

# Our Patience

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[ 0 : 00 ] Psalm 103, a psalm of David. Praise the Lord, O my soul. All my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

! The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel. The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever. He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us.

[ 1 : 15 ] As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. For he knows how we are formed. He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower of the field. The wind blows over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

But from everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children, with those who keep his covenant, and remember to obey his precepts.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Praise the Lord, all his works, everywhere in his dominion.

[ 2 : 21 ] Praise the Lord, O my soul. Well, how long do you wait for a video or a website to load before you quit?

In other words, how impatient are you? Ramash Sitterraman, a computer science professor at University of Massachusetts, did a study where he looked at the viewing habits of 6.7 million Internet users.

So it's probably some of us, actually, if it's that big. But how long were subjects willing to be patient? The answer, two seconds.

And after that, and this is what he says, after that they started abandoning, Sitterraman said. After five seconds, the abandonment rate reached 25%, so one out of four just totally quit.

And then when you got up to ten seconds, half are gone. As I was thinking about this, I know that sometimes when I'm trying to pull up my browser on my Internet, it doesn't come up right away, and so I click on it again, and I click on it again, and I click on it again, and then finally it comes up like 15 seconds later, and it's not just one of them.

[ 3 : 44 ] Now it's like ten of them are open. I won't ask you if you've ever yelled at your computer for taking so long. Last week we started talking about God's patience, and we began to apply it to perplexing people.

And today I want to talk about how God makes us patient. So God's patience and then our patience. Because God is at work in us to make us to be like him, to be patient.

But Colossians 3.12 says that, Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, close yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

So we're going to be talking about what God does, but on the other hand, Colossians 3.12 and a lot of other verses tell us that this is something that we need to be actively involved in pursuing and putting on ourselves.

And so we're going to be talking about what God does, but this is not something that it's just what God does, but we don't have anything to do. In every case that, in every situation that we're going to

be talking about, and the ways that God works patience in us, there is, God is also calling us to be active participants in that same pursuit.

[ 5 : 14 ] And so let's be, we need to start with the honest admission that impatience is a problem that we probably all have to some degree or other.

It's something that we all struggle with. Pastor John reminded me this week that Moses himself, the meekest man who ever lived, finally got to the point where he had had enough with the Israelites. Remember, the Lord said, speak to the rock and the water will come out of it. And Moses instead struck the rock two times, and the Lord was angry with him. And for that very reason, Moses was not allowed to go into the promised land because Moses was not clearly and accurately portraying who God was.

Because God was being patient in that situation. He was going to give them water despite their complaining. But Moses himself, the meekest man to ever live, finally had had enough.

And God was patient, but Moses wasn't. And if that's true of Moses, then I know it's true of me.

[ 6 : 30 ] I know it's true of me. And so, what about you? What about you? Last week, we ended with that we should and we can grow in patience.

We should and we can grow in patience. And we can for the very reason that we're going to be talking about, because the Spirit of God is at work in us.

God himself is working actively to put patience in our inmost places. Because patience is one of the ways that God is making us just like him.

There are some attributes that will never be like God. Will never be a trinity. Will never be eternal.

And yet, this is one of those areas where God and us can be the same.

Patient. So, how does God make us patient? And what does that mean for us? I have five points. I have a list here with five points.

[ 7 : 34 ] And the first is number one. It's not by magic. And that's just my way of saying it's not going to be instantly, instantaneous, by the snap of the fingers.

We are going to close tonight by singing, I ask the Lord, this song from John Newton, I ask the Lord that I might grow in faith and love and every grace.

Every grace. Like, patience. And, in the next verse, he tells us what he had hoped. He says, I had hoped, I hoped that in some favored hour, you know, the sun would shine upon me in some favored hour.

At once, he'd answer my request. And by his love's constraining power, subdue my sins and give me rest. So, what was John Newton looking for?

