



Patience is something that we all wish we could have more of. We know that patience is important in our world. There are studies that show that people who are patient are healthier both mentally and physically. Those who are patient make better neighbors and friends. Patient people are more likely to set goals and keep them. We've all heard it said: "Patience is a virtue." Or maybe this one: "Good things come to those who wait." Who wouldn't want to be more patient? We have to stop and ask ourselves, is this the type of patience we're talking about when we think of the Fruit of the Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit give us patience so we can achieve our goals better? Isn't there something more?

As we look at the scriptures, we're able to understand more about patience and what it means for Christians. For instance, one of the things that Paul reminds us of in 1 Timothy 1:16 was that he, "was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life." Peter shows us that, "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation..." (2 Peter 3:15). When we see these scriptures for what they truly mean, we can understand that the reason we're patient is because of how incredibly patient Jesus is with each of us.

We also discover *what* we're waiting *for*. We are waiting for the Day of the Lord. One day Jesus will return and He will set all things right. Until then, we wait. But our waiting is not static. We are patiently active because we know that our lives point to the God who is patient with us. We are not patient just for our own sake – we are patient for the sake of the other. We patiently bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). We work like the patient farmer, standing firm, and not grumbling against one another (James 5:7-9). Our patience communicates God's patience to the world around us.

Patience is a "Long Obedience in the Same Direction". This is the title of a book by Eugene Peterson where he reminds us that we are living in the "in between". Jesus has come, but He has not returned. Therefore, we obediently wait for Him to return and love Him with our heart, soul, and mind and we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Patience is not always easy – and it may not come naturally. This is why we have to cultivate patience. To do this, we (1) Trust in the Holy Spirit, (2) Remember our Story, (3), Move from being a Tourist to a Pilgrim, and we (4) Wait and Work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not so patient and 10 being the most patient person): How patient are you? Does your rating change in different situations? Why or why not?
2. Most people would agree that having patience is important. If this is true, why do you think we are so obsessed with speed and efficiency?
3. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-16. How does Paul use his life before Christ as an illustration of Jesus' patience? How are verses 15 and 16 connected according to Paul?
4. 2 Peter 3:15 reminds us that, "our Lord's patience means salvation..." Use examples from your own life to help explain and make sense of this verse.
5. The "what" that we are to be patient "for" is the return of Jesus. 2 Peter 3:9 shows us that, "He [Jesus] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." Peter also reminds us in the next verse that, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare" (2 Peter 3:10). What happens to the patience of Jesus when the day of the Lord comes? What does this mean for those who have not chosen to follow Jesus? What does this mean for us?
6. Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." What is the link between being patient and bearing with one another in love? What happens when we ignore commands like this one? What can happen when we follow them?
7. In his book, "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction", Eugene Peterson states that it's not difficult to get a person interested in the Gospel, but it is terribly difficult to sustain the interest. Do you think this is true? Why or why not? What does patience have to do with this?
8. Patience is not something that comes easily to everyone. It is a something we have to learn and practice, a muscle we have to work out. Look at the following ways suggested to Cultivate Patience in your life. Which stands out to the most? Why? What can you do this week to cultivate patience in your life?
 - **Trust the Holy Spirit:** Patience is a Fruit of the Spirit. In order for us to have patience, we have to ask for it and believe it can happen.
 - **Remember our Story:** Remember how incredibly patient Jesus has been with you.
 - **Move from being a Tourist to a Pilgrim:** Tourists stop by when they want and leave when they want. Pilgrims are disciples that journey with Jesus.
 - **Wait and Work:** We must be like the farmer in James 5. We do our part but patiently wait for the rain to come.