

Russell Kelfer

The Patience of Job

#1210-B

Series: The Fruit of the Spirit

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

The Patience of Job

The year was 1853. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the fate of a Christian mission which had been in operation some fifteen years in Ongole, India. The problem was, that in those fifteen years, only ten converts had been reported. Fifteen years: ten conversions. That was the issue. One member of the board which was to decide the mission's fate was Samuel Smith, the man who wrote "My Country 'tis of Thee". Moved by the need not to succumb to the temptation of placing God on man's timetable, Smith wrote these words:

"Shine on, Lone Star, in grief and tears, and sad reverses oft baptized:

Shine on amid thy founder's fears; lone stars in Heaven are not despised."

As the Board met to deliberate the fate of the church in Ongole, Samuel Smith read that brief verse which God had laid upon his heart only the night before. The Board was moved and voted unanimously to continue the work. Thirty years later, that church had grown to 15,000 members. What had Smith been asking for? *Patience*.

John and Charles Wesley were blessed with a mother who possessed that quality. One day her husband was heard to remark, "I marvel at your patience. You have told that child the same thing twenty times." Susannah Wesley looked fondly at the child. She answered, "Had I spoken the matter only nineteen times, I should have lost all my labor." *Patience*.

Patience is the God-given ability to wait. Patience is not looking at your watch, even when someone is late. Patience is not harassing God, because He has not answered. Patience is remaining at your post far into the night, when all who served alongside have long since abandoned theirs. Patience is allowing God to take the backroads to accomplish His

The Patience of Job

purposes, even though you had invited Him to join you on life's crowded freeways. Patience is the absence of any and all expectations that have alarm clocks attached to them.

Patience is a virtue that cannot be measured except by eternal standards. It is a quality of life that grows richer the longer it exists, and yet *even the process of becoming patient requires patience*. Thus, it is a self-perpetuating miracle. Patience is a gift from God to all believers. If you are a Christian, you have within you the capacity to be patient. The reason is that God is in you, and God is...perfect patience. That is why Paul told us that the fruit God produces in you when He is allowed to be Himself includes that miraculous expression of His nature.

It is that aspect of His beautiful character that we are focusing our attention upon in this study. It is our goal to define it; to describe it, to determine how to appropriate it, and to actually set about to see ourselves become increasingly...patient.

Thus, our title and our outline reflect those goals:

“The Patience of Job”

I- Patience Defined

II- Patience Demonstrated

III- Patience Described

A- Principles Revealed

B- Illustration Reviewed

PATIENCE DEFINED

There are really two basic families of words used in the New Testament to illustrate patience. While they are not used interchangeably, because *the thrust of their meaning is different*, they are nonetheless so closely related that both are essential to this study. The first is the word found in Galatians 5:22 to indicate that quality of the nature of God that reveals Himself in us as patience: “*makrothumia*”. It is used some fifteen times in the New Testament, and in the King James version is often translated “longsuffering”. It's literal meaning is to be “long-minded; slow to anger, patiently forbearing”. It

The Patience of Job

is virtually always used of people-patience; that is, of either God's ability or ours to patiently wait upon man.

The other root word: "*hupomone*" literally means "a remaining under; a bearing up under; the act of patient endurance; of remaining in place when others have gone". So the differences and the similarities are clear.

1- One kind of patience deals specifically with people; the other with circumstances or things.

2- One kind of patience is used of God; the other isn't.

3- One kind of patience has to do with our ability to be steadfast in a position in which we've been placed, regardless of the visible results; the other has to do with our ability to be tolerant of others, their shortcomings, and their timetables, *based on the realization of how tolerant God is with us.*

Both, however, are really expressions of the same aspect of God's nature...*His perfect patience.* Both are wrapped up in this quality of His character referred to in Galatians five.

