

Faith That Works Msg 10
 How To Develop Patience
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
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(Video Clip From Kicking & Screaming) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ozpkzjl-oCU>

That clip reminds us that WE ALL HATE TO WAIT

We hate hearing the words

- “Can you wait just a minute” or
- “Let me put you on hold” or
- “There’s been a delay on the delivery of the item you ordered.”

Waiting can be one of the toughest things in life

It’ 2 in the morning and your teenager’s curfew was 11:00PM and he’s not answering his cell phone - - all you can do is wait

You’re the maid of honor in your little sister’s wedding - - - she’s five years younger than you - - - she was NOT supposed to be the one getting married first - - all you can do is wait

For 5 years you’ve been on dialysis four hours a day, three times a week, and every day you wait, hoping to receive the call that there’s a kidney available for transplant.

But that call hasn’t come - - all you can do is wait

WE ALL HATE TO WAIT

Waiting is what we’re looking at this morning as we continue our study through the book of James. . . .

If you have your Bible or your Bible app . . .

Open up to . . . JAMES 5:7-12

“Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord’s return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.” James 5:7-8

“Don’t grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look - the Judge is standing at the door! For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.” James 5:9-10

“We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.” James 5:11

“But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned.” James 5:12

Would you like to be a more patient person?

There’s no shortcut, there’s no secret formula for patience

It’s one of the things that God’s Spirit grows or produces in us as we walk with him and cooperate with the work that he is doing in us

Galatians 5:22 identifies it as one of the F.O.S.

It says . . .

“But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, PATIENCE, kindness, goodness, faithfulness . . .” Galatians 5:22

But don’t miss the PREREQUISITE there

It’s . . . **when the Holy Spirit controls our lives**

That this is produced.

God knows the damage that impatience does to our lives, and so He is committed to producing patience in us.

Some of you might wonder . . . if God knows how difficult it is for us to have to wait . . .

If he knows that we are by nature people who are not patient . . .

Then how does he deal with that struggle that we have?

Some of you might think that the way that he would deal with our impatience would be to just put us in ideal situations where everything is cool and calm and peaceful and relaxing.

But that's not the way it works.

Because if those are the situations that we're in, we don't need patience and we'll never grow to become more patient people.

At the very beginning of this book of James

James chapter 1 and verses 2-4 from the Phillips paraphrase

"When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of patience." James 1:2-4

Have you ever stopped to think that God allows some of the tests and trials that we go through in life specifically for the purpose of producing patience in us?

Think about it!

People who have lived problem-free lives tend to be more impatient than people who have dealt with struggles.

None of us are born patient, but patience is something that all of us need.

When Do I Need Patience?

Let me give you three situations . . .

1. When circumstances are Uncontrollable

There are a lot of things in life that are beyond our ability to control.

James uses a farmer as an example of this.

"Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring." James 5:7b

Farmers spend a lot of their time waiting.

- Waiting to plow
- Waiting to plant
- Waiting to harvest....

There are a lot of things that they have to wait for, and there are a lot of circumstances over which they have no control.

They can't control the weather.

They may have too much rain, they may not have enough rain.

It's out of their control.

They can't control market prices

They can't control interest rates on the loans that they need to do their farming.

They can't control labor practices - it's possible that they could have a bumper crop and not be able to get it to market.

So many things are beyond their ability to control that the only way to survive is to learn patience.

It's the same way in our lives - we constantly come up against situations and circumstances that are beyond our control.

It's then that we need patience.

1. When circumstances are Uncontrollable

A second time we need patience is. . . .

2. When people are Unchangeable

Have you ever noticed that most people resist change.

And if they resist change in general, they particularly resist anyone trying to change them.

It's a fact of life that some people won't change and your only choice is to be patient with them.

AS AN EXAMPLE of this James points to the prophets.

"For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord." James 5:10

The responsibility of a prophet was to sound a warning to the people of a coming judgement and to call those people to change - to come back to God.

