Daily God Walk

Virtues Series

Patience

Daily God Walk

Virtues Series

Patience

Paul T. Smith

© 2017, 2024 by Paul Smith – New Hope Ministries
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission of the author.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:
(KJV) – King James Version
(NKJV) – New King James Version
(TLB) – The Living Bible
(TM) – The Message

New Hope Ministry Resources
2232 Terrace Ln
McKinleyville, CA 95519
paul@nhmresources.org
www.DailyGodWalk.org

Day One

Patience Is A Fruit Of The Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is… Patience… Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. – Galatians 5:22-23

Flowers, trees, and other plants produce fruit. The kind of fruit they produce depends upon the kind of plant they are. A fruit tree does not produce nuts or vegetables. Neither does an apple tree produce oranges. Spiritual fruit is the same.

Jesus said that we would know people by their fruit. He also said that a good tree will produce good fruit and a bad tree will produce bad fruit (Matthew 7:16-23). Jesus was talking about spiritual fruit in this passage. If someone is of a bad spirit they will produce fruit that is opposite of the fruit of the Spirit of God.

The particular fruit of the Spirit we are looking at in this month of devotions is patience. It is a characteristic of those who are spiritual to be patient. Think of the most Christ-like person you have known and remember the characteristics, or fruit, that was manifest in their life. Wasn't patience among them?

We often think of patience in the context of waiting for something to happen. We wait for the water to boil; we wait for certain birthdays as we are growing up; we wait for the red light to turn green. There are many occasions in our life to learn patience, but most of us, outside of the work of the Holy Spirit, do not do well at being patient. The watched pot never boils, certain birthdays are always too far away and red

lights take forever to turn green. Oh, for the virtue of patience.

The dictionary has an interesting definition of patient. The first application of the word patient is, "Bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint." The second is, "Manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain." It gives two more aspects of this word as, "Not hasty or impetuous," and "steadfast despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity." Are you ready to pray for patience?

Prayer: Lord, I've been guilty of asking for patience, and demanding it right now. Help me to submit to your guidance and allow your spirit to live through me so that the fruit of my life is the fruit of the Spirit. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Patience is a principle that grows out of walking in the Spirit.

Affirmation: As I grow in my walk of faith I am producing patience in my lie.

Reflection: There are four points from the dictionary that describe patient: Bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint; Manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain; Not hasty or impetuous; steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity. What are your thoughts on patience?

Day Two

Love Is Patient

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. – 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

The first fruit of the spirit that is listed in Galatians five is love. In our verse today Paul begins to describe love. First in a line of many descriptive phrases is this; Love is patient. When we love as Christ has loved, we will be patient.

You can usually tell whether a person is in love with another, or if they are just infatuated with them by whether they have patience with them. Love is first concerned with the other and therefore there is patient consideration of the others' needs. Infatuation is based in satisfying the desire that the other produces in us; it is more about us than it is the other person.

The statement, "I can't live without you, and I want to be with you," is flattering to us, but it is usually about needs and desires of an infatuated person and not about what is best for us.

This principle is not only true in romantic love, but it is also true in our faith walk. I have heard many people say something like, "I go to church on Sunday because I feel so much better for having gone." Another statement I've heard many times is, "There is no high like the Most High." That's catchy, but what is it really saying? It seems to be saying, "I'm plugged into God for the high I get."

I have noticed that people who have a relationship with God on the infatuation level find it difficult to be patient with him when they don't feel better after having gone to church and when there is no "high" in their walk.

The Holy Spirit produces *agape* love in our hearts and the fruit of that love is patience with God and others. Infatuation with God produces an expectancy which demands that God serve me right now or I'll do it my way.

Prayer: Lord, I want to love you with pure *agape* love that is patient. Help me to serve you because it's right and to patiently wait to hear your voice and to do your will. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When we love as Christ loved we will be patient.

Affirmation: I daily renew my relationship with God so that I might love as Christ loves and be patient with God and others.

Reflection: Ask yourself this question - If love is about pleasing, or blessing another, and infatuation is about satisfying my own desires, then do I really love God and others or am I infatuated with the idea of loving them?

Day Three

Add To Your Faith... Patience

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith...perseverance (patience in KJV)... If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive.

- 2 Peter 1:5-8

When we come to Christ we have faith, that is what brought us to him; but for most of us our faith is baby faith. We have believed enough to begin our journey with the Lord, but that's about it.

It is only after we begin our journey that we start to feel the need for more of the grace of God working in our lives. Peter is giving us a formula for growing in our faith. He is calling believers to "make every effort to add to your faith" those characteristics necessary for an effective and productive journey of faith.

The word translated perseverance, or patience (KJV) comes from the Greek word, "*hupomone*." It is actually a combination of two words; *hupo*, meaning to be under and *meno*, to abide. Literally it would mean to be abiding under. An application would be to have patient continuance while under a stressful time.

One definition of the word is, "The characteristic of a man who is un-swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings" (Thayer). It is that quality which demands a person stand firm even when his own person is being threatened.

Patience in the face of uncomfortable circumstances requires discipline of spirit. The NIV translation calls this trait, "perseverance." Paul writes to the Romans, "We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance" (Romans 5:3). He goes on to say that perseverance produces character and character produces hope.

It is this enduring hope which keeps us on this journey of faith. Our faith has given us hope and because we have faith we patiently endure. "Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts," (Romans 5:7)

Prayer:. Lord, It isn't easy to endure hardship when I see others living so well. Grant me the grace of patiently enduring. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: A patient person is loyal even in the greatest trial and suffering.

Affirmation: I gain patience by practicing the habit of encouraging myself in the Lord when going through difficult times.

Reflection: It is easier to be patient when times are good - but what do you do to be patient when times are stressful? Can you rejoice in suffering because you know that suffering produces perseverance or patience? Think about it.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PRINTED COPY
EMAIL ME AT : paul@nhmresources.org

Day Four

Angels Protect Those Who Patiently Trust Him

I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears… The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. – Psalm 34:4-8

David is telling the story of a strange event in the writing of this psalm. He was hiding from Saul and on the move when he stumbled into the camp of another enemy. Realizing he was about to be captured and probably killed he quickly began to act like a man who has lost his mind. The enemy thought he was crazy and were afraid to harm him, so they drove him away.