If we relate those characteristics to God's character, we define patience this way:

Patience is an attitude of heart that is:

- a) so in awe of God's mercy that it accepts others without condemnation (patience with people),
- b) so confident of God's sovereignty that it does not recoil from the adversities of life, knowing they produce what God is after (patience with circumstances), and
- c) so satisfied with God's timing, that it never questions how long it takes to bear fruit, see results, or receive God's promises...knowing that the ultimate reward is not here and now, but there and forever (patience with God).

That's what it means to be patient. It means that you do not rush to judge another because God has been so tolerant of you. It means you do not try to fit others into your mold or your timetable, for you did not make them, God did; and *if God is that patient with you*, who are you to be impatient with one He has custom designed? It means you do not flee

The Patience of Job

from adversity, but rather you welcome it. It means you do not badger God for immediate answers, because the process may be more important to Him than the answer. So quietly you wait. It means you keep on keeping on *whether or not you see results*, because you are not laboring to see results, you are laboring to obey God. The results that last may well not be visible until you enter Glory. It means you cling to that promise, not because you see it coming to pass, but because God said it would. *And God's promising it is the same thing as seeing it, if you walk by faith.*

Patience. Only God can give it; so non-believers can't have it. Only we can release it, so God's not at fault when we let the clocks rule our hearts or our tempers. Only the man or woman who is walking in the Spirit can ever fully experience the miracle of its splendor, for it is a fruit of God's Spirit set free to reveal Himself in a life which often, left to itself, would be anything but patient. If you want to know what the Scripture says about it, please be patient. That is what the rest of this lesson is all about.

PATIENCE DEMONSTRATED

The best way to visualize how any quality of God's nature looks when it is revealed through man is to look at Jesus. He was all of God shining through the life of man, without the filter of sin to hinder it. So Jesus was perfect love, perfect peace, perfect joy, and perfect patience. God the Father, as He revealed His nature to Israel, demonstrated the exact same qualities, yet we did not see them in human form. Always, however, the reflections are identical, for they are One God.

Patience is no exception. If you want to visualize patience, look at God. If you want to look at God, look into the Scriptures. "These are they which testify of Him." Indeed they do. Let's take a look, then, at the patience of God. First, Romans, chapter two. There Paul has been systematically building a case for the guilt of the unbelieving Gentile world, all the time leading his Jewish readers into a corner, so that as they begin to judge these who had so flagrantly disregarded God, they would simply reveal their own unbelief. In verse three, He draws the net, and He brings to the surface the primary quality of God

The Patience of Job

they are overlooking. The Living Bible paraphrases it this way:

Do you think that God will judge and condemn others for doing them (these things) and overlook you when you do them, too?

Don't you realize how patient he is being with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see that he has been waiting all this time without punishing you, to give you time to turn from your sin? His kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

(Romans 2:3,4 TLB)

Oh, the patience of our God. While we sit in judgment of others, we allow ourselves to be blinded to the reality that we are guilty or have been guilty of virtually everything which we condemn. Yet, instead of marvelling at the patience of God, we turn to devour those who, but for the grace of God, are where we would be. Oh, the patience of God. Were it not for His infinite patience, would you even exist today? Would you be in the Kingdom today? How long did you make Him call to you? How many times did you ignore His voice? How often did you, even after you heard His call, put Him on hold? And how many times, yea, how many thousands of times since you came to Christ have you rebelled in your heart and lived life your way? Beloved, Paul just said it. Don't you realize how patient He is being with you? Or don't you care? And don't you see that *His patience toward you is your pattern of behavior toward others?*

Do you not see that many of us were saved in spite of our rebellion, just to demonstrate God's patience? Listen to Paul. Again, Ken Taylor paraphrases it this way:

Oh, how kind our Lord was, for he showed me how to trust him and become full of the love of Christ Jesus.

How true it is, and how I long that everyone should know it, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I was the greatest of them all.

But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as an example to show everyone how patient he is with even the worst sinners, so that others will realize that they, too, can have everlasting life.

(I Timothy 1:14-16 TLB)

That may be why God called you: to show forth His patience.

