

The Importance of Patience for People of Faith

“The Lord is patient and full of mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression” *Numbers* 14:18.

Longsuffering, patience, endurance, and perseverance are important character traits that God desires in His people. Usually these qualities are developed and showcased in times of trial.

- Elijah despairs after his victory at Mount Carmel over the prophets of Baal:

“And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!”

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise *and* eat.” Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you.” So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.” 1 Kings 19, 1-10

- The Lord’s response: the situation is not as bleak as Elijah imagines it. His exhaustion has skewed his perspective.

Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *as* prophet in your place. It shall be *that* whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” 1 Kings 19, 15-18

- God tests the patience of Job in his suffering:

“But He knows the way that I take; *When* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.”
Job 23:10

- The Lord is compassionate and merciful to those who endure:

“My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended* by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.” James 5:10-11

- Waiting on God’s Promises

“I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, *And* established my steps.” Psalms 40, 1-2

- Patience involves ruling one’s spirit:

“Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit *Is like* a city broken down, without walls.”
Proverbs 25:28

“*He who is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” Proverbs 16:32

- Patience Rewarded:

“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” Romans 2:5-11

- Patience in suffering produces character and hope:

“And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5: 3-5

“Not only *that*, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we

were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” Romans 8:23-25

- God, the Author of Patience:

“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.” Romans 15:5-6

- Paul’s patience in the midst of suffering:

“From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *in* weariness and toil, *in* sleeplessness often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*” 2 Corinthians 11:24-29

- Patience is a fruit of the Spirit:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22

- Endured with Joy:

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” Colossians 1: 9-12

- Christ, the example of patience:

“Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 3:5

- Patience is to be pursued:

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.” 1 Timothy 6:11

- Waiting on God's promises:

“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Hebrews 6:11-12

- Believers need endurance:

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

“For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.
Now the just shall live by faith;
But if *anyone* draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him.”

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” Hebrews 10:36-39

- The testing of faith produces patience:

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1: 2-4

- Wait upon the Lord, for His coming is near:

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” James 5:7-8

- The Lord is patient toward us:

“The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9