And what do we often look for? We are, we look for some favored hour, some overwhelming power of God that instantaneously, instantaneously, changes us and subdues our sin.

[ 8 : 39 ] Now, there are times when I believe that God gives us drastic leaps forward in our sanctification. Especially, when you are first born again.

Behold, everything is new. You become a new creature and, and in some areas and in some ways, you become drastically different than what you used to be. And there are situations where sin and personality, and sins of personality just completely change.

But generally, it's at the very beginning of the Christian life. And so, now, if you're a Christian, and you've been a Christian for a while, and you see, I need patience, I need to grow in this, and I need to ask God for it, what I'm saying is, we can't, and we shouldn't, probably expect instant, magical, so to speak, results.

You won't wake up suddenly and be a patient mom or a patient dad with your kids. You won't wake up and go to work and none of the irritations bother you anymore.

They're just magically, you've suddenly outgrown it all or something like that. You're just suddenly able to take it all in and keep your cool. That's not how it works.

[ 10 : 01 ] It's not by magic. That's number one. And number two is, then, it's a process. Learning to be patient is a process.

Romans 12 says that we should be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

That's where transformation comes from. It comes from the mind being made new. And that's a process. Or, Psalm 51 says, create in me a pure heart.

and renew a steadfast spirit within me. So, do you need patience? Well, it starts in your heart.

It starts in your mind. It starts with real, concrete changes in your inner man. It doesn't just pop out of, into existence out of nowhere.

[ 11 : 02 ] God starts working patience in you not by nailing the fruit of patience onto a bad tree. He doesn't take apples and then staple them to an oak tree.

Instead, he goes inside and he changes that tree within so that it begins to organically, because of the kind of thing that it is, it produces apples.

And that's how he works. He begins with deeper changes inside of us. And then he builds us out from there.

And that's how this works. And so, he begins by giving us a new way of thinking. New priorities.

Where some things used to be up front, now they're down four or five.

And as God begins to continue to work in us, they fall lower and lower, and other priorities get higher and higher. And we feel them to be important. We just don't say it.

[ 12 : 01 ] No, he actually elevates those priorities, elevates those convictions. And so, he gives us these new things that we say, this is true, and this is important. And as we begin to experience those changes in the deeper places of our heart, we begin to produce this fruit.

It's an inside-out renovation. We once thought, we once thought, felt, and so acted like our father the devil.

But now, the Lord is beginning to work in us so that we think, and we feel, and then we so act like our father in heaven.

Sanctification is not just outwardly looking like Jesus. It is, as Paul says in Philippians, may the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, the same attitude, be in you.

So what does that mean for you? Just a couple of things. I want to say, it means that you shouldn't judge whether the Lord is working or not working change in by immediate visible effects.

[ 13 : 27 ] Immediate visible changes, results. God is a kind of a workman that goes down into the basement of our hearts.

And so let's suppose there's no heat in your house. the Lord doesn't bring in heaters to produce an artificial heat. He goes down into the basement where the furnace is and he begins working on that furnace so that the furnace produces heat for the house.

And so what I want to say is don't be discouraged because God doesn't seem to be addressing the most visible or the most pressing issues. He very well and he probably is working at a deeper level.

There are other things that he needs to build in you before you begin to produce and show the fruit of patience or any other grace. And then the second thing that means is that we also need to be at work where he's at work.

And just one verse here, Proverbs 4.23, above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.

[ 14 : 42 ] Guard your heart, protect it, tend it, keep it, care for it. So do the deep work of developing new convictions, of praying for new convictions, praying for new thoughts, reading your Bible in order to get those new thoughts inside of you, the new priorities.

And James says if you make the spring good, the water will be good. God is working at making the spring good. What I'm saying is that's where we need to be working ourselves.

So don't just stay upstairs, get downstairs. Get where God is working. Well, that's number two. The number three is this, and really number two leads right to three.

If number two is it's a process, then number three is what's going into that process? How does God make us patient? And it's this, he deepens our understanding.

