

## DEVELOPING GODLY PATIENCE

The Bible mentions a very important virtue that applies to many if not every facet of our Christian lives!

I'm referring to the virtue of patience.

We hear a lot about patience. We hear different people saying different things about it. And we all know we need more patience.

But what is patience? What does it mean?

That Greek word for *patience* basically means not to lose heart; but to persevere, be steadfast, cling tenaciously to faith despite continuing misfortunes and troubles. It also has this component of being willing to suffer long.

A dictionary definition of patience is very similar. Merriam-Webster says patience is "the ability to persevere over a long period of time despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity." Essentially then, patience involves a willingness to endure without complaint.

Unfortunately, with the hectic, oftentimes frantic pace of life today, patience is just about non-existent.

Many Americans are impatient about waiting in line. For example, at dine-in restaurants, 70% will not wait for more than 10 minutes to be served.

At a drive-thru, nearly 20% don't want to wait more than two minutes to get their food. While 55% said they were frustrated after five minutes of waiting. One in five admitted to being rude to someone who served them too slowly.

We live in a world where we want everything done quickly and instantaneously.

I want what I want and I want it now!

The apostle James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, was the pastor of the early New Testament Church in Jerusalem; and, he exhorted the Church then and all of us today to be patient.

Notice James 1:4.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

What does James mean by “let patience have its perfect work”?

He’s talking about letting patience develop certain qualities and characteristics in our lives.

First of all, a true Christian’s life includes endurance and perseverance. And that requires developing Godly patience.

When things start getting hard and difficult, we can get worn out.

Without patience, we can get easily frustrated because things aren’t happening as quickly as we want them to. Or the anticipated results are not materializing as rapidly as we expected them to.

Then we can find ourselves becoming discouraged, irritated and impatient because we want what we want when we want it.

Godly patience is the antidote to all that.

Look at Matthew 24:13.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Salvation is God’s gift to those who persevere through the narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:14)! We may stumble and fall, and we could get banged up. It will take patience to get up, endure and keep going.

Patience also builds faith.

The Bible tells us, faith is the assurance of receiving that which we hope for.

Faith is believing that what God has promised He will keep.

And because we have that living, dynamic faith that pleases Him, we patiently wait for Him to do what we ask.

He may act immediately. Or it may take some time. Sometimes, it could even take a long time. And our patience begins to weaken.

But, in faith, we acknowledge God knows what's best. So we patiently wait for Him to step in and work it all out at the best time for our benefit.

And we won't allow Satan to hoodwink us into quitting and giving up because we're tired of waiting on God.

The third thing that patience produces is temperance, self-discipline or self-control.

The reality of life is that situations don't always turn out the way we want or expect them to.

But through patience, we learn to deal with not always having what we want when we want it the way we want it.

Patience develops maturity. It brings about balance. That's why patience is a very, very strong quality to have.

It sets us apart from the average individual.

It does away with outbursts of anger, feelings of disappointment and bouts of depression because we didn't get what we want when we wanted it.

Patience teaches us to wait, to keep on going without losing heart. Continuing to do the best we can without expecting immediate gratification.

Read Luke 21:19.

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

This is best understood as BY your patience, you will gain mastery over your lives!

This involves developing the three qualities of Godly patience that I have just described: enduring and remaining steadfast; exercising faith and trust in God; and, developing temperance, self-discipline and self-control.

This Godly patience is a quality that we need to pay more attention to. A character trait we strive to cultivate and develop so it grows and thrives more and more in our lives.

After all, when you come right down to it, Godly patience is one virtue we must have so that one day God will give us His precious gift of eternal life.