

Patience: “Bear with Each Other”

MATTHEW 18:21-35; COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

Life cannot be lived in isolation. We live in the context of relationships, good or bad. Impatience and anger, justifiable or not, are often our responses to unpleasant situations and people.

Just as God models for us love, joy, and peace, we see that he is also the perfect example of patience in relationships. His wrath and anger against sin are quite real. But this righteous anger is “slowed down” by his great love for us. He is long-suffering and patient with us, and asks us to be the same with others. With so many frustrating situations in our lives, we have boundless opportunity for the fruit of the Spirit to blossom into patience.

1. When do you get most impatient: with irritating people or irritating circumstances? Explain.

READ MATTHEW 18:21-35.

2. What did the first servant ask of his master? Why do you think he then responded to his fellow servant so differently?
3. Half of the Greek word for *patience* in verse 26 (*makrothumia*) means “anger” and the other half means “long” or “slow” (i.e., handling anger slowly). What does this definition tell us about how we are to apply patience?
4. What is the relationship between forgiveness and patience?
5. Are you comfortable with a God who expresses both wrath and patience? Why or why not?

6. Name some ways you have seen people express impatience and anger inappropriately.

What is God’s solution to this problem?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-14.

7. Paul described the believers in Colosse in the beginning of verse 12 as “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” Do you see yourself like this? Why or why not?
8. How does knowing how God sees us affect how we treat other people?

9. Paul listed several virtues that express love and patience. In what ways can this kind of loving patience benefit families, churches, and the world?

10. What theme is echoed in this passage that was also stated in the parable in Matthew 18?

11. How has God expressed his patience to you?

12. Is there someone in your life right now toward whom you need to show patience?