The Patience of Job

And that's why Christ hasn't returned yet. It's His incredible patience. The Amplified Bible says this:

Nevertheless do not let this one fact escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord does not delay and be tardy or slow about what He promises, according to some people's conception of slowness, but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance,

But the day of the Lord will come...

(II Peter 3:8-10a Amplified Bible)

Jesus is bearing the scorn of even His own, as they mock Him and cry, "Where is the promise of His Coming?" Either directly or through innuendos, pastors and laymen alike preach and teach and live as though He were not coming at all. Yet even His delay is but a sign of His patience. *He simply does not want to leave anyone out.* When all who will come, have come, Beloved, look up! That day will come. It will come indeed.

Your God and mine is the epitome of patience. Every breath He breathes reflects the patience of His Spirit. Patiently, he waited for us to say, "Yes". Patiently, He forgives, again and again. Patiently, *He delays His return until all have come.* "Consider the longsuffering of our God...". Consider just how patient He has been with you. Then begin taking a look, as we will do now, at the degree to which you reflect that *very same patience* in your dealings with others.

PATIENCE DESCRIBED

That, then, is our *motivation* and our *illustration*. Our God has demonstrated His infinite patience towards us in our salvation, in His forgiveness, and in the timing of His return. We must ponder those truths every time we tend to be impatient with those around us. So the guy you work with has to be shown the same thing a thousand times? *Be patient. Demonstrate Christ.* That's no more often than God has to show you something before you begin to put it into practice. So your mate keeps making promises, but doesn't quite deliver? So

The Patience of Job

he or she is never on time? So the children drive you wild by asking the same questions over and over? Be patient, Beloved. *Be patient, as patient as God is with you.* He listens. He loves. He waits.

He says to you: “Now I want you to release My patience to a waiting, wondering, weary world. A world that is growing more impatient by the second.”

God’s Principles Revealed

Now let’s look momentarily at the principles in Scripture that surface as we look at the patience of God and its corresponding effect upon us. As we do, let’s try to apply those principles to our willingness to release the patience of God in our own world.

1- A patient spirit is required of all who serve the Master. I believe some of the most impatient people in the world are Christians. We somehow, instead of seeing our place in the back of the line as servants, seem to think as the King’s Kids we ought to have some kind of pass that gets us front seats in the drama of life. If the line is too long at the supermarket, we murmur. If the kid behind the counter at McDonald’s takes thirty seconds instead of twenty to take our order, we are furious. If the discount store puts us on hold when we call, we fume. If our car is not ready when we expected, we rant and rave. And yet II Timothy says this:

And the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome—fighting and contending. Instead he must be kindly to every one and mild-tempered—preserving the bond of peace; he must be a skilled and suitable teacher, patient and forbearing and willing to suffer wrong.

(II Timothy 2:24 Amplified Bible)

Mild-tempered. Not quarrelsome. Patient. Willing to suffer wrong. Oh, what an impact you and I could have on our world if we lived that kind of life. But that’s not a superman suit we can put on when we arrive at the end of our pilgrimage; that’s the *normal* Christian life for every believer. It is a life of incredible patience. You and I ought to have the patience of Job.

The Patience of Job

2- Patience is especially necessary in those who would lead.

I Timothy 3 describes a church leader this way:

A bishop (church leader) must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

(I Timothy 3:2,3)

God's man who would lead God's church has a series of responsibilities that Scripture makes crystal clear. They reflect his family, his self-control, his motivations for serving, and *his patience with others*. The man who cannot be patient with the those in the flock, cannot be a shepherd. Why? The Good Shepherd, whom He represents, is perfect patience... that's why. The shepherd ought to have the patience of Job.

3- The older men in the church ought to be displaying an increasing amount of patience in their dealings with others.

Urge the older men to be temperate, venerable (serious), sensible, self-controlled; sound in the faith, in the love, and in the steadfastness and patience [of Christ].