When we trust the Lord he will make a way of escape for us in every situation, but we have to trust him to come through, even when he waits to the last second. If David did not have a pattern of trusting the Lord in difficult times he would not have been prepared to respond in this situation.

David displayed a characteristic of patience that we don't often think of. David displayed the kind of patience that is ready to act, but only when he knows the right thing to do in the situation. That may mean waiting for the right second to act.

Years ago I used to play Racquetball regularly. Racquetball is a very fast moving game and it took me a while to learn that a major key to scoring points is to patiently wait for the ball (a ball that is coming at you

at about 60 miles per hour). If you jump at the ball a split second to soon you will mishit it and you will not have control. The difference is a split second, but to patiently wait that split second is the difference between getting the point or not getting it.

That is the kind of patience David displayed in this situation. He already knew that God had dispatched angels to protect him, but he had to wait for the right time to act. We are often in the same position of having to wait for God to give us direction before we act. That requires patience, a fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer: Lord, in pressing times I tend to respond according to my human nature. I know angels are protecting so grant me the grace to wait for you to come through with the answer. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When we patiently trust the Lord he will make a way of escape for us in every situation.

Affirmation: When I am surprised by an unexpected circumstance I wait for wisdom to respond in an appropriate manner.

Reflection: Have you been surprised by an unexpected adverse circumstance that demanded an immediate response? How did you respond? Did you appeal to our Father for wisdom and wait his response?

Day Five

Wait For The Spirit – He Will Guide You

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. - Acts 1:4-5

It was a troubling time for those who followed Jesus. First he was crucified, now he is going back to the Father. They were feeling abandoned and anxious about the future. Jesus, knowing how they were feeling told them to go back into the city and wait for God to send his gift.

Every once in a while we find ourselves in a situation where one trying time is placed upon another and we become anxious about our circumstances. We feel inadequate and we feel that we don't have the appropriate resources to handle things. That is the way the disciples felt as Jesus was ascending to heaven.

That's why Jesus reminded them of the promise they had received about the comforter being with them. He was also instructing them that if they would just wait upon the Lord he would baptize them with power and every spiritual gift that was necessary to accomplish the task they had been commissioned to do. The whole thing depended upon patiently waiting for the Holy Spirit.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. That is why we must learn to wait upon him. It is like planting a garden. One fruit of a garden is patience. You grow in patience

as you wait for the plants to grow, produce blooms and eventually produce fruit. That is the way it is with the Holy Spirit. He enters our heart and begins to do a work there. As we learn to give him lordship in our life he begins the work of building fruit in us.

Has waiting on the Holy Spirit given you the fruit of patience? If it hasn't just wait around and you will get it.

Prayer: Lord, I want to be able to fulfill the call that you have on my life. I cannot do that without the power of the Holy Spirit working in me. Grant me the grace to wait patiently upon you as I seek your guidance. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The promises of God are fulfilled in those who patiently do what He has asked them to do.

Affirmation: I patiently fulfill what God has asked me to do because I know He is faithful to his word and his promises are true.

Reflection: Often the promised blessings of God do not come when we expect. How do you feel when God's promised blessing does not come when you expect it? Is it difficult for you to patiently wait for God to respond?

Day Six

Steadfast Patience Fills Us With Joy

You have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised. – Hebrews 10:36 (Amp)

This passage in The Amplified Bible brings out an interesting perspective on patience. It is saying that the fruit of patient labor is having the promise fulfilled in us and it also adds the dimension of being able to enjoy the promise to the full.

The point seems to be that we have been given a promise of future joy, but we must endure whatever comes to us as we are on the path in order to receive the promise. If we will hold steadfast and patiently endure, we will receive the overwhelming joy of having the promise fulfilled.

In this passage he is referring the eternal hope that we share in Christ. In the verses before this one he speaks of persecution and loss of this world's possessions and contrasts those things lost with "better and lasting possessions" (v34).

He speaks to those who will patiently endure saying, "Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded" (v35). There is no one going to say that it is easy to go through persecution, particularly the kind of persecution the early church endured, but we are promised that if we patiently endure and wait for the promised deliverance, we will be vindicated and have great joy.

A key to having steadfast patience is to be committed to a cause. The purpose given in this passage for patient endurance is, "So that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God." A common mistake people make is that they want patience because they know they should have it, but they are not really committed to a cause.

The purpose of patient enduring is not so that we can put another notch on our spiritual belt, but it is so that we can fulfill God's purposes for our lives.

Prayer: Lord, help me to realize that I must be steadfast in my commitment to your will and patiently endure whatever comes my way so that I can perform and fully accomplish your will. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The fruit of patient labor is having the promise fulfilled in us and it also adds the dimension of being able to enjoy the promise to the full.

Affirmation: I labor in the kingdom patiently so that I may perform and fully accomplish the will of God.

Reflection: Patience is a virtue that is developed through being committed to a cause. Patience is a virtue, but it is only achieved when one is committed to a greater cause. What greater cause are you committed to?

Day Seven

Is Patience Optional As Fruit Of The Spirit?

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. - John 15:1-2

Have you ever looked at the list of spiritual fruit in Galatians five and thought, "Well, I'm not doing too bad, I have about two-thirds of those?" Most of us think, "I've got most of them, that's pretty good, after all, I'm only human."

There is something that should be pointed out here. There is just one fruit, and that fruit is manifested in the characteristics that are listed. Jesus uses the example of a vine, presumably a grape vine to demonstrate this point. The fruit of a grape vine is a cluster of grapes. There are many parts to each grape in the cluster. There is the stem, the skin of the grape, the meat and seeds. If one of those components is missing it is not a complete grape.

It is the same with fruit of the Spirit; when one characteristic, or virtue, is absent then the fruit is not complete. When we are living submitted to the Holy Spirit then all of the fruit mentioned will be manifest in us. In fact, a measure of whether we are truly submitted to the work of the Holy Spirit in us is the degree to which the fruit of the Spirit is manifest.

In this passage Jesus is dealing with vines that do not produce healthy fruit. First he lets us know that non-producing branches will be cut off from the vine. That seems pretty severe, but that is what he said.

Then he says those branches that are producing will be pruned so that they will produce more and better fruit.

I have found myself in that latter category all too often. The Holy Spirit has frequently gotten my attention by revealing that I am not doing a good job of manifesting his fruit. Then the Father begins to prune my branch. I have found that submitting to the Father's pruning makes me a productive branch.