He deepens our understanding. And again, this is Romans 12. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So how does the Lord make us to be patient like he deepens our understanding.

[ 16 : 03 ] He gives us more of his insight, more of his understanding, his wisdom. That's just to say that patience doesn't begin at the emotional level.

You don't feel patience first. It begins with new thoughts, new understanding, clarity of thought, and have you noticed that when we really don't understand what people are going through, their history, where they've been, who they are, what they've been through, etc., it's very easy for us to be impatient with them.

If we have a very superficial understanding of a person, it is very easy for us to be impatient with them. And so when you have a small, a truncated, a shortened understanding, it's easy for us to simplify people and to just put them in a nice little box and say, you know what, they should get their

acts together.

I don't understand why they're doing what they're doing. There's no reason for it. And it's easy for us to be impatient when there's no nuance, when we're not taking the whole picture into consideration, when it's all simple and easy, it's very easy for us to be impatient with them.

It's simple. They can do it, so they should do it. They're not doing it, so I'm impatient with them.

Well, how does God make us patient?

[ 17 : 47 ] He deepens our understanding of their situation. Maybe he will put you into the same kind of situation that they are in. And when you start to walk a mile in their shoes, then you begin to understand the reasons.

And maybe you give a little more credit and credence and maybe a little more grace when you've been in the same sort of situation and now you understand why they're acting the way they're acting.

We have that saying that the burnt hand learns best. That's just to say, experience. Going through something teaches you in a way that verbal teaching can't produce.

And so when he puts you into the same fire as they are in, your understanding grows and you're able to be more patient. Maybe he gives you more information.

He broadens your understanding of those perplexing people. Maybe he gives you more insight or clarity into how things are working. He brings in other variables, other considerations, things we never thought of before.

[ 19 : 04 ] And now we do. And that's what you see in Psalm 103. That's what you see in Psalm 103. In verse 13, it says, well, why as a father does the Lord have compassion on his children?

So the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. Why is the Lord compassionate? The next verse answers it, for, because, he knows how we are formed.

He remembers that we are dust. God's patience and his compassion come from a deep understanding of how we are created, how we are made, and how frail we are.

We are dust. You know, when you're impatient with someone, you very rarely, probably never, are really taking into consideration their frailty,!

Their frailty,! Their weakness! You're probably not really appreciating how weak or even damaged they are.

[ 20 : 20 ] Now, we live in sort of a victimized culture where almost everyone's a victim, but I think we don't want to go over too far and say that, you know what, no one is a victim.

And the reality is because we are born into a sinful world surrounded by sinners living in sin, people are hurt.

Sin does damage. People are not only sinners, they are sufferers. And when you suffer, it does make it hard for you to get your whole life together, isn't it?

We're rarely at our best when we're suffering. And I just want to say, brothers and sisters, we are all suffering in one way or the other. We are all suffering. We're all shipwrecks in one way.

We're all sort of like Paul and all of his shipmates. They were blown about in the water for 14 days and now they're wrecked on Malta and they come waterlogged walking onto the shore.

[ 21 : 25 ] Well, that's a picture of all of us. We've been shipwrecked in sin and now we're walking off the shore and yet there's a lot of us, it's all of us, we're still waterlogged and we're still carrying the scars and the bruises of that past life and I want to say God sees that.

God knows how frail we are and how broken we are. He knows our created weakness and he knows the damage of sin and he understands us so he's patient with us and that's how patience grows in us.

Patience grows with understanding. Listen to a few Proverbs and ask yourself, is my impatience just a sign of my folly?

Is my impatience just a sign that I'm acting or thinking like a fool? Proverbs 14, 29, a patient man has great understanding but a quick-tempered man displays folly.

A patient man has great understanding but a quick-tempered man displays folly. A patient man has great understanding. It's not only wise to be patient, it's not really saying that even though that is true, it is wise to be patient, but this verse is saying a patient man shows and displays that he has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays his folly.

