

**Strength for Today (1-21-2013)**

**Biblical Patience**

“Walk . . . with patience.” - Ephesians 4:1-2

Patient Christians endure negative circumstances, cope with difficult people, and accept God’s plan for everything.

In our instant, microwave, drive-through, “I want it now” culture, patience is hard to come by. We get upset if we have to wait too long in the supermarket line or get stuck behind the guy driving ten miles per hour under the speed limit.

But today’s Scripture tells us that our lives need to be marked by patience. The Greek word translated “patience” literally means “long-tempered.” A patient person doesn’t have a short fuse or lose his temper.

There are three aspects to biblical patience. First, patience never gives in to negative circumstances, no matter how difficult. God told Abraham He would make him into a great nation and give Canaan to his descendants (Gen. 12:2, 7). When God made this promise, Abraham and Sarah had no children. They had to wait far past their childbearing years before God gave them a son. But Hebrews 6:15 says, “Having patiently waited, [Abraham] obtained the promise.” “He did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom. 4:20). He trusted God and patiently waited for Him to fulfill His promise. A second aspect of patience is coping with difficult people. Paul tells us to “be patient with all men” (1 Thess. 5:14). This is applied gentleness—a spirit that refuses to retaliate. Our normal reaction is to be defensive when provoked. But a patient person bears insult, persecution, unfair treatment, slander, and hatred. You can’t start a fight with a patient person. He defends God, not himself, knowing that He will repay all wrongs at the right time.

Third, patience accepts God’s plan for everything. It doesn’t question God. A patient person says, “Lord, if this is what You have planned for me, that’s all right.” Romans 8:28 says, “We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Since God is in control, we can be patient, waiting for Him to work out His will.

**Suggestions for Prayer:**

Ask God to help you recognize when you're apt to be impatient. When those times come, pray for strength to endure them.

**For Further Study:**

James 5:10 says the prophets were examples of suffering and patience. Read what two prophets had to endure in Isaiah 6:9-12 and Jeremiah 1:5-19. How might they be examples to you as you seek to be faithful in the face of life's tests?

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