Prayer: Lord, I've had the attitude that I wasn't doing too bad if I had most of the Spirit's fruit, but now I know that there is just one fruit. Grant me the grace to live submitted to the Holy Spirit so that his fruit is fully manifest. In Jesus name, amen.4

Message: When one characteristic, or virtue, is absent then the fruit of the Spirit is not complete.

Affirmation: I consciously seek to submit my flesh so that the fruit I manifest is fruit of the Spirit, not of the flesh.

Reflection: There is but one fruit of the Spirit with nine manifestations. In the passage today the Father is pruning the vine. Does that mean if we do not have all of the fruit manifestations that we are not productive branches? What are your thoughts on that?

Day Eight

Waiting Patiently For The Promised Blessing

God made his promise to Abraham… "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. – Hebrews 6:13-15

Abraham was 75 years old when God promised him a son. It isn't that unusual for a man of that age to father children. What is unusual is that his wife was near the same age. Abraham had already been walking with God many years and he had developed great faith in the word of the Lord, but this was a stretch even for him. Yet he believed and waited for the promise to be fulfilled.

It is sometimes easier to believe than it is to wait for the promise. Abraham and Sarah waited many years for this promise to come to pass, and all the while Sarah's biological clock ticked way past the time when women could bear children. Yet they waited. God's promises are fulfilled in his time, not ours.

God called me to preach when I was in High School. At that time I had a vision of preaching before a crowd of people and I appeared to be in Africa. A few years ago I was ministering in a crusade in Liberia, West Africa. I looked across the crowd of people assembled there and all at once I realized that it was the crowd I had seen in the vision over 40 years before.

Has God given you a vision, or a promise that has yet to be fulfilled? Perhaps someone was guided by the Holy Spirit to recognize a particular calling in your life and spoke that to you, but you have not yet seen the

fruit of that promise. Maybe God spoke a promise to you about finances, or relationships, and you are still waiting for the fulfillment of that promise.

Put yourself in Abraham's place. See yourself waiting, patiently all those years before the promise was fulfilled. Then see yourself today waiting for God's promise to you to be fulfilled. Every time you get impatient with God concerning his promises to you remember Abraham. God knows the best time – wait for his time.

Prayer: Lord, you have given so many promises and I am trying to wait patiently for their fulfillment, but it's hard to wait. Grant me the wisdom and the patience wait for your timing. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When you get impatient with God concerning his promises to you remember Abraham. God knows the best time – wait for his time.

Affirmation: I am committed to waiting patiently on the Lord until He speaks revelation to me and then to wait until He says it is time to implement the revelation.

Reflection: Waiting for the right timing is always critical and it requires a commitment to the outcome. Patience is required to wait for the right time to act. What are your thoughts on being patient?

Day Nine

Patient People Don't Fret Over Evil People

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil.

- Psalm 37:7-8

We've all been there. You've worked hard, your accomplishments are exemplary; then the most conniving, manipulating, and certainly undeserving person, gets the promotion. Didn't that just make you want to do something to that person? If it didn't you are probably more spiritual than the rest of us.

The message David is conveying in this Psalm is to trust the justice of God and not resort to the same schemes and manipulation that evil people do. It is easy to feel justified returning evil for evil, but that's not God's way.

The Message Bible says it well:

"Quiet down before God; be prayerful before him. Don't bother with those who climb the ladder, who elbow their way to the top. Bridle your anger, trash your wrath, cool your pipes – it only makes things worse. Before long the crooks will be bankrupt; God-investors will soon own the store."

It isn't always easy, in fact it rarely is, to wait for God's justice. We want justice to be swift and sure. We want vengeance, now! But God says, "Wait on me. Trust me. I have the situation well in hand." Our goal is vindication; God's goal is to bring the violator to repentance. God has already administered justice,

even death, for the guilty. He did that on the Cross when Christ died for the sins of all who would live in every age.

Speaking of the judgment that is to fall upon the unrepentant Peter writes, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God patiently waited on us to repent, shouldn't we wait patiently?

Prayer: OK God, I confess that all too often I want vengeance and punishment for wrongdoers. Grant me your heart that my desire will for their repentance. Amen.

Message: Trust the justice of God and do not resort to the same schemes and manipulation that evil people do.

Affirmation: When others, who are less worthy, receive recognition I give them honor because I trust the justice of God and I do not resort to the same schemes and manipulation the evil people do.

Reflection: How do you feel when others receive the honor or promotion you felt that you deserved? Be honest! How should we feel toward them?

Day Ten

It Takes Patience To Get Out Of The Pit

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. - Psalm 40:1-2

It is hard to wait patiently when you are standing in the muck. David paints a picture in these verses of being dropped into a pit that has a muddy slimy bottom, yet, he is standing humbly, crying out to God, and waiting for his answer. When we wait upon the Lord he will hear us and turn his favor to us.

There is an old hymn that was inspired by this passage. It was written by Henry J. Zelley in 1898 and title, "He Brought Me Out":

My heart was distressed 'neath Jehovah's dread frown,
And low in the pit where my sins dragged me down;
I cried to the Lord from the deep miry clay,
Who tenderly brought me out to golden day.

He brought me out of the miry clay,
He set my feet on the Rock to stay;
He puts a song in my soul today,
A song of praise, Hallelujah!

Can you identify with this song? I certainly can. In Psalm 32 David writes, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day

and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer" (v3-4).

In the midst of our despair He reached down and brought us out setting our feet on the solid Rock. Hallelujah!

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for lifting me out of the miry clay and putting my feet upon the solid rock to stay. Grant me the wisdom to stay there. Amen.

Message: It is hard to wait patiently when you are standing in the muck. When we wait upon the Lord he will hear us and turn his favor to us.

Affirmation: When I am standing the muck of this world I wait patiently upon the Lord and he hears me and gives me favor.

Reflection: Can you identify with the hymn, "He Brought Me Out"? What did David mean when he wrote, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer" (Psalm 32).

Day Eleven

He's Coming... Wait Patiently

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 for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. - James 5:7-8

My dad always had a garden. It was not a small backyard garden, it was big. It was so big that when the vegetables ripened he put a sign out on the road inviting passersby to drop in and buy some vegetables.

When I was about five years old I decided to plant my own garden. Mom had a flower bed in front of our porch. I took a few beans from the kitchen out to mom's flower garden. I pushed my finger into the soft dirt to make a hole for each of the beans, placed the beans in the holes and covered them up. Then I waited.