[ 23 : 10 ] So a man's great understanding makes him patient and his quick-tempered man displays his folly. Proverbs 19, 11, a man's wisdom gives him patience. It's to his glory to overlook an

offense.

So where does patience come from? Wisdom, insight, understanding. And so really what Proverbs is saying is what we need to do is think harder, think broader, think deeper, go deeper into your thoughts.

Things are probably not as simple and straightforward as you're making them out to be. You're probably missing something. You need to broaden your considerations.

You need to take into account other factors. Wisdom does that and is patient. A fool just simplifies things and reduces it, cuts it short, and then we're impatient with people.

And maybe most of all how God improves our understanding is he shows us ourselves. It's not only understanding of other people, it's understanding of this person.

[24:37] We all know what it's like to be berating someone and then to have that epiphany moment of the thing that I am so upset about is something that God has been so patient with me about that I'm really no better than this person.

this thing that I'm so impatient about is the very thing that God's been so patient with me about, and we've all been there, that startling, humbling reality, and it makes us shut our mouths, doesn't it? And we say, what am I doing? I'm really no better. That deeper self-understanding, the greater clarity of who I am, that's God teaching me patience.

The fool is blind to himself. The fool is blind to his own failures, and he feels so justified at being impatient with everyone. But the wise man knows that we all stumble in many ways.

So I guess what I'm saying is when you pray for patience, don't expect a magical answer. Expect a crash course in wisdom.

[26:02] Expect a crash course in self-understanding. Expect a crash course in God revealing more of you to yourself. Expect a crash course in experience.

Because what is God doing? Again, he's not nailing and stapling apples to an oak tree. He's changing who we are on the inside.

He's changing how we think about ourselves and about others and about the world. And so God answers prayer with a light shined into our lives and into our world where we have a deeper understanding.

That's number three. And I guess just to say before we move to number four, what does that mean? In your moments of impatience, impatience, or if you have a life, sort of a life of impatience, you need to really ask yourself, am I thinking deeply?

What am I missing here? What am I not taking into consideration? Because if there is a reason that God is being patient with this person, there has to be a reason for me to be patient with him.

[27:18] if God is willing to be patient with him, God has some sort of understanding that I'm missing, and I need insight into that. So seek for wisdom, think more deeply.

That's number three. Number four, how does God deal with our patience, or how does God teach his patience? He deals with our idols. Because what does impatience come right down to? It's just the fact that something I want, I'm not getting when I want it.

My world is not the way I want it to be. One of my idols, at least one of my idols is not being fed and properly adored. So I'm not getting the respect I want.

So I'm impatient. The house isn't as clean as I want. I'm impatient. Two ladies come down to the theater, in the theater, halfway through the movie, talking and trying to find a seat, and I'm impatient.

And then two ladies five minutes later get out of their seat and realize that they're in the wrong movie and talking the whole way, and I'm impatient. The kids are loud and I want peace and quiet. We can go on and on.

[28:22] I'm not getting obedience, so I'm impatient. And really in almost all these cases, respect and cleanliness and obedience and public consideration and all the rest.

I mean, we can multiply examples. They're all perfectly good things, all good things that I like, all good things that would be really nice to have. God. But they're things that I have now elevated to the status of an idol.

And now I'm going to sin if I don't get it. And now I'm going to just say, God, I don't like what you're doing in your world. I don't like what you're doing in my life because this idol is not being properly fed and cared for and adored.

So how can God teach us patience? How can he teach us patience and leave those idols in place?

He can't. So he begins the work of uncovering those idols and dealing with those idols. More than that, he shows us his superior glory.

[ 29 : 28 ] And patience really is just about not giving God the glory he deserves. Psalm 103 calls it the fear of the Lord.

It's having a high view of God. And a high view of God that permeates your life. That's what the fear of the Lord is. It's this high view of God that permeates and changes and affects your whole life.

