

CCC HOW TO DEVELOP PATIENCE P14

Developing A Faith That works - Part 14

James 5:7-12

A lot of your life you spend waiting. As a little kid, I waited all my life to start school, then I couldn't wait until I got out of school, then I couldn't wait to fall in love, then I couldn't wait to get married, then I couldn't wait to have kids, ... we spend a lot of our lives waiting and waiting.

There are many things in life that test our patience: freeways, supermarket lines, doctor's offices, irritating people. I think overall for the most part we all hate to wait.

We are part of the Now Generation. We do not like to wait. I am a very patient except when I'm hungry. Then I lose my character.

Today we're going to look at what James has to say on "How to Develop Patience." You need patience in every

area of your life. In this passage, James uses the word "patience" or "perseverance" six times. He uses three different illustrations to teach us when to be patient, why to be patient, and how to be patient.

WHEN SHOULD I BE PATIENT?

Now I want you to understand that James isn't saying we have to be patient all the time but there are three special times when you need that extra dose of patience:

1. **When circumstances are uncontrollable** - Have you figured out that a lot of life is beyond your control? You cannot keep your thumb on everything. James uses a farmer as an example of when circumstances are uncontrollable. v. 7 *"Be patient then brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is ..."* Don't go into farming unless you've got patience. Part of the job

description of being a farmer is you do a lot of waiting: waiting to till, waiting to plant, waiting to prune... there are a lot of factors in waiting. Yet more than the factors of waiting on things to do are the factors that the farmer has no control over -- weather, rain, heat, the economy, labor practices... As a farmer you deal with a lot of uncontrollable factors -- uncontrollable circumstances -- in life and have you noticed that even when we realize a situation is beyond our control, we still try to control it? How do we do that? By worrying. We think that worry will control a situation. The bible says, to worry about something you can change is foolish, to worry about something you can't change is useless. We need to have patience in uncontrollable circumstances.

2. When people are unchangeable - When people won't change. When they won't make a difference. He gives an

example of the prophets. *"As an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord."* What was the duty of prophets? To help people change, to bring them back to God, to be different in their behavior, to change their lives. Have you noticed that most of us resist change? It doesn't come easy.

Let me ask you a question? Do you have anybody in your life right now who refuses to change? We need patience with people. God's word, the bible calls them, "irregular people" -- they are people who only see their own way and sorry to say, "they may never change." Even if they themselves know they need to change. James says to have patience. Let God's word and Spirit direct you in your living and give you patience. When should I be patient.

3. When problems are unexplainable - The classic example he gives is in verse 11, *"You have heard of Job's*

perseverance ..." Job played in the Super Bowl of suffering and he won the championship. He was the wealthiest man that ever lived. He had everything going for him. In a two-day period, everything fell apart. He went bankrupt, his children were murdered, he got an incurable, deadly disease that was very painful. You think you've got problems, you think you've had a rough day! He lost his family, his friends, his finances. He was suffering materially, physically, socially -- every kind of way. One day his wife comes to him and says, "Curse God and die!" Now that's a support system and just have to think here that God has a sense of humor even. God allowed the devil to take away everything in Job's life except for one thing... a nagging wife. The worst part of Job's suffering was that he had absolutely no idea why it was happening. For 37 chapters in the book of Job, God doesn't even talk to him

and tell him why it's happening. There was no apparent reason for his misfortune. Of all people, Job had the privilege to say, "Why me?" Life is not fair! That is true. God never said it would be fair. A lot of things in life just don't make sense. Maybe we'll never understand on this side of heaven. Job didn't understand. In all of those unexplained problems, Job maintained his faith. Sometimes we just can't figure out our problems.

WHY BE PATIENT?

1. Because God is in control - *"Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."* v. 8. Three times in this passage, James says, "The Lord's coming is near, Jesus is coming back. That is the ultimate proof that God is in control of everything. God is saying be patient because I am in control of it all and nothing can stop it. The Bible talks more about Jesus' second coming -- when He comes

back to judge the world -- than it does about His first coming." He's got it all planned out, everything is on schedule, nothing is late, it's all moving toward a climax. Make sure you try and get this; God's purpose for your life is greater than any problem you're facing right now. You and I may wonder sometimes where are you God... God is in control. Yes, a situation may be out of my control, but no circumstance is out of God's control. Although I can't control everything that happens in my life, God can so why wouldn't I trust Him. Listen if you're a Christian you've surrender your drawing to the Lord and trusting Him, God's timing is perfect, He's never late. Some of you here today maybe are experiencing a real delay right now but God's delays never obstruct or hinder His purpose.