Being a young gardener, I was impatient. Every few minutes I would look to see if the beans were coming up yet. Finally, after an eternity of about five days, little sprouts began to stick up out of the dirt. Then day by day I watched as the sprouts became full sized plants. After an eternity of weeks the plants produced little flowers that grew into bean pods.

It was a long spring of waiting, but the reward was in the satisfaction of knowing I had raised a crop. Of course there was the reward at the dinner table too when mom served the fresh picked beans for dinner.

James is telling us that we must learn the lesson of the patient farmer. We must stand firm and wait

patiently for our Lord to return. We must stand firm in the Christian faith, and we must stand firm in our personal faith.

When we come to Christ we are like the child who plants his first garden. We expect the harvest any day and anxiously await signs that the harvest is ready. Then, as the days go by and we become interested in other things, we can't forget that the harvest is coming. He is coming, wait patiently and with expectancy.

Prayer: Lord, I'm still a little like that five year old gardener. I need patience and perseverance to endure until you return. Grant it in Jesus name, amen.4

Message: We must learn the lesson of the patient farmer standing firm as we wait patiently for our Lord to return.

Affirmation: As the one who has planted seed in the ground waits for the time of harvest, so I, who have placed my faith in Christ, wait patiently for his return.

Reflection: James tells us that we should wait patiently for the return of the Lord just as a farmer waits patiently for harvest time. How should we be waiting for the Lord's return?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PRINTED COPY
EMAIL ME AT : paul@nhmresources.org

Day Twelve

We Patiently Long For Him

O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress. - Isaiah 33:2

In the verse before this one there is a warning to the destroyer; you must keep destroying or be destroyed. Then, in the verse following Isaiah writes of locusts that destroys the harvest. Sandwiched between these two warnings of calamity is the cry of the people, "O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you."

There are many stresses in a day that strain our emotional resources and it is sometimes difficult to keep our focus on the Lord. Throughout the day, incident by incident, our strength is drained until finally when the day is done we lay on our bed and cry, "O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you."

How many are the nights that we have lain on the bed, trying to find sleep after a day of watching the destroyer devour the good that others do. The deceiver, who seeks to wreck havoc on the people of God, goes about releasing his destructive forces upon the good that we would do. Exhausted and emotionally drained we lay on our bed and cry, "O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you."

Alas, the morning does come when we have been refreshed by the Holy Spirit and his rest is upon us. In the morning we realize that he is our strength and our salvation in time of distress. He is our strength every morning and our salvation.

What is it that gives us the patience to endure the day and cry out with hope in the night? We wait on him because he has proven that when we endure he will always come through. If we can hold on through the day and cry out in hope at night, we will awaken renewed. He is our strength every morning and our salvation.

No enemy can destroy the one who longs for the Lord and who has learned that the Lord is their strength. He is our strength every morning and our salvation.

Prayer: Lord, I long for you. When I am distressed over the circumstances that surround me I cry out for your strength and your salvation, In Jesus name, amen.

Message: We wait on him because he has proven that when we endure he will always come through.

Affirmation: In the midst of daily activities and the stresses of life I wait patiently as I cry out, " O Lord, be gracious to me; I long for you. Be my strength every morning, my salvation in time of distress."

Reflection: Read the first five verses of Isaiah 33 and reflect on them paying particular attention to the verses 2-3. Even in times of distress we must wait patiently for him.

Day Thirteen

Enduring Patience Gets God's Attention

Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. – *Revelation 3:10*

The book of Revelation is filled with many awful and wonderful things. There is fire and judgment; angels with scrolls and seals and that release plagues upon the earth. Then there is a city called "The New Jerusalem" with streets of gold, a river of life and trees lining the river with healing in their leaves.

In these first chapters of the book the Lord is addressing the different churches in Asia Minor. Many believe that these churches are representative of church ages and others believe that they represent seven different conditions the church may be in at any given time. Whatever is true about those churches there is universal truth that is addressed to each of them.

The church of Philadelphia is being praised in this passage. The Lord says, "I know your deeds… You have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name." They had held steadfast to the faith and now God is going to reward their patient endurance.

There are times for all of us when living in faith means patience to endure hardships and persecution. It is in those times that our faith is truly tested and we are forced to ask ourselves, "Do I really believe what I

say I believe?" The answer to that question rests in your ability to patiently wait for the victory of God.

When you stand firm in your faith you are going to have friends, and even family, who will not understand your position. You may even have to stand alone . When that happens remember two things: The battle is God's not ours; Patient endurance gets God's attention and releases his favor.

It was because the Church of Philadelphia had kept the commands of the Lord, enduring patiently, that God promised to save them from the most severe trials.

Prayer: Lord, I am no different than others. Adverse circumstances and hard times cause me to think of doing it my way. Grant me the grace to trust you.

Message: There are times for all of us when living in faith means patience to endure hardships and persecution.

Affirmation: When my faith is truly tested and I am forced to ask myself, "Do I really believe what I say I believe?" My answer Is Yes – I am willing to endure hardship and persecution as I patiently wait for the victory of God.

Reflection: Why is it often difficult to patiently wait upon the Lord in times of hardship and persecution? As you reflect upon the promise given to the church of Philadelphia what hope does that give you in your circumstances?

Day Fourteen

Return To God and Wait Patiently For Him

You must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always. - Hosea 12:6

We do a lot of work with people who have life controlling behaviors. One characteristic that seems to be common among them is the need for instant gratification. Whether the controlling behavior is drugs, alcohol, anger, or sexual habits, the tendency to need instant gratification affects their ability walk consistently.

We look at those whose "shortcomings" that are obvious for all to see and think that they just need to make up their mind to live right. But when we stand before the mirror of God's law we can see our own need to make up our mind on the issues that affect our faith walk.

In this passage God is calling Israel back to himself and today he is making the same call to all who will listen. The most common sin that Israel committed was that they did not wait patiently for God to reveal his will. They were constantly faced with difficult situations that demanded action and instead of waiting to hear what the Lord would say they resorted to their own resources.

People have not changed that much and we tend to do the same thing today. When we are faced with the immediacy of the need coupled with our own tendency to need instant satisfaction, it becomes very easy to trust our own instincts instead of waiting upon the Lord. When we have done that all is not lost, but

we, like Israel, must return to the Lord and wait upon him.

This passage is calling us to transcend human tendencies and learn God's way. We are called to do three things; maintain love, maintain justice, and wait for God.

