

New Mount Zion M.B. Church



*140 West Maple Street
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**New Mount Zion M.B. Church
Bible Class July 6, 2020**

***“Understanding The Fruit of The Spirit”
4th Fruit***

The quality of forbearance and self-control which shows itself particularly in a willingness to wait upon God and his will. Believers are called upon to be patient in their expectations of God's actions, and in their relationships with one another.

Patience is the ability to take a great deal of punishment from evil people or circumstances without losing one's temper, without becoming irritated and angry, or without taking vengeance. It includes the capacity to bear pain or trials without complaint, the ability to forbear under severe provocation, and the self-control which keeps one from acting rashly even though suffering opposition or adversity.

The usual Hebrew expression for patience is related to the verb “to be long” and involves the idea of being long to get riled or slow to become angry. Two different Greek words are translated by KJV translators with the word “patience.” One of the words has the idea of “remaining firm under” tests and trials and is better translated “endurance” or “steadfastness.” The other Greek word is related to the above Hebrew meaning and refers to patience as “long-spiritedness” or “calmness of spirit” even though under severe provocation to lose one’s temper.

The great biblical illustration of patience in operation is God himself. Several passages speak of him, in conjunction with other gracious attributes, as “slow to anger.” In a context which stresses Israel’s rebellion and provocation of God, he is contrasted as a God who is forgiving, gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in loving-kindness (Neh 9:17). The psalmist declares, “Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ps 86:15; see also Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; Ps 103:8; Jl 2:13; Jon 4:2). In addition, the virtue of a patient spirit on the part of mankind is extolled in the OT, especially in Proverbs (14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 25:15; see also Eccl 7:8).

The NT also stresses the patience of the Lord. It is God's kindness, forbearance and patience that lead people to repentance (Rom 2:4). This attribute of God is seen clearly in his patient enduring of Pharaoh who fitted himself for destruction (Rom 9:22). God was patient in holding off the flood for the sinners of Noah's day while the ark was being built, thereby giving more time for repentance (1 Pt 3:20). Probably the greatest of the NT references to God's patience is in 2 Peter 3:9.

The delay in Christ's return is not an indication of slowness on God's part, says Peter, but of his long-suffering, not being willing that anyone should perish.

A specific reference to Jesus Christ's patience is made by Paul who claimed that, in his case, Jesus was able to demonstrate perfect patience (1 Tm 1:16).

Patience then, which is an attribute of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, is also to characterize each Christian. Paul's prayer for the Colossians is that they might demonstrate this quality (Col 1:11). It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), an attribute of love (1 Cor 13:4), and a virtue (Col 3:12; see also 2 Tm 3:10). In addition, Christians are exhorted to be patient (1 Thes 5:14). If we are not, we will be treated as the slave in the parable which Jesus told. This slave pleaded with his lord, to whom he owed a great sum, for patience, promising to pay all. The lord was patient and forgave all the debt, until he found out that the slave had refused to show the same patience to a fellow servant who owed him a pittance in comparison (Mt 18:26–29).

In some contexts, the word “patience” takes on the more general meaning of waiting long and expectantly for something. The farmer waits patiently for the crop to come (Jas 5:7b). Abraham waited patiently for God’s promise to give him the land of Canaan to be fulfilled and died without seeing what was promised, although still believing (Heb 6:15; 11:39). Finally, all Christians are commanded to be longsuffering until the coming of the Lord (Jas 5:7a).

Such patience is characteristic of God's dealings with sinful men, who are fully deserving of his wrath (Is. 48:9; Ho. 11:8). His protecting mark on the murderer Cain (Gn. 4:15), his providential rainbow sign to a world that had forfeited its existence (Gn. 9:11–17; cf. 1 Pet. 3:20), his many restorations of disobedient Israel (Ho. 11:8–9), his sparing of Nineveh (Jonah), his repeated pleadings with Jerusalem (Mk. 12:1–11; Lk. 13:1–9, 34; Rom. 9:22), his deferment of Christ's second coming (2 Pet. 3:9)—these are all expressions of his patience.

Job is a Bible character who is an epitome of patience or longsuffering. He was a very rich farmer from Uz and doubled as the head of a large family. He lived a just life and walked right with God until Satan was permitted to barrage him with a series of attacks and take away his possessions- thousands of sheep, camels, oxen, donkeys, and even his ten children.

Job held on to his faith albeit the second series of attacks he had to endure, this time his health. Nonetheless, he refused to curse God and die, as his wife had advised in Job 2:9. Shortly after, the human side of Job began to question God's motives for his severe physical condition. The situation was made worse by the arrival of his friends, who accused him of his troubles due to secret sin.

Patience is not often easy to demonstrate. Looking for the perfect job, waiting for a life partner, hoping to conceive children, being the victim of an injustice, long lines at the checkout counter, and bumper-to-bumper traffic are just a few of the situations in which it is easy to be impatient. Often, we can even feel that our impatience is a righteous anger in the face of irritations and trials. It is human to feel this impatience, but we are called to trust in God's divine timing, sovereignty, and love. The Bible praises patience and lists it as part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) that is built up in us when we follow Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Because our human nature is not inclined towards patience, we must make the choice to build patience into our character. As with everything else, however, we need God's strength and grace to develop this fruit in our lives (Colossians 1:11). The trials that we face are opportunities for us to perfect our patience through Christ's support (James 1:2-4). We are called to rest in God's perfect timing, which is beyond our linear understanding, when we face unfairness and wicked schemes (Psalm 37:7). Our development of patience hinges on our hope that "the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:7-8) and that "The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him" (Lamentations 3:25).

Jesus exhibited patience as well when he was led to the cross. The writer of Hebrews gives Jesus as an example for our endurance: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Human's natural response is impatience and frustration, but since we have been made new creations in Christ, we can practice developing patience (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have the strength of God and the hope in God's promise to always work in our favor to lean on while we develop this difficult characteristic. Romans 2:7 reassures us that, "to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life."