And impatience really is a sign that we're not glorifying God like we ought. We're not fearing him as we ought. And so we're blind to his agenda, his rights, his desires.

All we can see is what I want, my desires, my agenda. And so how do you, if you want patience, pray that God would exalt himself in your eyes.

Glorify himself in your eyes. And so that now it's not my agenda, it's okay, what God, what are you trying to do in this moment? It's not what are my rights, but what are his rights?

[ 30 : 31 ] not what I deserve, but what he deserves. Pray that God would take your heart, own it all and reign supreme and conquer every rebel power.

Pray that he would go up, the idols would go down. It's the fear of the Lord for his glory, his majesty, his agenda, his rights to become so real and so pressing upon your heart that in that moment, the moment of trial, that you don't react with impatience, but you react with the question of, okay, what does God want me to do right here?

What's God's plan for this minute? What's God's agenda for this moment? What does he deserve here? What are his rights here? And you pray that functionally God would be your God.

that he would fill your heart and mind and just as his glory fills his heart and mind, that we would be like him and that his glory would fill our heart and our minds.

Not just in word, but really his glory is weighing upon us and when his glory is weighing on you impatience is going to be squeezed out and you're going to be saying, Lord, what do you want for me?

[ 31 : 57 ] is there something for me to do? Is there something for me to suffer? What do you want me to do in this moment? Number five, this is our last point.

How does God make us patient? He teaches us to trust him. He teaches us to trust him. You know, we need to remember that we are waiting on the Lord.

we need to remember that we are waiting on the Lord. Patience comes when we remember that.

That we are waiting for God to act, to move, to help, to change.

We're waiting for his time. I'd encourage you to go back last year or so to listen to Pastor John's own sermons on waiting on the Lord.

You can still find them on the church website. What does it mean to wait on the Lord? What does that look like? Because the battle for patience is really the battle for faith.

[ 33 : 03 ] Will I trust the Lord in this moment? I mean, we read 1 Peter's account, or 1 Peter this morning about Jesus under this persecution, and he doesn't lash out with slander and lies and anger and impatience.

What does he do? He entrusts himself, to God who judges justly. He trusted the Lord in that situation. So the battle for patience is the battle for faith.

When we are impatient, we are not trusting the Lord. We're not trusting his heart. We're not trusting his power, his goodness, his faithfulness.

And so, God teaches us to be patient by teaching us that we can trust him, that we really can trust him. And so, that begs the question, so how does the Lord teach us to trust him?

Well, by putting us into hard situations and showing that he's trustworthy. By putting us into situations that demand patience and where we have to wait, and then he comes through for us.

[ 34 : 21 ] Faith is that muscle. Faith is a muscle that needs worked out. And so, God builds patience in us by making us be patient.

Where we have to wait weeks, and months, and years. And instead of drastically and radically changing the situation, he wonderfully upholds us, and he's there every moment, and we learn through the days, as the days go by, not alone.

I can count on him. I can trust him. Until either now or later, he finally works out his will. That's what we see.

Deep and unfathomable minds of never failing skill, he treasures up his bright designs and works his sovereign will. You know, God will take you to the edge, down and make you look into the mind,

and all you see is the darkness.

And he'll make you look in the darkness and say, I'm going to bring something good out of there, and all I see is darkness. But at last he comes and he brings his jewels out, and we can trust him.

[ 35 : 32 ] And that doesn't happen once, does it? Oh, that we can learn faith in one go, but we don't. Again and again, God makes us learn and wait, and we grow with each opportunity.

And so I guess bring your present impatience to God, to who he is, to his characteristics. Bring your impatience to his promises, and think about what he's done in the past.

We're too forgetful. Think about what he's done in the past. Has he ever let you down? Has he ever proven to be untrustworthy? Has he ever abandoned you?

Where you went into that situation and the Lord did not help you or uphold you in any way? Aren't his ways best? Doesn't he love you? So time and again he's been faithful.