It doesn't seem that hard to maintain justice, but justice tends to get skewed when viewed through the eyes of those who have been mistreated by others.

Love and justice can only be maintained as we patiently wait upon the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to patiently wait on you to reveal your love and justice through me. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: You must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

Affirmation: I know that love and justice can only be maintained so I have purposed to turn my heart toward God and wait patiently upon him.

Reflection: Israel often wandered away from God because they did not see his hand in their daily life. The result was that they lost favor with God. What happens when we do not see the hand of the Lord in our daily life? Reflect on how to maintain that daily contact with him.

Day Fifteen

Wisdom Produces Patience

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. - Proverbs 19:17

I know many very good people who are constantly getting themselves into uncomfortable situations because they do not have the patience to wait before taking action. It seems they are ever learning but never gaining wisdom.

There are a lot of reasons why a person would be quick to act when prudence would call for patience. One reason is that we tend think we are the answer. We think, "This is an easy one, I can do this," and we wind up acting on incomplete information which leads to having to back up and start again.

Another cause for impatience is feeling the urgency of a situation, believing that if we don't act now a catastrophe will result. That is true if a child is in the road and a car is approaching, but most of the crisis situations we face are not that drastic and we are driven by urgency rather than wisdom.

Some people have a keen sense of justice and are quick to make decisions based upon an injustice they perceive being committed. All too often these folks create more of a problem with their quick action to right a perceived wrong than the wrong itself created.

What are we to do? Should we ignore injustice? Should we pretend a crisis does not exist? Absolutely not – but wisdom demands patience. If we find ourselves acting out of urgency rather than from

wisdom we must seek God for wisdom and the wisdom he gives us will produce patience.

Patience is easy when we have the wisdom to weigh a situation before we take action. And, there are many times when wisdom demands that we are patient with someone who has committed an offense allowing God to bring them to repentance. The Apostle Peter wrote, "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Prayer: Lord, all too often I have found myself taking action when I should be standing still listening for your wisdom. Grant me the patience to wait for your answer before I act. In Jesus name, amen.4

Message: A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

Affirmation: I am instructed to seek God for wisdom. I do that. I ask God for wisdom so that I might have patience and be seek God for the ability to overlook offense.

Reflection: Reflect upon the reasons given in the devotion which deal with why we too often don't respond to a given situation the way God would have us respond. Think about how wisdom and patience go hand in hand.

Day Sixteen

Patience Is Better Than Pride

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. - Ecclesiastes 7:8-9

That sounds pretty radical. "Anger resides in the lap of fools." What about when I have just cause to be angry – is that foolish? There are about three occasions that arouse anger in us. One is when someone we care about is being abused in some way. Another is when our belief system is being threatened. A third is when we feel that our person/pride is being threatened.

Most of our anger comes from the third category. Our pride, or ego, sees many opportunities to be angry: When we feel that we are being taken advantage of; when we feel that we are being neglected; when we feel others are disrespecting us in some way. Our pride, or ego, gives us many opportunities to be angry.

According to this passage in Ecclesiastestes, "patience is better than pride." What does that mean to us in everyday life? Simply that most of what makes us angry is foolishness and if we will just be patient most of these things will work themselves out. And besides that, if the issues don't just work themselves out we are still better for not allowing them to cause an angry response.

Those who have gained wisdom through the process of trial and error tell us that thinking in terms of the big picture puts our own situation in perspective. What I mean by that is we often see

circumstances through a short-sighted lens. We can only see how the situation immediately affects us and we don't like what we see. When we can look at the big picture we can see that most of what concerns us fades in view of what is taking place on a larger scale.

When we see life through the big picture we respond in a way that affects a larger set of circumstances rather than in a way that justifies us for the moment.

Prayer: Lord, I don't want to be seen as an angry fool. Grant me the wisdom to look beyond myself to a greater purpose. Give me the grace of patience that I will bring honor to you. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools

Affirmation: I know that the end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride, therefore I will not allow myself to be quickly provoked.

Reflection: Three causes of anger are listed in this devotion. Reflect on them and how you have responded in those situation. Of the three, do you agree that ego is the one which gives us the most trouble?

Day Seventeen

Be Patient With Everyone

We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

The paragraph that contains the verse we are using here begins with, "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you" (v12). Then in verse 14 he gives the ways that we are to respect others among us; warning, encouraging, helping and being patient. This is some powerful instruction.

One of the primary factors to being patient with others is respecting who they are. If I see others as being placed on the earth for my convenience and to make life simpler for me, then I am going to run into relationship problems and I will be impatient with them. However, when I see others as an opportunity to bless and serve I am going to suffer long with their shortcomings and work hard to help them become more effective in their life.

Being patient with everyone is not an easy task. It seems that there is always at least one person in my life who tries my patience. In fact, I have found that the more I serve others the more people there are in my life who try my patience. It is those people that this passage is addressing.

Having respect for others has many facets. Paul is addressing some them in this passage. He tells us to warn the idle. Warn them of what? They need to be

reminded of the consequences of being irresponsible with their time. That doesn't mean we are to cut them off until they learn, but it does mean that we are not to enable them to be irresponsible.

There are also those among us who are timid, and some are weak. It can be a bit wearisome trying to help them see their potential and help them see God's plan for their life, but we are called to be patient with everyone, warning them, encouraging them, helping them.

Prayer: Father, there are times that I find it difficult to be patient with others. Help me to keep in mind that I am called to serve others. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The ways we are to respect others among us; warning, encouraging, helping and being patient.

Affirmation: I show my respect for others by warning them when they are in grievous error; encouraging them when they are weak; helping them when they fall and being patient with them in all things.

Reflection: This devotion speaks of many facets, or many ways of respecting others. Reflect on some of those and look inside yourself to see how your respond to people who try your patience. Give it some thought.

Day Eighteen

Forgiving Others Requires Patience

Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

– Colossians 3:12-13

Being able to forgive others for their offences against us is more than making a list of offenses then checking them off as forgiven. Paul is talking about forgiveness that doesn't even keep a list.

Jesus was teaching about forgiveness one day and Peter was feeling pretty spiritual so he asked, "Lord, how often should we forgive? If a brother offends us seven times in a day, should we forgive him?" Peter thought he was being generous, but Jesus responded, "No Peter, not seven but 70 times seven."