It wasn't a happy job because people naturally resist change and resent people who try and change them.

Have you noticed that?

You may have a wonderful self-improvement plan for your husband or your wife and they are not cooperating with your plan.

The reason is that people resist change

In the Greek Language, there are two words that are often translated "Patience"

One of them has to do with being patient with circumstances that are out of our control.

The other has to do with being patient with people.

It's interesting that only one of these two words is ever used to describe God, and it's the one that has to do with PEOPLE.

The reason that that other word is never used to describe God, is that he never had to be patient with circumstances that are beyond his control, because there are no circumstances that are beyond his control - - but He does have to be patient with people - - with you and me who are slow to change.

The Greek Word for patience which has to do with people is a compound word made up of two words . . .

The word for "Long" and the word for "Heat"

The idea is that if you are patient it will take you a long time to boil over

You've heard of someone who has a short fuse - - patience means you have a long fuse.

It's having the ability to count-down before you blast-off.

We need patience when circumstances are uncontrollable.

We need patience when people are unchangeable.

We also need patience when . . .

3. When problems are Unexplainable

Life is not always fair -

Maybe THE BEST EXAMPLE of that in the Bible is THE CASE OF JOB.

James says....

"You know about Job, a man of great endurance." James 5:11

Job was a contender in the SUPER-BOWL OF SUFFERING.

He as the wealthiest man alive in his time, he owned a huge spread, lots of cattle, lots of children, Maybe the Bill Gates or Warren Buffet of Bible times

And yet in a two-day period he lost it all - he went bankrupt - his children were killed - and he contracted an incurable disease that was exceedingly painful.

Job lost his family, his friends, his finances, he suffered materially, mentally, spiritually, socially, physically - in every conceivable way.

His situation was so bad that his wife actually suggested that Job should just "Curse God and die".

But the worst part of Job's suffering was that he had absolutely no idea why it was all happening to him.

And for 37 chapters of the book of Job - - - God doesn't even talk to him.

Job had no clue as to why the things were happening to him had happened.

And the point is that when God is silent - I've got to be patient.

Patience is trusting God when he doesn't give the answer.

We need patience when....

- When circumstances are uncontrollable.
- When people are unchangeable.
- When problems are unexplainable.

Some of you are in situations right now that are testing your patience. . .

Situations where you have to wait

And that situation is an opportunity for God to grow patience in you

Some of you are waiting and hoping and praying and longing to have a child, and still no child.

Some of you are waiting for the results from medical tests or a biopsy or your waiting for chemotherapy or other treatment to be effective

Maybe you're waiting for someone you love to change or break a habit.

Maybe you're waiting to hear whether you got the job or got a loan

If you read through the Bible you'll see that every person God used in a powerful way had to go through times of trial that God used to develop patience in them

Noah waited 120 years before he ever saw rain

Abraham waited until he was 100 before he saw the fulfillment of God's promise of a son

Moses waiting 80 years for God to call him to be the deliverer of his people.

Jacob waited 7 years for the woman he loved, Rachel, to become his wife

And then because he was deceived by her father he had to wait 7 more.

Jesus waited 30 years to begin his ministry here on earth.

Even though most of us would want to be able to fast-forward through those times of waiting, God often uses times of waiting in our lives to mold us into the people that he wants to grow us to become people of patience.

Some of you here today had dreams when you got married

And your marriage hasn't matched your dream

And you've prayed about it and you've wept about it and maybe you've even gone to counseling.

But barring a miracle it seems like things will never change.

Patience for you means refusing to walk away when so many others would.

Patience for you means to refuse to have an affair when it would be so easy.

Patience for you means cooperating with God's process of transforming you into the kind of marriage partner that you ought to be, instead of waiting for God to change your spouse.

Patience isn't just about waiting . . .

It's about what you do while you're waiting . . .

Some of you are single . . .

And you wonder whether the gift of marriage will ever be given to you, and you feel the pain of loneliness.

Patience for you might mean . . .