2. God rewards patience. - v. 11a *"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered."* Circle

"blessed". The second half of Job's life was more blessed than the first half. God doubled everything he had. It pays to be patient. There are all kinds of rewards. Your character grows, you get along with people better, you'll be a happier person, and you'll reach those difficult goals. There are lots of benefits of being patient and God rewards it. You'll be honored by others. They'll say, "He's a patient person."

But not just on this side of eternity, but on the other side you're going to be rewarded. Matthew 5:13-14
"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." When people put you down, when they

criticize you, be patient, because there's going to be a reward in heaven.

It is our natural tendency -- one of the strongest desires in life -- that when you're hurt, you want to get even, you want to hurt other people. You want to retaliate, get revenge, take matters into your own hands. When you get criticized, you want to criticize back. If you get insulted, you want to insult back. Revenge, retaliation are the natural thing -- but that's the opposite of patience. James says that the next time someone criticizes you, before you strike back, think about this, is it worth giving up the reward I'm going to have in heaven? You need to be patient because God is in control and He's going to reward patience. Why be patient?

3. Because God is working things out - Often behind the scenes, things we don't even see, God is at work but we

don't see Him at work. A delay does not mean a denial. If you've been praying for an answer to prayer and you haven't gotten it, you may think God doesn't want to give it to you. No, a delay is not a denial. We have to learn the difference between "no" and "not yet" and there is big difference. Philippians 2:13 *"God is at work within you."* Maybe you can't see it, but He is. Romans 8:28 *"And we know that in all things, God is working."* In every circumstance in your life, God is working. Be patient. I don't know what kind of problem you have this week, but regardless of the problem you're going through (financial, relational, health) God is working in that problem if you've surrender and asked Him too. Be patient and trust Him.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING WHILE I'M WAITING ON GOD?

1. Wait expectantly

Just like a farmer expect a harvest. I must believe that it is inevitable, that I've done the right thing, I've done my part. Now, what does a farmer do while he's waiting on God? Does he just sit and watch reruns on television all day? No, while he's waiting on the harvest, the farmer is preparing for the answer. He's getting ready. He is doing what he needs to be doing, and part of that is that waiting patiently shows your expectation. We demonstrate our expectation by our preparation. We get ready for the answer in advance. Psalm 130:5 (LB) "... *I wait expectantly, trusting God to help, for He has promised.*" Circle "expectantly". What are you waiting for from God? Maybe to heal a long-term illness, or to transform your marriage, or to reverse your financial problems or for God to reach your teenagers for Christ? Do you really expect Him to do that? The Bible says, "*According to your faith it will be done*

unto you." If you do expect God to do it eventually, James says, "prove it!" How can you prove that you're expecting God to do something? Simple. What are you doing to get ready for it? Are you preparing for the answer? If the answer came today, would you be ready? How can I prepare? The way you get ready for something is by preparing in advance. While you're waiting you're preparing. Preparing demonstrates expectation.

I have found out for myself over the years that a lot of times when I'm waiting on God, He's really waiting on me. He was ready to give the answer a long time ago but I wasn't ready to receive it. He's saying, "Grow up! Get some spiritual depth in your life. I want to bless your life but you can't handle the blessing I want to pour on you, you're not ready to handle this blessing. When you've got some spiritual muscle in your life, some spiritual stability,

I'll bless you beyond what you can imagine." Waiting is a time to get ready. Prepare. Isaiah 49:23 *"The Lord says ... No one who waits for my help will be disappointed."*

2. **Wait quietly**

James points out the fact that we have a tendency to run off at the mouth when we're irritated, when we're tense, when we're under pressure, when things aren't going our way and things aren't under our control. James warns us of two things to avoid.

1. *"Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged."* Why does he talk about grumbling right in the middle of patience? It's hard to be quiet when you're frustrated. When you're frustrated, you want everybody to know you're frustrated. You want to grumble, mumble, moan and complain. We don't mind waiting if we can complain about it. I'll wait if I can gripe while I'm doing it.