The point Jesus was making with his disciples is to not to keep a list of offenses. I have learned that this kind of forgiveness is possible only when we have clothed ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, as this passage instructs us.

The patience we must have with others grows out of developing compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness. When these virtues are dominant in your life it is a lot easier to be patient with those who would otherwise be frustrating. It is also much easier to forgive others when our motivation is to help them grow rather than to be personally vindicated.

If forgiving others is a challenge to you then perhaps you need to examine whether you are clothed with the virtues listed in this verse. How do you clothe yourself with virtues? I know it sounds simplistic, but you clothe yourself with virtues much in the same way you put clothes on in the morning; you just put them on.

When you recognize a virtue that you need to develop, practice that virtue by being involved in activities that use it. When you find yourself coming up short in the virtue, patiently seek the Father and he will clothe you with virtue.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to humbly, and patiently, pursue the virtues that enable to forgive others as you have forgiven me. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Being able to forgive others for their offences against us is more than making a list of offenses then checking them off as forgiven.

Affirmation: I have discovered that being able to forgive others for their offences against me is more than making a list of offenses then checking them off as forgiven. I forgive others of all offenses because God has forgiven me.

Reflection: Forgiveness is a difficult virtue to develop, but we must be able to forgive or we will not be able to receive forgiveness. Think about those you need to forgive and how to have that forgiveness in your heart – then pray about it.

Day Nineteen

Pride Makes Us Impatient With God

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He said, "I am angry enough to die." – Jonah 3-4

You remember Jonah don't you? He's the guy that got swallowed by the big fish. God called him to go to Nineveh to preach and he resisted the call running off to board a ship. The end result was that he ended up in the belly of a whale. He finally winds up in Nineveh, where God had sent him and he preached that God was going to destroy the city.

Jonah was a fire and brimstone preacher. God had sent him to preach judgment, and he expected judgment. His preaching was so convincing that the people repented before God. God heard their cries for mercy and granted them favor by removing the threat of judgment.

Jonah, in his pride and impatience, became angry at God. After all, Jonah's honor was on the line. He had predicted judgment, just like God had instructed him, now God removes the judgment and begins to bless the people. Jonah was impatient with God.

It is interesting that Jonah was more concerned about his pride and reputation as a preacher than he was about the people God had called him to.

Can you remember times when you felt you had heard the word of the Lord on something and began

to make plans to bring to fruition what the Lord had told you? Then something happens. The situation changes and your plans no longer fit the circumstances. You can either patiently trust God, and alter your plans, or you can go ahead with the plans you had so painstakingly prepared. It's your choice.

It is often the case in our lives when we must be humble enough to let our plans go, as good as they seem to be, and patiently trust the wisdom of God.

Prayer: Lord, Jonah reminds me of the times that my own ego has gotten in the way of what you wanted to do. Help me to patiently wait on you. In Jesus name.

Message: There are times in our lives when we must be humble enough to let our plans go, as good as they seem to be, and patiently trust the wisdom of God.

Affirmation: I often feel my plans are good, but I know God's plans are better. I am committed to humbly accepting God's pan as better than mine and to patiently follow him.

Reflection: Jonah seemed to be more in touch with his message of destruction than God's gift of repentance. Have you had a time in your life when you felt someone should be punished, but they changed and mercy was given them? Think about how that made you feel and ask yourself why you felt that way.

Day Twenty

Suffering For Righteousness Requires Patience

It is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. – 1 Peter 2:19-20

"I don't know why God would do this to me." I have heard that lament many times from people whose lifestyle had produced a consequence that they now want to blame on God. That is not suffering for doing what is right, that's consequences.

Then there is another group of people who have made unwise choices and wind up in difficult situations with the attitude that God put them in that situation to teach them something and they are seeking him to find out what it is.

There is no grace in giving God the credit (or blame) for the circumstances that we produced by making unwise decisions. It is false humility to walk willfully into an area that God would never lead you then accuse God of putting you there so he can teach you something. He is teaching us that he is "hands off" when we are doing it our way. When we suffer for our own willfulness it is on us not God.

Just the other day I saw someone I hadn't seen in a couple of years. When I asked him where he had been he told me he had been in prison. His attitude was

that God let him go to prison because he had a ministry for him to do there. How crazy is that?

I don't doubt that God uses people who are in prison after they have repented; but he isn't going to cause us to commit felonies so that we will go to prison to minister.

The message of this passage is that we should conduct ourselves in such a way that we are not worthy of punishment so that when persecution does come our patient endurance of unjust persecution becomes a witness to the world of the grace of God.

Prayer: Lord, I surrender my ways to you and ask for the patience to endure suffering for you name sake. Grant me the wisdom to take ownership of my mistakes and not blame you. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

Affirmation: I resist the temptation to blame God for the consequences of my choices and I rejoice when suffering for doing good and I endure it as God gives me grace.

Reflection: If you are one of those who feels God placed you in a bad situation to teach you a lesson? If you are, think on this: God may be trying to tell you not to do the things you did which caused you to in that situation. Something to reflect on.

Day Twenty One

Patience Helps Us To Be Slow To Speak

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen… Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. - Ecclesiastes 5:2

Promises are easy to make, but often they are more difficult to fulfill. Most of us have been in hard places and in those places it is easy to make promises that may be hard to keep. When we need money we promise the bank to pay them back. When we need mercy from a friend we promise to never do it again. Promises; they are easy to make but harder to keep.

This passage in Ecclesiastes is excerpted from a larger passage that is dealing with the issue of being quick to make vows to God and then not being able to make good on the vow. I once had a recurring sin in my life. I must have promised God hundreds of times that I would never do it again. But, in time the same sin came around to haunt me.

I was such a failure at overcoming this sin that I finally told God I wouldn't promise not to do it anymore. I would only come to him asking for mercy and forgiveness. What is interesting is that when I quit making vows I couldn't keep God began to work in my life giving me the ability to live above my sin.

There is value in going to the house of God to listen rather than to make promises. It is foolish to keep coming back making promises we can't keep. That is why this passage tells us not to be hasty in

making promises to God. This is where patience as a fruit of the spirit comes in.

Before you make another promise stop for a moment to think it through. Has anything changed that will make it different this time? Think about it. What will it take to be able to fulfill your promise? Wait patiently on the Lord and he will give you the answer. Be slow to promise and be sure to fulfill what you promise.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to be quick to speak then struggle to fulfill what I have promised. Help me to hear your voice and listen to your instruction. Amen.