Refusing to give up on life and instead pouring yourself into self-sacrificing service instead of being consumed by self-pity.

Patience for you might mean . . .

Refusing to settle for a lesser relationship that could lead you away from God

How Can I Develop Patience?

Let me give you three suggestions . . .

1. Remember That Nobody Is Perfect

Nobody is perfect.

You're not

I'm not

Nobody is

That's one of the reasons that James tells us . . .

"Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged." James 5:9a

Our MEMORY VERSE for this week is Ephesians 4:2

It says . . .

Memory Verse

"Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Ephesians 4:2

Let me encourage you to circle those two words . . .

"Making Allowance"

That means giving people the freedom to have a bad day.

Proverbs 14:29 tells us . . .

"Whoever is patient has great understanding..." Proverbs 14:29

Patience and understanding go hand in hand.

If you want to have patience with people you need to try and understand life from their perspective.

You need to understand that the difficult people in your life, most likely weren't just born that way

They may be that way because they've suffered from hurt, or from frustration or from fear.

And usually if you look closely at them, you'll find a wounded or frustrated or insecure person.

Some of you grew up in difficult family situations.

Perhaps with parents who had a hard time expressing emotion, or with parents who were unpleasable

And it may be that if you could go back and look at the home that they grew up in you would understand something about why they were the way they were.

Maybe that boss you have who is so difficult and so critical and tests your patience every day had a father they could never please and is driven by a need to prove their worth.

These things don't EXCUSE the way that they treat you, but they can help you to understand.

There was a book that came out several years ago on mothering, the title is

"I Didn't Plan To Be A Witch"

The subtitle is "I was going to be a princess, but instead I had seven children."

Remember That Nobody Is Perfect.

I want to challenge you right now to think about that person, or those people who really try your patience.

That person who you find difficult to love, or perhaps you do love them, but you find it hard to be patient with them.

Instead of saying "God change those people who are irritating in my life",

Why not say "God help me to remember that nobody is perfect and so start working on me and my attitude."

And once you've taught me patience, then you can start working on those other people.

Remember That Nobody Is Perfect.

A second thing you can do to cooperate with the Spirit's work of growing this fruit in you is to . . .

2. Remember That God Is Working While I'm Waiting

James writes . . .

"You know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end." James 5:11b

Don't miss those last three words . . .

"At the end"

What that reminds us of, is the truth that God does not work according to our timetable.

I recently was reminded of a story that I've shared with some of you, but I needed to hear it again.

A true story about a man named Roger Simms

Roger had just gotten out of the military and he was hitchhiking home.

To his surprise a man in a shiny new Cadillac stopped to give him a ride.

The driver was a silver-haired, handsome, well-dressed distinguished looking man.

The driver said, "I saw your uniform, I was in the service too, I just thought I'd give you a ride."

They talked about everything under the sun.

The driver told the soldier his name was Mr. Hanover

Roger, the serviceman who had just gotten out of the military was a Christian, and he felt a strong prompting from the Lord to talk to this man about Jesus.

The thing was, Roger didn't have a lot of experience in sharing his faith, so he didn't say anything.

Finally, just a few minutes from his house where Mr. Hanover was going to drop him, he realized "It was now or never."

Roger cleared his throat and said, "Mr. Hanover, I would like to talk to you about something very important, would you like to know more about Jesus?"

To his surprise, the guy pulled the car over.

Roger thought he was going to kick him out.

But the businessman bowed his head over the steering wheel and began to weep.

He said, "Yes, Yes. Not only do I want to know more ABOUT Jesus, but I want to know Jesus. I want to receive Him into my life. "

"Picking you up is the greatest thing that's ever happened to me."

And Roger is thinking "It's not supposed to work this way."

"I just said one sentence and this guy is ready to receive Jesus."

So he prays with this man, Mr. Hanover, who a few minutes later drops Roger off at his house

Before he left him, Mr. Hanover reached for his wallet, took out a white business card and handed it to the soldier.

He told him, "This is where you can find me if you're ever in Chicago."

Five years go by.

