

God's Patience Plan

(Relationships in Flight, part 4)

Pastor Bob Johnson, November 4th, 2018

The Picture of Patience:

- **having ...** (Ecc. 7:8-9)
- **remaining ...** (James 5:8)
- **reflects ...** (1 Cor. 13:4, Eph. 4:2)
- **develops ...** (James 1:3-4)
- **leads ...** (James 1:12)

The Problems Lessening Patience:

1. **O ...**
2. **E ...**
3. **P ...**

The Plan For More Patience:

1. **Reflect before ...** (Prov. 14:29)

Two Questions To Ask:

- **Why ...**
- **What ...**

2. **Respond with ...** (2 Chron. 20:12, Mt. 6:9-10)
3. **Respond with ...** (Eph. 4:26, Prov. 29:11)
4. **Relate with ...** (Prov. 22:24-25)

This Week's Discussion Guide:

For the next three weeks, we'll be digging deeper into our study of the Fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23. As we study these character qualities God desires to develop in our lives as Christ followers, let's prayerfully seek God's wisdom in how God can strengthen the relationships in our lives.

Getting Started:

How are you???? What has happened in your life since we last met (good or not so good) that we can rejoice with you or pray with you about?

We are all waiting on something! The best way to develop patience is being given opportunities to wait. What things (big or small) are you waiting for these days?

The last of the four steps to develop more patience in our lives from last Sunday was, "Relate with other lengtheners." It is important to spend time with and build community with others who want to mature in their faith and character.

How have others helped encourage you and equip you to be more patient?

We all get impatient at times. Can you think of a time where you were 'less patient' than you wanted to be? What prompted the frustration? How was your impatience expressed? Were you more verbal, emotional, physical? Were you more expressive ... or did you keep it all in?

James 5:7-8 says that we are called to be patient as we wait for various things. James encourages us to consider the farmers who patiently wait for rain and a harvest. From this example, it is clear that waiting is not passive. While we wait, what are some actions we can take to help us develop patience and remain steadfast?

Digging Deeper:

1. There are many stories in Scripture where people were given the opportunity to wait well. Abraham, Joseph and Job are three examples in the Old Testament. What do you remember of one or more of these stories regarding opportunities to be patient?

2. Read Exodus 34:6. God is described as merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

How have you seen God exhibit these attributes toward you?

3. One of the many Bible stories illustrating the patience of God was His dealing with Nineveh. The prophet Jonah recognized God's patience. Read Jonah 4:1-2. Why was Jonah angry? We can be thankful that God is more patient and gracious than we often are. If God struck out at people as quickly as humans frequently do, we'd all be dead!

Read 2 Peter 3:8-9. Why is God patient with sinners like us and others like the people of Ninevah? As God has been patient with you, what acts of repentance (change) have you seen in your life?

4. Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. How is pride and a preoccupation with self at the root of impatience?

5. Read Ephesians 4:1-3. Paul encourages Christ followers to 'walk worthy' of the Lord. In doing so, patience is one of the qualities he encourages us to pursue. How is patience linked with the other attributes Paul mentions?

6. Read Romans 14:1-4 and Romans 15:1-2. What insights do these passages provide in how we can be patient with others?

Looking Ahead: (Personal Application)

This last section is based on passages like the one below:

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.
James 1:22-25 (NLT)

Let's take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on this last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out.

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other.

As we learn and apply His truths to our lives, may we experience more of the patience that is available to us.