^ Gracious words are sometimes tender and sometimes tough (Prov. 27:6), but they are always thought through, clear, honest, and if possible, concise (Proverbs 10:19).
  - ^ They always aim for truthful restoration and genuine agreement (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry is very hard. But with God, all things are possible (Luke 18:27).

> So as we face conflicts today, we need to listen, wait, and respond in the spirit of James 1:19.



PARAPHRASED FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee

Consider these scenarios as we think about how our inability to wait has impacted modern culture:

- writing e-mails versus handwritten (or typed) letters sent in the mail
- talking on cell phones versus landlines
- picking up food at drive-through windows versus sitting down for a well-prepared meal at home
- cooking in microwaves versus cooking on the stove
- downloading music on iTunes versus buying CDs
- streaming movies on a laptop versus renting DVDs
- using single-serve coffee pods versus multi-cup coffeepots

We find ourselves more and more often becoming frustrated because we have to wait five minutes to get what we want, whereas just a few years ago we might have had to wait five hours. We no longer want to wait — for anything. ... so patience is a crucial virtue for a Christian.

God provides help for our impatient souls in a number of ways:



1. By example. God's long-suffering in dealing with us provides an ongoing model of how we should respond to others and to difficult situations.
2. By empowerment. God's Spirit gives us the strength to see life through his eyes and not just view the urgency of the issue. His perspective, which he shares with us, can help us see the bigger picture.
3. By encouragement. Scripture is filled with inspirational and motivating words to slow us down and wait for God's timing and provision.



**KEY QUESTION: HOW DOES GOD PROVIDE THE HELP I NEED TO DEAL WITH STRESS?**

**PERSEVERING UNDER PRESSURE**

*Another aspect of patience is holding up under the pressures of life, waiting on the Lord for resolution. In the book of Job we read of a most unusual conversation taking place in heaven between God and Satan. The outcome of this conversation will gravely affect the life of a righteous man named Job. What unfolds is the ultimate test of patience. Will Job curse God or will he offer up his broken praise to God?*

*Understandably, Job contemplated giving up; he also had straight-forward questions for God and inappropriately defended himself. But Job never cursed God as Satan claimed he would. Job's patience in the face of trials is a model for us. In the end, God restored Job. (See Job 1:1-2:13; 42:7-17)*

*In Job, we see a man who God allows to be directly attacked by Satan. He is an example of faithfulness as he loses everything important to him yet remains faithful to God. Its purpose is to illustrate God's sovereignty and faithfulness during a time of great suffering.*

*God tests Job's faithfulness through allowing Satan to attack him. Through Job's trials, all is lost including his health, his wife even tells him to curse God and commit suicide, but he remains strong and faithful (1:22).*

*Job has friends that come to visit him and they give him plenty of bad advice, in rounds of discussion. They mistakenly blame his sufferings on his personal sins rather than God testing and growing Job. One of them was half-correct in that God wanted to humble him, but this was only a part of God's test.*

*In the final chapter of the book, God speaks to Job and restores him. God knows that Job has received incorrect guidance from his friends, and declares that humans do not know everything. Then God humbles Job by asking a series of questions that could never be answered by anyone other than God himself; for example, "Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this". God then brings him to an understanding that believers don't always know what God is doing in their lives.*

*In the end, God blessed Job with twice as much as he had before his trials began.*

Not all people understand what Job's trials were all about and what God was trying to accomplish. Nor do they realize that Job suffered as he did so that God's people today might learn from his experiences how to be patient in suffering and endure to the end.

**You, too, may have to go through the furnace in order to really grasp the message of the book of Job. If so, don't be afraid. By faith, just say with Job, "He knows where I am going. And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold" (Job 23:10). ... Whatever we have that is burned up in the furnace wasn't worth having anyway." --WARREN WINKSBE**

As we learn to be patient in our own trials, we will learn how to help others in their trials.

> Our world is filled with people who need encouragement, and God may be preparing you for just that ministry.

*Patience is a virtue that we develop through control of our anger, and we develop this virtue in the face of adversity. Our cultivation of patience pleases God, who is patient with us. Patience affects our relationships in a positive way and brings great joy to our lives and community.*

James offers some great advice about life's pressures. He reminds us that God has a purpose in mind when He allows trials to press down on us. Like turning coals into diamonds, some things only happen under a lot of pressure.

> Persevering under pressure is how God tests our faith in order to make us "mature and complete" (James 1:4).

< If we give up in our attitudes or actions under the burden of pressure, we interfere with the productive intentions God has for our lives.