Roger Simms meets a girl, gets married, they have a child, he starts a business.

God blesses that business.

One day he has to travel to Chicago.

He came across the business card that Mr. Hanover had given him five years before - - - on the card it says "Hanover Enterprises."

He decides to look him up while he's in the city to see how he's doing.

He goes to the address on the card.

It's a huge downtown building.

He tells the receptionist, "My name is Roger Simms. I'd like to see Mr Hanover."

She said, "I'm sorry sir. That's not possible."

Roger wouldn't take no for an answer.

He said, "I'm sure he'll remember me. I'm the hitchhiker he picked up one afternoon five years ago."

The receptionist said, "It's not possible for you to talk to Mr. Hanover, but if he's an old friend, you can see Mrs. Hanover."

Roger was puzzled, but he agrees.

Almost immediately Roger is face to face with Mrs. Hanover who said, "You knew my husband?"

Roger said, "Yes, he picked me up when I was on my way home from the war."

Mrs. Hanover says, "What day was that? I mean the date?"

He said, "It was five years ago in the spring."

It was May 7th. I remember the date because it was the day I was discharged from the service."

Mrs. Hanover asked, "Did you talk about anything special? I mean, how was he that day?"

Roger said, "We talked about many things."

And then he paused and said, "Mrs. Hanover, we talked about SPIRITUAL THINGS."

He said, "Mrs. Hanover, your husband accepted Jesus Christ that day."

As soon as she heard that, Mrs. Hanover began to sob uncontrollably.

After several minutes she regained her composure and apologized, she said, "You were the last person to see my husband alive."

"I prayed for my husband's salvation for many years, but on May 7th five years ago, he passed away in a head-on collision, apparently just after he let you out."

She said, "I was so angry at God, that I had waited so long, and for what? For nothing!"

"For the past five years I've been so bitter against God."

What she couldn't see was that God was working while she was waiting.

What Roger Simms didn't realize was that when he received that prompting to share Christ with that man, there had been years of other people sharing Christ with him, praying for him, working behind the scenes.

There may be long periods of time when it seems like heaven is silent . . . like your prayers aren't getting any higher than the ceiling.

Never forget that God Is Working While You Are Waiting.

A third thing you can do to cooperate with God's work of growing patience

3. Remember How Patient God Has Been With Me

If you and I want to develop patience we can begin by remembering how patient God has been with us.

Why is that important?

It's important because

You will never have to be more patient with anybody else than God has already been with you.

In fact, one of the next steps on the back of your study notes is to

Ask God to teach me to be as patient with others as He is with me

Romans 2:4 says . . .

"Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?"
Romans 2:4

You study through the New Testament and you will be amazed at the patience our Lord demonstrated toward his disciples.

Think of Peter...

The epitome of inconsistency.

One minute Peter would say "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God....I'll die for you!!!"

The next minute he'd say "Jesus who???? -- I don't know the man???"

One minute Peter is walking on water, the next minute he's drowning in doubt.

The amazing thing is that Jesus put up with Peter –

Most likely there was no one who tried the patience of Jesus more than Peter -- that is until you and I came along.

God is patient --- and His patience is the reason that he does not send his son Jesus Christ back into this world to close the book on the history of man.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” II Peter 3:9

God says, "I could end the world right now but if I did there would be some of you here who would not be ready".

You haven't made your peace with God yet.

And he doesn't want to see any of you spend an eternity in hell -- and so he delays -- waiting for unbelievers to turn to him and repent.

That's the reason that Jesus is waiting to return to earth - he's waiting for other people to come to know him.

Do you need patience?

- Remember that Nobody is Perfect
- Remember that God is Working While You're Waiting
- Remember How Patient God has been with you.

Some of you struggle with a little impatience.

For others of you it's a raging battle

Making It Personal

Where do I need patience today?

Take a moment and think of your particular situation.

Wherever you are when it comes to this fruit of God's Spirit, **I'd like to pray for you right now.**

Would you bow your heads with me?