(Titus 2:2 Amplified Bible)

In other words, the older you get, the more patient you ought to have become. Instead, we use old age as an excuse for being testy, selfish, irritable, inconsiderate. God's way is always the opposite. Want to see patience in action? Then, according to God's plan, look at those who have walked the walk and lived the life the longest. They ought to be sensible, sound, self-controlled, and patient. They ought to have the patience of Job.

4- The best way to become patient is to graciously submit to pressure. Now I know you're tired of hearing that the fruit of the Spirit is best produced under pressure. We heard it of love. We heard it of joy. We heard it of peace. It is Truth, and with its description of each of those reflections of God's Spirit, the Word reminds us how we release it. We let God test us, and through the testing, when we cannot naturally be loving,

The Patience of Job

joyful, peaceful, or patient, God in us does it *supernaturally*. And thus, in the process, He both produces His nature in us and His witness through us. Not only is patience no exception, it is probably the most specifically explained. Listen to Romans,

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3-5)

The Living Bible paraphrases that beautifully. Listen:

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient.

And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.

(Romans 5:3,4 TLB)

James 1, of course, echoes that refrain. In the Amplified Bible, it reads:

Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort, or fall into various temptations.

Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience.

But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed (with no defects), lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4 Amplified Bible)

There you have the big three. The trio of meanings of those Greek words we translate longsuffering and patience. Endurance, steadfastness, patience. All of them are manifestations of God's nature. All of them are produced when we let God put pressure on us, and when we respond properly to the pressure He gives us. Listen carefully to what James tells us. "Let endurance and steadfastness and patience have

The Patience of Job

full play and do a thorough work...” Don’t interfere with what God is trying to do in the ovens of your life. Stop screaming. You’ll never develop patience. Stop running. You’ll never develop patience. Stop being angry. You’ll never develop patience. *Patience is developed when you let her finish what she started.* When you let God complete His work of testing His way, you can rest assured, that whether you see it or not, your character is growing more and more and more like His. That, you see, is a promise, from a God *who always keeps His promises.*

5- Patience never questions how long God is taking to bear fruit (Luke 8:15), see results (I Peter 3:20), or receive the promises (Hebrews 10:36).

What that means is that you not only do not panic looking at the clock; you do not panic looking at the calendar. You have not been called to measure results, but to exhibit faithfulness. Some till the soil, some plant, some water. *God gives the increase...if and when and how He chooses.* Churches and Christian groups and individuals who measure their effectiveness for Christ in numbers or growth may look around in Heaven and wonder where the harvest is. Others who may have labored in the vineyard for a lifetime, with virtually no visible results, may but reach the Master’s Throne, only to be surrounded by lives which have been touched by theirs. That’s what Luke 8:15 means by those who represent the seed sown on the good soil... “they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

Bringing forth fruit with patience means letting God be the fruit-bearer. It took Him a lifetime with Moses. A lifetime with Abraham. A lifetime with Joseph. A lifetime with Elijah. And along the way, those men felt as though they had labored in vain...Moses on a hillside, tending sheep; Abraham waiting, waiting, waiting, for the promise; Joseph wasting away in a dungeon cell; Elijah wondering why by a drying brook. But all the while, a faithful God was whispering, “Be patient, my child, be patient. In due season, if ye faint not...” (Galatians 6:9). Again, God Himself is our example in I Peter 3:20. There we read that God waited patiently, while Noah was building

The Patience of Job

the ark, even though only eight souls were saved.

God wasn't in a hurry. God wasn't measuring time by numbers. Eight souls. All that time. All that work. All that waiting. God simply was patient. It wasn't *how many* would be saved, it was that *the will of God be done*. The will of God because it deals with eternity, takes time.

Don't you press God for answers on your schedule, either. While you're badgering Him to hurry, you're missing the blessing of that heavenly parenthesis in which He is accomplishing His work in you. That's what it means in Hebrews when it says:

For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise.

(Hebrews 10:36)

Doing what God wants doesn't guarantee you instant results. It only guarantees you eternal rewards. The longer you have to wait to receive the promise, the more faith you have to appropriate to live the life, so why should He hurry? When maximum glory will be accrued to His name, and maximum blessing accrued to your life, God will answer. Until then, you ought not to want Him to. Patience. Oh, to have the patience of Job.