And over time all that evidence begins to build up. That's one of the wonderful things about being a Christian for longer. You have a longer track record to look back on.

[ 36 : 43 ] You have more experience. You've seen things. You've gone further down the road, and God's walked with you further, and your faith builds and grows, and we learn to wait, and we learn to be patient, and he teaches us to wait quietly and hope expectantly so that we're not only waiting patiently, but we're waiting hopefully and cheerfully.

We know the Lord's going to do something good, because we know him. When Jonathan Edwards died suddenly of smallpox, he was a healthy man.

The ideas of vaccines were rare, or were new, and he was vaccinated for smallpox, but instead of really being vaccinated, he contracted the disease.

babies. And so in the prime of his life, he was about 50-something, in the prime of his life, with lots of years still left, he left, he passed away with a wife and children still at home.

And his wife Sarah wrote a note to their grown daughter, and she said this, what shall I say? put yourself into her place.

[ 37 : 58 ] She's living on the backside of the woods. She has children at home. What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud.

Not a bad God. A holy and a good God has covered us with a dark cloud. Oh, that we may kiss the rod. And lay our hands on our mouths.

That's patience. That's patience. The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long.

But my God lives, and he has my heart. My husband's dead. God is alive. He has my heart. Well, how can you have patience under trial and under difficulty?

Well, you can when God has your heart. When you trust him. Poor Sarah was broken, heartbroken.

[ 39 : 05 ] She loved her husband, and he died suddenly and so sadly. But you see how sweet her spirit was. And she had learned patience. She had learned to trust God.

how? Ten children. A not altogether easy husband to live with.

Eventually a husband that was disliked and removed from his ministry. Jonathan Edwards is adored by a lot of people nowadays and looked up to and revered, but his own congregation kicked him out.

And Sarah, they were forced to out of their home that they had lived in for 20 years or so, and they were forced to the edge of the frontier. Sarah had learned sweetness, not by magic, but ten children, not enough money, people in her church that she would love and should have been able to trust, but had turned against her.

But all the time, God was big, and he was getting bigger, and God was good, and she was seeing more and more of it. And so, she was growing from the inside out.

[ 40 : 35 ] And so, when the moment of this great trial came, she could still trust. She could still wait. She could still be patient. She passed the test.

And brothers and sisters, that's what God is doing in your life. Sarah Edwards' God is your God, and his agenda in her life is his agenda in your life.

So God is doing that in your life. And so, just don't lose heart. Don't lose heart. Grow in your understanding. Grow in your understanding.

Do that heart work. Wait for the Lord. and trust him. He's our slow-to-anger God. And he is set and determined and he is going to make us just like him from the inside out.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you that you are at work in our lives every moment and every day, that you have plans for every little thing in our life.

[ 41 : 41 ] All the trials and the difficulties, the setbacks, the things that bring us grief and the things that bring us joy. It's not only the hard things that we learn to trust you, but it's in your blessings.

And in either case, we learn that you are a good God. God, you're a holy and good God, and so we echo what Sarah said about you. And we thank you that you're at work in our hearts and our lives to make us patient, to make us sweet, where there used to be nothing but bitter selfishness and impatience.

Thank you that you love us not because we are beautiful, but you love us and you make us to be beautiful. And so I pray that for my brothers and sisters here, that you would encourage their hearts, that you would increase their understanding, that you would grow their patience, and that in all things that we would be steadfast in putting on patience, and warring and fighting against our quick tempers, and our quick to not trust, and our quick to speak.

Help us to be, quick to listen, and slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Lord, bring salvation and light to all and to everyone here.

There are lost sinners in our presence, set on themselves, bent in on themselves, impossible for any one of us to reach. Pray that you would reach down and begin making great changes in their lives by putting Jesus on the throne of their hearts.

[ 43 : 32 ] I pray that you would do that for his sake and his glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.