It's interesting that the Greek word James uses for "perseverance" in James 1:3 is *hupomeno*. It's derived from two Greek words: *hupo* (under) and *meno* (remain).

> James is making the point that in order to achieve God's refining goals for our lives, we need to be willing to cooperatively remain under the pressure.

> It boils down to whether or not you want comfort or character. We want our lives to be free from pressure, but that's not going to be the case—trouble happens!

< The issue is not if you will face trials, it's how you will respond to the inevitable pressure that the problems of life bring.

NOTE: The next time you're tempted to bail on God and squeeze out from under the trouble, think of Jesus, who "humbled himself and became obedient to death" (Philippians 2:8). He "remained under" great suffering for the purpose of making you better.

***Do you try to wiggle out from under pressure that God may be asking you to go through? Why it is hard to remain under it?***

---



---



---

***What are some reasons why you might try to get out of God's maturing process in your life?***

---



---



---

***What are some steps you can take to be more committed to the process of this type of growth?***

---



---



---

**Hebrews 12:7-11**

*<sup>7</sup> Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? <sup>8</sup> If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. <sup>9</sup> Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! <sup>10</sup> They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

The writer of Hebrews viewed the trials of the Christian life as spiritual discipline that could help a believer mature.

- > Instead of trying to escape the difficulties of life, we should be exercised by them so that we grow.
- > Discipline is evidence of God's love.
  - < Whatever our experience, we can know that God's discipline is controlled by his loving heart.

**God wants us to be patient and we must learn to wait on God. When we face a serious problem we want God to deal with the situation immediately. If every problem was solved instantly what would we have learned? This is why the Bible tells us that God allows trials and testing to develop our patience and character. -DON BOYD**

Our faith can only be purified by perseverance under pressure.

- > When we conquer by faith the difficulties thrown in our path, the experience builds our trust in God, because we learn that He is sufficient to deliver us.
- > Testing is the only way while still in this world that God can prove to us that He can and will deliver us from the trials of life.
- > Going through these times are a way we can show God that we really do believe in him and his Son, and are willing to trust, even when the situation looks grim.
- > When we go through these times with patience and perseverance, we become witnesses to others of God's goodness and power.
  - < Through the successful application of our faith, we often build up the faith of others even more than our own. In the process we also gain insight into certain areas of suffering that may help us to encourage others when facing similar tests. (2Cor. 1:3-4)



**KEY IDEA: I AM SLOW TO ANGER AND ENDURE PATIENTLY UNDER THE UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES OF LIFE.**

Remember the source of our strength as we persevere and overcome.

- > We do not survive pressure by focusing on our own strength.
- > We survive pressure by keeping focused on God, and there only will we find strength.

PATIENCE IS A CHOICE

We see throughout the Bible, stories of people experiencing trials and tribulations.

- > Their reactions varied.

- < Some grumbled against God because of lack of provision. (Exodus 15).
- < Some worshipped God through trials and adversity (Job 1:20)
- < Some cried out to God in despair. (Psalm 18:6)
- > What is important is that we all have a choice. We get to decide how we are going to act when adversity hits.
  - < We can be patient and wait on God, or we can be impatient and act on our own accord.
- > Patience does not develop overnight. God’s power and goodness are crucial to the development of patience.
  - < Colossians 1:11 tells us that we are strengthened by Him to “great endurance and patience.”
  - < James 1:3-4 encourages us to know that trials are His way of perfecting our patience.
- > Our patience is further developed and strengthened by resting in God’s perfect will and timing.
  - < Our patience is rewarded in the end when the Lord returns.(James 5:7-8).

The next time you are put into a stressful situation, such as a traffic jam, or you are betrayed by a friend, or treated unfairly by a boss or co-worker—or even a friend or family member, how will you respond?

- > The natural response is impatience which leads to stress, anger, and frustration. But as Christians, we no longer have to be in in bondage to natural responses. We have the Lord’s strength to respond with patience and in complete trust in the Father’s power and purpose (Romans 2:7).



## **KEY APPLICATION: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE IN THE WAY I LIVE?**

FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee

God is not bound by our time or circumstances — a truth that challenges our view that God should respond to us immediately versus when he chooses to respond to us according to his plan.

Ironically, in our Christian journey, the only way God can teach us patience and help us grow in this virtue is to give us circumstances where we must wait on him. All too often, we get tired of this process and start trying to make things happen.