God's Illustration Reviewed

Which brings us to the last point in our study of patience. Why Job? Why does God measure patience by Job? Why not Moses? Why not Paul? Why Job? Didn't Job do a lot of fussing and complaining? Didn't Job get bitter and angry? Didn't Job wish he were dead? Didn't Job dare God to show up and defend Himself? Then why "the patience of Job"? Let's read the passage first, and analyze it afterwards.

Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

The Patience of Job

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

(James 5:7-11)

What an incredible passage of Scripture. Christians are being instructed to patiently endure until Jesus comes. Have you ever noticed how many passages that deal with patience also deal with the Second Coming of Christ? The reason is simple. Here is our great promise. Here is the reason for our enduring affliction and suffering and pain. Jesus is coming again! All things will become new. Don't you see, Beloved, this world is not where it's at! It takes an "other-world" mentality for you to be able to live patiently, in this one. Because Jesus is coming soon, we can endure; we can wait; we can be patient with both God and man. Just as the farmer endures patiently the rains, the rocks, the weeds, and the worries, because when the crop comes in, it's worth it; so we as believers can endure, patiently endure, anything and everything this life sends us. Because when Jesus comes, it will be worth it all.

James goes on then and says, "So you be patient. Establish your hearts. Jesus is coming soon." And "don't condemn or judge your brother", he goes on; *the real judge is at the door*. When He comes, He'll do the judging; that's not our job." Then he gives us God's illustration book of patience. He reaches back into the Old Testament and reminds us of the prophets and how they suffered, yet how they patiently endured. Then he comes to the paramount illustration.

...Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

(James 5:11)

From that one passage of Scripture has come generation after generation of men who have used the expression, "the patience of Job," to illustrate someone who quietly endured, or who waited without questioning. "You have heard of the patience of Job." What is the significance of that phrase? How can it help us to exhibit the patience of God? I believe these

things must be considered:

1- We were told to consider the prophets and how they suffered affliction patiently. Patience was the result of suffering. According to James 1, it still is. No one suffered more than Job. God allowed it, because Job was worthy. Since Job is the ultimate in unjust suffering, (He lost everything, for no apparent reason), Job was the recipient of patience commensurate with his suffering.

2- Consider the sequence of events. First, Job demonstrated patience. He lost *everything*, and responded, “The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” Then, having seen Job demonstrate patience, by patiently taking whatever He sent, God turned up the furnace of affliction, using the thermostat of time. He just let him sit and wait... and wait...and wait. When nothing happened, Job, who had so demonstrated patience, now *developed patience*, even as he complained.

3- We were told we have seen the end of the Lord. The key isn't just how patient Job became, it's how gracious God was. It might well read, “Ye have seen the patience of God with Job.” It was God who was patient. The end was a revelation of God's mercy, and of God's pity. The real power in this passage focuses on God, not Job. Job was onstage, but God was in the Heavens orchestrating a conflict with Satan, and developing in his most precious saint an even deeper level of patience than he had. He was *already his most patient saint*. No small wonder, then, that God chose him to test the more. The test was a tribute to Job. The end result was a tribute to God.

So my friend, don't pray for the patience of Job unless you are willing to undergo the testing of Job. And most of us aren't. But should you be willing for God to send you whatever would best stretch your heart, then that's a healthy prayer to pray. Remember, it is the trial of your faith that exercises patience. It is your responding to that trial as Job did, acknowledging that God can do with you *whatever He chooses*, that will free God to release His Spirit of patience in you.

In the final analysis, that's what He wants. He wants you to allow Him to do what He wants, so you can become what

The Patience of Job

He wants. And one thing He wants is men and women...with the patience of Job.

You say, "How can anyone want such a life at such a price?"

God answers, "Jesus is coming soon: in the light of that fact, how can anyone want anything else?"

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer

(10.16.12)