

Wednesdays in the Word
Digging Deeper
June 17, 2020
James 1:1-4
Lighten Up!

What is the benefit to being patient? According to today's text it is one of the most necessary ingredients to being a complete man or woman. How do we learn this patience? By being tempted, tried, and tested. James tells us that when these things come upon us we are to consider it all Joy.

Many things can be said about the book of James. Many topics are brought up throughout. It is a practical book but we can question today whether any of us has truly allowed our lives to be changed by the teaching there-in. In our text today we come upon the topic of patience and a thorough study of James will show us that patience may well be the underlying core of the book. In chapter one, verses 2 through 4 we have God's formula for developing patience. Simply stated we must consider it Joy when we fall into temptations because the trying of our faith brings about patience. Patience will be perfected in us and leave us complete in Christ. Just how patient are you? How do you respond when you are in a long line and don't have enough time to wait? How are you affected when you are behind a slow driver? How do you feel when you are put on hold by an automated phone call? Dig a Little Deeper. How do you feel when you're sharing Christ and the person you're talking to just won't seek to understand or care about what you're saying? What is your response when an anti-christian antagonist troubles you just to push your buttons? What about when someone in need constantly troubles you for assistance? We will work our way through James to learn the many aspects of living a patient life. Let us start at the very end.

Why such a focus on patience? We find it in chapter 5:19-20. The last two verses of the book. When we are finally able to learn the valuable character trait that we most lack then we will be of high value to Christ in being able to convert others from their errors and see Souls saved from eternal death. Let's consider how patience makes us more useful to the Lord. Starting in today's text, as Pastor pointed out, the word patience is translated to English from the Greek word hupomone. It comes to us from two Greek root words. Hupo, meaning under or beneath and meno, meaning to stay in place. Put them together. We are being told to stay in place under or beneath the trials, temptations and testings that come our way. We must not allow our faith, our mind or our knees to buckle under the great weight of the evils that come to us through the world, the flesh and the devil (Ephesians 2:2-3).. When we sense that God is behind our testing we are under an even greater responsibility to stand strong and endure for His glory. There are many other Greek words in today's text that are interesting but so as not to burden you with them all, we will look at only one more. The word for temptations in verse two is the Greek word, pierasmos. It means to put to proof by experiment or experience. Has Satan experimented on you to attempt to cause you to fail the Lord in some way? Has God allowed an experience in your life that has tested you and tried you beyond that which you are able? Good. Then you're on the right track because God is working on you to improve you to make you worthy of His work as we saw in James 5:19-20.

Let's now go through the book of James and see how God has set up this passage to then further instruct us to be patient people. Jump down to verse 12 of chapter 1. We are told here that if we are able to endure or bear up under a temptation that we will receive the Crown of Life and yet he explains to us that that Crown is available to us simply because we love the Lord Jesus. Loving the Lord Jesus and being tempted by evil go hand-in-hand unfortunately. Whatever you're going through is allowed by God for your growth and to align you with His will. Move on down to verses 19 and 20. These verses sound so simple and yet they are some of the hardest things to do in the Christian life. Are you failing at being swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to become angry? Pray that the Lord would train you more seriously in this high calling. Notice in verse 20 that our wrath, whether internalised or displayed, fails at meeting God's requirements. Let's take a moment to discuss or ponder some ways we can cool down when we're angry. Let us also ask why we so often fail. Chapter 2 goes into a lot of detail in questioning us about our impartiality concerning others. Are you patient with others who are in need? Do you lovingly try to assist them or quickly grow impatient and try to distance yourself from them. Looking at verses 14-16, is not our patience part of our works? Confer with proverbs 3:27-28. Looking through chapter 3 we find that if we lose patience with others it will quickly be reflected through our tongue. We've all said things we wished we could take back but could not. Holding our tongue is a sign of patience. Consider verse 6 as compared to Proverbs 16:27. Have you ever burned to share gossip? Couldn't wait to tell someone what you heard? Patience would cause us to still our tongue and think it through. James refers often to wisdom as in 1:5 and 3:13. Wisdom and patience are two sides of the same coin of Godliness. Zero in on 3:17-18. The word patience is not used but reading through that list of what God expects from us, is it not filled with patience from one end to the other? Chapter 4 in its first few verses seems to describe the world we live in today and yet James was writing to Jewish Christians who were to be living Godly lives. See James 1:1. Move on to chapter 5, starting in verse 7. Our patience must even concern that wonderful day when Jesus will finally remove us from all this. We're given the example of farmers. Ever waited for a crop to grow ? Or a pool to fill ? Or a child to mature? Or a spouse to calm down? Verses 10-11 could be the key verses for our lesson today. Seeing the Prophets from days gone by who spoke for the Lord as we must, their example tells us of suffering, affliction and patience. We're told elsewhere that we have not yet suffered to the point of blood (Hebrews 12:3-4). Are our lives really so miserable? Or are we simply being schooled in the art of Christianity? Verse 11 picks up on the same thought given in chapter 1:2. Happiness comes through endurance. We are given the greatest human example of patience in Job. You may have suffered some of what he went through but he went through all of it and stayed true to the Lord in the patient hope of redemption. James' treatise on truly living a right Christian Life in the eyes of God is a powerful one. Read through the whole book when you can and ask God to help you find where you fail and give you the correcting influence of the Holy Spirit. Be the best you can be so you can serve Jesus in this lost and dying world. May God bless you and train you in his love.