Message: Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

Affirmation: I do not make hasty promises because I know I am accountable to God for what I promise.

Reflection: Before you make another promise stop for a moment to think it through. Has anything changed that will make it different this time? Think about it. What will it take to be able to fulfill your promise? Wait patiently on the Lord and he will give you the answer. Be slow to promise and be sure that you fulfill what you promise.

Day Twenty Two

Patience Stands Firm In The Face Of Adversity

Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's... You will not have to fight this battle. Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you. Do not be afraid... the Lord will be with you. - 2 Chronicles 20:15-17

It is difficult to stand firm and patiently wait when we are facing overwhelming odds. In this passage there were four kingdoms coming against Jerusalem. King Jehoshaphat realized that he was outnumbered and ill equipped to fight these armies.

Jehoshaphat prayed and the Lord said, "Stand firm." That was good news. They were facing immanent destruction and God says, "Just stand there." But that wasn't all he said. He also said, "Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you." The key is not to do nothing, but to hear the the Lord and do what he says.

We are programmed to take action when we are facing adversity. It is just natural to resist difficulty and develop a plan. However, our actions are based on a limited knowledge of the situation. That's why our plans are so inadequate; we can only act on what we know and what we know is limited. In those times God is telling us to wait on him; hear his voice, then act on his instruction.

You can imagine the anxiety among the residents of Jerusalem as they waited for the opposing army to

come against them, knowing that their own king was just going to wait on the Lord. It's like hearing someone outside your house, rattling your door to see if it will open, and someone saying, "Don't worry. The Lord said to just stand here and see him destroy the enemy." We might stand there, but we'll have a baseball bat in our hand.

Trust and patience go hand in hand. As we are on this journey of faith we must learn to trust the Lord to do as he has promised, and we must patiently wait for him speak, then we must patiently wait for him to do what he has promised.

Prayer: It is difficult to wait when danger seems imminent. Grant me the grace to stand firm in the face of the adversary and to tarry in prayer until your answer comes. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: God Said, "Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you." The key to victory is not to do nothing, but to hear the voice of the Lord and do what he says.

Affirmation: I am committed to not taking action in situations with major consequences until I have heard God speak and then I will do what he says.

Reflection: Trust and patience go hand in hand. How did trusting God give king Jehoshaphat patience? Have you had occasions in your own life when God seemed to say, "Stand still," but your feet said, "Run for your life"?

Day Twenty Three

Patiently Waiting In Hope

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. - Isaiah 40:31 (KJV)

The big picture of the book of Isaiah is that a judgment from God was coming and the Jews would be taken to a foreign land as captives. They would remain there for a time then the favor the Lord would return and they would be allowed to go back to their homeland. He also looks far into the future and predicts a kingdom where the Lord himself will rule.

The context of our passage for today is that through the trials of life God's people would grow weary, but he will give them strength. Isaiah writes, "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak" (v29). When we have exhausted ourselves trying to do it on our own he says that he will give us renewed strength if we trust him.

The NIV translates this verse, "those who hope in the Lord…" That is an interesting translation of the Hebrew word *kaw-vaw*. The word literally means to "bind together" as in to twist together. It seems to mean, in this passage, "to be bound to the promise of restoration and while you wait patiently for the fulfillment the Lord will strengthen you." The NIV translators interpreted this to simply mean "Hope in the Lord."

The simple truth is that God has promised to be our deliverer, our help, our strength, and everything

else we need. Our response to his promise is to place our hope in him; have faith in him. It is faith which gives us the courage, and patience, to wait upon him.

Oh, blessed is the peace that comes from trusting the Lord to do what he has promised. How great is the joy that comes from the faith which gives us patience to wait for his provision. Anxiety rolls away as we are strengthened in his grace.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for your promise to be our strength in wearisome times. Grant me the grace to patiently wait on you. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They shall not grow weary in well doing.

Affirmation: My hope is in the Lord and I will trust him because I know he gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Reflection: Israel was facing the prospect of being taken from their land and exiled to a foreign country. They needed hope to sustain them through the trial. How can we have hope in the time of our greatest trial? How can we have the strength to patiently endure? Reflect on that.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PRINTED COPY
EMAIL ME AT : paul@nhmresources.org

Day Twenty Four

Blessed Are Those Who Have Persevered

Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.

– James 5:10-11

There are some who look at the faith through rose colored glasses seeing only the benefits without seeing the cost associated with walking the path of faith. Yes, it is true that we receive favor from God as a free gift and that gift is appropriated by faith in Jesus Christ, but it is also true that continuing in faith requires a strong commitment.

James reminds us that many who have gone before have had to face difficulties which required a commitment to patiently await the deliverance of the Lord. He first speaks of the prophets who suffered at the hands of the people God sent them to serve. Then he reminds us of Job who suffered unfairly, yet he persevered.

What the prophets and Job had in common was an unwavering faith. The prophets believed the word of the Lord they had been given and they accepted the responsibility of declaring it in an unfriendly environment and they endured patiently. Job, though not understanding why he was asked to endure such loss, held on to his faith declaring, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust him."

As our faith deepens we can rest assured that it is going to be tested. When we are tested it is not to cause us grief and prove that we can bear it, it is to prove that our faith in God is well placed. The testing of our faith is to prove the faithfulness of God.

When James reminds us of Job's suffering he concludes, "we have seen what the Lord finally brought about [for Job]." It was his faithfulness and patient suffering that prepared him to receive God's blessing. It is not easy to endure, and our patience is often tested, but we know that those who patiently endure will receive the reward of righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, I don't enjoy hardships, but I know they come to us all. Grant me the grace to endure with patience so that I will be proven faithful. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When we are tested it is not to cause us grief and prove that we can bear it, it is to prove that our faith in God is well placed. The testing of our faith is to prove the faithfulness of God.

Affirmation: When my faith is being tested I know that I can trust the faithfulness of God. My faithful and patient pursuit of God leads to his faithful deliverance.

Reflection: Job suffered many afflictions as his faith was tested, yet He could say, "Though God slay me I will trust him." How does one have that level of faith? Could you say that about yourself?

Day Twenty Five

Patiently Instruct Others

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus… I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.

- 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Have you ever had a teacher become impatient with your slowness to learn something? It may have taken them years to master a subject but they expect you to grasp the concepts and principles in one setting. I think we've all had that teacher at one time or another.