### **Enduring in patience and trusting Christ help us see that whatever God unfolds will always be better than what we try to force to happen.**

The apostle Peter reminds us of God’s loving purposes: *“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 Peter 3:9

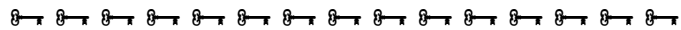
At the root of impatience is mistrust. There are times when God wants us to wait, yet we doubt whether anyone will act on our behalf, so we choose to not wait. We take action on our own, outside of God’s direction. In our impatience, we exhibit pride — thinking we can do things better on our own. If we trust someone, we will wait on them to act. If we truly trust God, we will wait on his timing as we commit to serving him while we wait. ... Jumping ahead of God’s plan is always a bad idea.

### **Enduring in patience and trusting Christ to help us see that receiving something later is often a far better plan than receiving it now.**

The faster we want a life event to occur, the more it usually means we aren't ready to handle the responsibility of it. ... As we mature in Christ, we will see more clearly why his timing is perfect. He knows best when we need something; therefore, to trust his heart and hand to provide is far better than placing before him our selfish demands.

**Enduring in patience and trusting Christ to help us see growth in our trust of God — his ways, timing, and outcomes.**

Waiting on God will always provide the strongest finish, bringing the ability to see circumstances as he sees them. This will, in turn, spill over into our interactions with our neighbors. Patience is a spiritual muscle that grows stronger as we quietly wait for God to answer. This is the way the author of Ecclesiastes sums it up: *“The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.”* Ecclesiastes 7:8



**7 Bible Verses About Patience**

The Bible has many verses on patience. Below are some of the most prominent verses:

**Psalm 37:7** *“Be patient and trust the LORD. Don’t let it bother you when all goes well for those who do sinful things.”*

Here we are seeing the patience regarding the one who is prospering and doing sinful things. All will stand before the Lord to give an account someday (Rev. 20:11-15). Those who patiently trusted the Lord will receive what they were expecting.

> God is just and as a just Judge, all will be made right. We must leave judgment to God and be patient and not allow our impatience to get the best of us (Rom 12:19).

**James 5:7-8** *“<sup>7</sup> My friends, be patient until the Lord returns. Think of farmers who wait patiently for the spring and summer rains to make their valuable crops grow.<sup>8</sup> Be patient like those farmers and don’t give up. The Lord will soon be here!”*

Once again we are told to be patient “until the Lord returns.” The example of the farmer being patient for his crops to grow is used. A farmer must be patient knowing that his crop's time will come when it is time.

> The patience James talks about is the patience to be waiting, expectantly, on the Lord’s coming. Because James repeats "be patient" we know that it is significant.

**Revelation 14:12** *“<sup>12</sup> God’s people must learn to endure. They must also obey his commands and have faith in Jesus.”*

> Even through persecution, we should rejoice (Matt 5:12) because even Jesus went through persecution.

> We are not to grow tired of doing good because there is coming a time when we will reap a reward (Gal 6:9). Not giving up is enduring patiently.

> In Revelation 14:12 John writes that the patience of the saints is equal to that of keeping the commandments of God and their faith in Christ.

< Obedience is not easy and we can’t keep them perfectly but that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t strive to obey God's commandments and it takes patience with ourselves and with others.

**Romans 15:4-5** *“<sup>4</sup> And the Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope. <sup>5</sup> God is the one who makes us patient and cheerful. I pray that he will help you live at peace with each other, as you follow Christ.”*

> Paul ties in patience with reading the Scriptures so we would have hope.

< A lack of patience could be a lack of being in the Scriptures. When we immerse ourselves in Scriptures and prayer it gives power to change our attitudes.

**Romans 2:6 -7** *“<sup>6</sup> God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” <sup>7</sup> To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.*

> Every Christian today will be rewarded for their works on earth. We are not saved by works but a Godly faith is seen in our works. Good works are a natural byproduct of our faith.

< Our patience will bring glory, honor and immortality, not now, but when Christ returns.

^ Even though our reward may not come in this life, our obedience frequently produces better consequences in this life, but patience is more easily retained when we live with the end in mind.

**Proverbs 25:15** *“Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.”*

Solomon writes this in conjunction with using a “gentle tongue” so the idea is that with patience, a soft voice and gentle words, someone can more easily be persuaded to make a decision or a choice that you want them to make.

> It’s interesting that the author said that “a gentle tongue can break a bone” but we could read it in the Hebrew vernacular as being “a soft voice can break a bone” or with gentleness and respect, even a strong bone (hard headed person or a difficult decision) can be persuaded but only if accompanied by patience.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** *“<sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

> This verse admonishes the idle/lazy, encourages the disheartened/fearful, and help the weak. Paul tells us to do these things patiently.