

# Patience is a virtue

October 26, 2020

**PROVERBS 14:29 NIV - (29)** Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

An elderly lady walks up to a pharmacy register in a store. The pharmacy consultant walks up to her and asks, "Can I help you?" The elderly replies by saying "Ehh (What did you say?)" The consultant asked again, "Can I help you?" She replies, "Ehh (What did you say?)" The consultant asks again, "Mam, can I help you?" She replies, "Ehh (What did you say?)" By now the consultant is getting with the elderly lady and he walks down to the floor in front of her and asks, I sais "Mam, can I help you?" The elderly lady say never mind, I can't understand you! By the way, do you have any batteries for my hearing aid?

We all have pretty much heard of the term, "Patience is a virtue." What does that mean? The ability to wait for something without frustration is a useful skill and a good aspect of one's personality.

When everything is going our way, patience is easy to demonstrate. The true test of patience comes when our rights are violated—when another car cuts us off in traffic; when we are treated unfairly; when our coworker derides our faith, again. Some people think they have a right to get upset in the face of irritations and trials. Impatience seems like a holy anger. The Bible, however, praises patience as a fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**) which should be produced for all followers of Christ (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**). Patience reveals our faith in God's timing, omnipotence, and love.

Although most people consider patience to be a passive waiting or gentle tolerance, most of the Greek words translated "patience" in the New Testament are active, robust words. Consider, for example, **Hebrews 12:1**: "Therefore since we also are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Does one run a race by passively waiting for slow-pokes or gently tolerating cheaters? Certainly not! The word translated "patience" in this verse means "endurance." A Christian runs the race patiently by persevering through difficulties. In the Bible, patience is persevering towards a goal, enduring trials, or expectantly waiting for a promise to be fulfilled.

Patience does not develop overnight. God's power and goodness are crucial to the development of patience. **Colossians 1:11** tells us that we are strengthened by Him to "great endurance and patience," while **James 1:3-4** encourages us to know that trials are His way of perfecting our patience. Our patience is further developed and strengthened by resting in God's perfect will and timing, even in the face of evil men who "succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes" (**Psalms 37:7**). Our patience is rewarded in the end "because the Lord's coming is near" (**James 5:7-8**), "And the Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him" (**Lamentations 3:25**).

So, how do we display the patience that is characteristic of Christ? **First**, we thank God. A person's first reaction is usually "Why me?", but the Bible says to rejoice in God's will (**Philippians 4:4**; **1 Peter 1:6**). **Second**, we seek His purposes. Sometimes God puts us in difficult situations so that we can be a witness. Other times, He might allow a trial for sanctification of character. Remembering that His purpose is for our growth and His glory will help us in the trial. **Third**, we remember His promises such as **Romans 8:28**, which tell us that "All things work for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." The "all things" include the things that try our patience.

The next time you are in a traffic jam, betrayed by a friend, or mocked for your testimony, how will you respond? The natural response is impatience which leads to stress, anger, and frustration. Praise God that, as Christians, we are no longer in bondage to a "natural response" because we are new creations in Christ Himself (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Instead, we have the Lord's strength to respond with patience and in complete trust in the Father's power and purpose. "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life" (**Romans 2:7**).

**SCRIPTURE READING: PROVERBS 15:18**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** Patience is not simply the ability to wait – it's how we behave while we wait.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"