

## Life to the Fullest: I Choose Patience

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Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, FL

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### INTRODUCTION

Monday morning at 7:32 AM, I faced a test. I began the day with my typical "start up" activities. I took a bundle of clothes to the cleaners, but the first shop I went to did not open until 8:00 AM. Okay. I preached on peace last Sunday, so I didn't want to lose it at 7:30 AM Monday morning! I drove to another shop across town and delivered the clothes. When I received the ticket receipt, I was told the clothes would be ready on Friday at 5:00 PM.

I tried to contain myself as I asked the assistant, "Isn't this Monday morning before 9:00?"

"Yes," she replied. "If you want it sooner, you can pay 50 cents more per garment."

I left with the original arrangement, but I realized that between Monday and Friday, I was going to have to move from Galatians 5:22, *peace*, to the next in line, *patience*.

*Patience* or *longsuffering* = a long fuse, an abiding persistence, a love that is untiring and enduring.

Patience "is a willingness to stay cool, stick in, stick to, and stick it out until you arrive at the best outcome possible."

Patience is like the boy in the department store who stood looking at the escalator. The sales lady asked, "Son, are you lost? The boy replied, "No ma'am. I'm just waiting for my chewing gum to come back."

"Love is patient . . ." I Corinthians 13:4

On this Mother's Day, what could be a better subject or a more honorable virtue for us to consider than patience? Motherhood requires great patience and persistence.

When I speak of patience, I feel it vital to rescue this word from its common misuses. Patience is not passivity, complacency or inactivity. It is not as much about time as it is about tenacity.

"We must never think that patience is complacency. Patience is endurance in action. It is not the Christian sitting in a rocking chair, waiting for God to do something. It is the soldier on the battlefield, keeping on when the going is tough. It is the runner on the racetrack, refusing to stop because he wants to win the race. Too many Christians have a tendency to quit when circumstances become difficult. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, Wheaton College, used to say, 'It is always too soon to quit.'" —W.W. Wiersbe

"The most useful virtue is patience." —John Dewey

"He that can have patience can have what he will." —Benjamin Franklin

"Rome was not built in a day." —Latin Proverb

## EXPECT YOUR PATIENCE TO BE TESTED THROUGH LIFE'S PROBLEMS

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:7

Everyday problems challenge patience:

- ◆ **Interruptions**--phone call during dinner, doorbell, work deadline when a meeting is called by the boss, getting a red light in when you are in a hurry.

Jesus' disciples were impatient with children. Jesus said to let the children come Him. They are not interruptions. They are reminders of His kingdom.

Few things interrupt life more than children, but few things enrich our lives more than these precious gifts.

- ◆ **Inconveniences.** We all struggle with the inconveniences of life. "God I want patience, and I want it right now!" —Oren Arnold, *Prayer of Modern Americans*

- ◆ **Irritations.** Irritations bring out the *best* or the *beast* in us. What really irritates you? Full parking lots? Traffic jams? Long lines? New attendant at a checkout line? Phone calls? Cold food? No coffee? Locked bathrooms? Out of hair spray?

- ◆ **Inactivity.** Elevators, red lights, etc.

- ◆ **Injustices.** There are things in life that don't seem fair. Moms know this well. They experience some things that expose, criticize or hurt their child. When this happens, get out the way because Mama is coming! There are also promotions that are given to someone else, low pay, etc.

All these things try our patience, our long

suffering. Expect your patience to be tested every day.

## ALLOW YOUR PATIENCE TO BE INCREASED THROUGH LIFE'S PRESSURES

In Scripture, there are two words used to translate our word *patience*. We have already discussed one: *long suffering*. The other word means *to abide under, to withstand, to endure*.

God and mothers both share a common occupation in the lives of children. They are both in the "character building" business.

"My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me." —Henry Ford

This is true of a mother for her children and God, our heavenly Father.

"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. Then when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love."

Romans 5:3-5 (Living Bible Translation)

God is patient. Scripture affirms this. God is in the business of building the character of Christ in us and He does it though test, trials and temptations in life. "God does not disengage us to make us holy. He develops holiness in us through the fires of life."

To the Christian, image is everything:  
“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”  
Colossians 1:27

One of the common duties of a mother is signing permission slips for her children. Likewise, as a believer, we should sign a “permission slip” to make the image of Christ real in us.

“Learn to suffer with patience. God will send frequent and probably great suffering into your life. This is His doing; He has chosen it; accept it.” —Jeanne Guyon

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR PATIENCE TO BE DEVELOPED THROUGH FOUR SIMPLE PRACTICES**

It is often quoted that “practice makes perfect.” Here are four simple steps that make a big difference when you are under pressure:

**1. Look beyond the moment.** Walls close in and light shuts out, etc. So often my impatience comes from looking at myself and measuring the whole of life based on me.

For most, this is the bottom line: How does it affect me? So often, things that interrupt and irritate me and my comfort zone become the rule of measure. Part of patience is seeing that where I am, what I face, what I do, how I act affects others and not just me.

Husbands, see life from wife’s view.  
Fathers, see life from kid’s view.

Business, see life from customer’s view.  
Employers, see life from worker’s view.  
Christians, see life from God’s view.

Nothing has greater potential to reduce conflict and increase patience than to move from making yourself the center of your world and to look at life from the viewpoint of others.

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” Proverbs 19:11

**2. Learn to laugh at yourself.** Are you too serious? Learn to find fun in your frustrations. People with a sense of humor live longer. Moms, be sure that some of the best memories your children have are those of your laugh.

**3. Let life be a journey toward love.** “Love is patient . . .” When we are impatient, we are not loving. Love is forbearing and forgiving.

**4. Let God be God.** Patience is an expression of faith. God is bigger than any problem we face. “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

Phillip Brooks, a preacher in New England, was known for his calm and poise even though he suffered from irritability and anxiety on occasion. One day a friend saw him pacing and asked, “Dr. Brooks, what is wrong?” Dr. Brooks answered, “The trouble is that I am in a hurry and God isn’t.”

This message was preached from the pulpit of Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, Florida, on Sunday, May 13, 2001, by Dr. David H. McKinley, Senior Pastor. The complete message is available on audio cassette tape through the media ministry of Boca Raton Community Church. To order this message, simply email us at [tapes@bocacommunity.org](mailto:tapes@bocacommunity.org) and specify the message title, date, and billing information. (\$4 per tape including shipping and handling).