



# *Patience*

by Esther Talbert

## **I. What is patience?**

### **A. Definition**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: "ability to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for a long time or when dealing with problems or difficult people."

### **B. Words in Scripture for patience**

1. Hebrew: 'erek 'appayim—literally "long of nose" or "long of nostril", referring to someone who takes a long time to show temper. Translated "slow to anger" or "longsuffering".

## 2. Greek:

- a. **makrothumia**—long of temper, or long of passion. Translated “patience” in the NASV, and “longsuffering” in the KJV.

The *New Bible Dictionary* defines makrothumia as “God-given restraint in face of opposition or oppression.” (I would add “or delay”.)

- b. **hupomone**—literally “remaining under”. Translated “patience” in the KJV, but translated “perseverance” or “endurance” in the NASV.

## II. Why is patience important?

### A. Patience is an attribute of God.

1. In the OT, patience is used most often to describe God, not men.

*“... The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.” Exodus 34:6*

*“... for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, **slow to anger**, and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.” Jonah 4:2*

2. The NT reinforces the concept of the patience of God.

*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9*

*Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and **patience**, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? Romans 2:4*

*. . . Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect **patience** as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. 1 Timothy 1:16*

## **B. We are to reflect Christ.**

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. 1 Peter 1:14-16

## **C. Patience is an attribute of wise people. (Proverbs 19:11)**

A patient person has great understanding (Proverbs 14:29), and can calm a quarrel (15:18), and persuade a king (25:15).

### III. Patience Fleshed out in the New Testament Believer

**A. Longsuffering**—The ability or determination to suffer a long time under mistreatment or provocation by others, without growing resentful or bitter. -Jerry Bridges

#### 1. Directives

*We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, **be patient** with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 15*

*Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and **slow to anger**; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. James 1:19, 20*

*[Love] is **not provoked**, does not take into account a wrong suffered. 1 Corinthians 13:5*

## 2. How do I cultivate “longsuffering”?

Meditate on God’s love and providence:

### **Because of Christ I am. . .**

- Chosen of God (Titus 1:1, Colossians 3:12)
- Holy (set apart) (Colossians 3:12, Hebrews 3:1)
- Beloved (Colossians 3:12, Ephesians 2:4)
- Loved by God the Father even as He loves Christ. (John 17:23)
- Being purified by Him to be His own possession. (Titus 2:14)
- An heir of God, and joint heir with Christ. (Romans 8:17, Titus 3:7)
- Inseparable from the love of God. (Romans 8:38-39)
- A partaker of a heavenly calling. (Hebrews 3:1)
- Called a child of God. (1 John 3:1)

“We need faith  
to believe that God will take  
care of us when others don’t.  
That’s why we can’t love  
without faith.”  
Paul Miller

**B. Forbearance**—patience that tolerates shortcomings in someone else. -Jerry Bridges

1. Directives – Compare Ephesians 4:1-3 and Colossians 3:12-14. Both deal with forbearance, humility, gentleness, powered by love, resulting in unity.
2. How do I cultivate “forbearance”?

- a. Recognize my own pride.

“For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7

- b. Meditate on God’s forbearance to me.

**C. Waiting on God’s timetable**

1. Directives

Colossians 1:9-11—This type of patience is part of walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.

2. Examples of waiting on God’s timetable:
  - Abraham (Hebrews 6: 11-15)
  - Farmer (James 5:7-8)
  - Prophets (James 5:10)

3. How do I cultivate the ability to wait on God?

Faith and obedience: believe that God knows better than we do, and be willing to obey what He has for us to do while we wait on Him.

## D. Endurance

Hupomone—perseverance or endurance or steadfastness. This word refers more to our reaction to circumstances than to people.

### 1. Directives

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to *run with **endurance** the race that is set before us.*

2 Peter 1:6 commands us to cultivate **endurance** along with other virtues as we build onto our faith.

Hebrews 10:36 says Christians have need of **endurance** in order to *receive what was promised.*

In 1 Timothy 6:11 Paul commands Timothy to flee the love of money, and *pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **perseverance** and gentleness.*

Romans 2:7 tells us that God will give eternal life to those who through **perseverance** *in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality.*

### 2. How do I cultivate endurance?

- God gives perseverance. (Romans 15:5)
- Testing of our faith produces endurance. (James 1:3)
- Tribulation brings about perseverance. (Romans 5:3; 12:12)
- Hope in the love of God. (Romans 5:5)

## IV. Common Thread

All 4 types of patience require faith in God's goodness and love to us.

1. We can **suffer long** under mistreatment of others, because God will take care of us when other people don't.
2. We can gladly **forbear** the shortcomings of others when we meditate on the forbearance of God with us, and on the fact that every good gift, any virtue we may display, is from God, by His grace.
3. We can patiently **wait on God's timetable** to answer our prayers or to end our suffering when we believe that He is good, and knows better than we do what we need and when we need it.
4. We can **persevere** amidst trials and sufferings if we have the hope of God's love, and we trust His working in our lives for our good and His ultimate glory.

So near, so very near to God, nearer I cannot be,  
For in the presence of His Son I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God, dearer I cannot be.  
The love wherewith He loved His Son,  
such is His love for me.

-Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Though War Should Rise*