James says, "Don't grumble". The New English Bible says, *"Don't blame your troubles on one another."* When you get up in the morning, do you rise and whine about it, complain about. When you rise do you rise saying, This is the day the Lord has made I will choose to rejoice and be glad in it or do you say "Good Lord it's morning, yuck. ? You hit the ground griping? Everything is bad! If you come home at night dog-tired, it's because you growled all day long that's why your dog tired...!

v. 12 *"Above all, my brothers, don't swear."* Does waiting ever tempt you to swear? Sometimes when I get frustrated I feel like cussing. I have a lot of patience with people but I don't have a lot of patience with mechanical things. What happens when you get uptight? When you're frustrated and things aren't going your way and things are beyond your control? How do you normally respond?

Typically, we take it out on those closest to us. We unload on our husbands, our wives, our children, and it's not even their fault. But we're frustrated and impatient. We displace our anger and focus it on those we love the most. James says don't do that.

Do you have a dream, a goal in life, a vision that God's given you? God says it will be right on target, at the right time, in the right way.

You wait expectantly and you wait quietly.

3. Wait confidently

Job never lost his confidence in all that he did. When the outlook is bad, you look up. Micah 7:7 *"I will wait confidently for God."* How do you do that? You have hope. Hope is Holding On Praying Expectantly -- HOPE. When you've got a problem that's unexplainable, a person who is unchangeable, a circumstance that is uncontrollable

then wait confidently. God is working. How do you wait confidently? Sit still. Don't get nervous, anxious. You don't take matters into your own hands and work things out. Ps. 37:7 *"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him to act."*

Let me ask this morning... Where do you need to have patience this morning? Do you have an uncontrollable circumstance in your life right now? Maybe you're in a job situation and your boss has told you to do something that's beyond your control and you don't want to do it. Maybe you've had a financial reversal that was beyond your control. Maybe you have a long term illness. Maybe you've got an unchangeable person in your life. It's frustrating when you tell your kids something to do over and over and they don't do it. It's frustrating when you want to make the marriage work and you're willing to change but

your partner is not willing to change. It's frustrating when you have a parent who's growing old; their idiosyncrasies are coming out and they're dependent upon you. There's that cantankerous relative that, every time they are around, they cause problems. They're never going to change. You need patience with an unchangeable person. You need patience with unexplainable problems.

What do you do when you have these kinds of things? Remember what God has said in James. God is in control. It may be out of my control, but it's not out of God's control. Nothing is beyond His power and His purpose for my life is greater than the problem I'm experiencing right now. God will reward your patience, if not in this life, He will in eternity. God is working behind the scenes for a purpose.

Prayer: = Would you say, "Jesus Christ, I need patience. Help me to wait expectantly, to prepare for the answer while I'm waiting, get ready for it, act as if it's going to happen. Help me to wait quietly and not to grumble and complain about my frustrations. Help me not to take it out on those around me, those I love and displace my anger. Help me to wait confidently, to be still and trust that You're working behind the scenes. Help me not to get nervous and anxious and worried. Like the farmer, help me to plant good seeds and expect a harvest. Help me with that unchangeable person. Help me with that uncontrollable circumstance. Help me to be patient with that unexplainable problem."

Three times in this passage it says, "The Lord is coming back". Someday He's going to come back, just as certainly as He came at Christmas over 2000 years ago.

Why hasn't He come already you say? 2 Peter 3:9 says *God is waiting to come back in order to give you a chance to receive Him first.* He wants you to know Him. He wants you to commit yourself to Him. If He came back today, would you be ready to meet him? If not, today's your day. Open your heart up to Christ and say, "I don't understand it all, Lord, but I realize I need You in my life. Please forgive me for being impatient and all the other things I know are wrong in my life." The Bible says, whenever we confess to Him, He forgives us. "Come into my life. Give me patience." If He's the manager of your life, the Fruit of the Spirit is patience. God puts it in your life when He's in your life, when He's in charge. "Lord, I want You to be in charge of my life. I ask You to save me."

Father, I thank You for Your word. Help us to be patient people. I believe that today many are opening their hearts to you, some for the very first time, some saying even right now, "Come into my life, Lord Jesus Christ." I believe that You are coming into their lives. You're putting Your spirit within them. You're giving them a new start, a new approach to life. Others are saying, "Lord, I want to recommit myself to You. I've taken matters into my own hands. I've tried to solve the problem rather than by trusting You. I've tried to work it out on my own strength rather than waiting quietly and expectantly, confidently. Today, again, I turn the controls of my life over to You. I believe that You are in control. I believe that You're working behind the scenes and You'll reward my patience if not here then in eternity." In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.