Paul is instructing Timothy on the kind of teacher he is to be. First, he is to "Preach the word" and he is to always be prepared to present the gospel. That's the easy part, the rest of this admonition is not so easy; "correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction."

The point seems to be that if we have the truth and we use the truth to instruct others in such a way that they are driven away instead of being improved, then we have not done a good job of instructing. Some teachers catch the idea of correct and rebuke and they seem to think the best encouragement is to keep pointing out what others have done wrong, but they have missed the point.

This passage calls us to consider others as we wish to be considered. Over many years of ministry I have seen people who just weren't getting it, but through patient and careful instruction, all at once a light turns

on and they begin to tell us what the Lord has shown them. Never mind that we may have been trying to tell them for years; now, all at once, God reveals it to them.

The value of patient and careful instruction is that people who would be lost in the melee are nurtured through spiritual infancy and finally begin to grow into mature saints of the living God. I thank God for the patient and careful instructors who nurtured me through my youth and helped me grow in the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, Over these many years I have learned much about your word and your love. Grant me the grace to give others time to learn. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The value of patient and careful instruction is that people who would be lost in the melee are nurtured through spiritual infancy and finally begin to grow into mature saints of the living God.

Affirmation: I am committed to being patiently and carefully presenting the gospel to those who are lost, giving them hope and not condemnation.

Reflection: Paul is instructing Timothy to continue preaching the gospel, but to find ways of presenting it that will people and encourage them. Reflect on how to do that.

Day Twenty Six

Hope Inspires Endurance

Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Jesus Christ. - Romans 15:4-5

Unity is one of the first casualties of stress and anxiety. We've seen it in families, and at times in our own family. We've also seen it in churches among leaders who are not in agreement. What causes this breakdown of unity?

It seems to begin with the stress which comes when budgets are tight, or circumstances are calling us outside of our comfort zone. It usually begins with thinking, "How am I going to do this?" Gradually the "I" becomes "we" and we no longer ask "how," but we place a judgment, "We Can't do this."

Then the stress becomes anxiety as we ponder the impossibility of the situation. We speak phrases like, "We'll never be able to do that," and, "This is a hole we can't get out of." What is interesting is that stress begins when we start comparing the circumstances with our ability and anxiety grows out of realizing we can't possibly do it. The problem is that it is about us and what we can't do.

Paul reminds us that we have hope in the promises of God. When stressful times come we must remember our source and continue to trust him to do what we can't do. When we can trust him then we can

put our hope in what he has said. When we hope in his promises we are encouraged and we can patiently endure.

Endurance has much to do with unity. This passage begins in verse one with Paul instructing, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves." As we focus on the needs of others rather than how others are affecting us we will patiently work through the process of encouraging them and God then gives us a spirit of unity.

Prayer: Lord, It is easy to be in fellowship with those who are like me, but it is difficult to be patient with those who are weaker. Grant me patience. In Jesus name.

Message: Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Affirmation: My patience and endurance is hope driven and my hope is based upon what is written in Scripture.

Reflection: The statement is made in the text of the devotional, "Unity is one of the first casualties of stress and anxiety. Reflect upon how you have seen that work and then think about how it can be avoided through patiently enduring in relationships.

Day Twenty Seven

Patiently Waiting For His Appearing

The grace of God… teaches us to say "No" to undgodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ.

– Titus 2:11-13

The apostles and other early believers expected the Lord to return at any time. New Testament writers warn time and again that that those who call upon the name of the Lord must live in such a manner that they are prepared to meet him when Jesus comes.

It has been 2000 years now and he hasn't come yet. Because it has been so long far too many have become lax in their faith walk. Many have become weary of doing good and have began to live like the world lives. We are being warned in this passage to stay faithful.

We who are believers in Christ must remember that whether he comes today, or if he doesn't come in our lifetime, we are still to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions. We are still to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives. We must also remember that we are not living this way just for the future, but we know that living by God's rules releases his blessings upon us now as well as in eternity.

So we wait for the blessed hope, which is his glorious appearing. The Greek word translated, "wait for" is *prosdechomai*. It means to wait patiently with confidence. This kind of waiting is not the sitting

around with nothing to do kind of waiting. It is the kind of waiting that is proactive. This kind of waiting is following the instruction of Jesus to "occupy till I come." Occupy here means stay busy.

Believers who are expecting Christ to return are "busy" occupying while they wait upon his return. Our faith demands that we live disciplined, upright and godly lives – Those are the ones he is coming to receive unto himself. It is the hope of his appearing that drives us to occupy as we wait.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to become envious of those in the world who seem to have more than I. Help me to remember the hope that is in Christ and not in this world or in the pleasures of this world. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: whether he comes today, or if he doesn't come in our lifetime, we are still to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions.

Affirmation: I am living in a disciplined and upright manner because I know living righteously while I wait his glorious appearing releases his blessings on my life now.

Reflection: We are called to live godly, upright lives, not only for the hope which lies before us but because it is the right thing to do. How should we be waiting? Besides living righteously what else should we be doing? Think on it.

Day Twenty Eight

Strengthened With Power For Endurance And Patience

Strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. – Colossians 1:10-12

One of the limitations all of has is strength. When we are young we believe there is no end to what we can use our strength to do. As we grow older, and endure a few back injuries, we realize our strength is limited. Then when we get much older we have to ask others to do what we used to be able to do when we were young.

When we are talking about spiritual things the opposite is true. As we grow in understanding of his grace and his will for us our faith continues to grow. As our faith grows we are strengthened in our spirit, "with all power according to his glorious might."

When I was in High School I was chubby and couldn't do all of the exercises most of the other boys could do. One exercise was the peg board. When I first started trying to climb the peg board I couldn't get past the first peg. Every day, before class began I would practice on the peg board. Finally the day came when I could go up and down the peg board with ease. It took consistent effort, patience and endurance, but I finally made.

Many of us face the same kind of challenge in our faith walk. We may be weak now, but we have made up our mind that we are going to become strong by the grace of God. One day we'll be able to see measurable progress in our faith as we realize that we have gained patience and endurance by his power.

We build endurance into our faith as we experience his grace. It is this enduring faith which gives us patience to wait with the expectation that the Lord will give us victory in of our life.

Prayer:. Lord, grant me the grace of truly trusting you to strengthen my faith through your great power and help me to endure patiently. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: As we grow in understanding of his grace and his will for us our faith continues to grow. As our faith grows we are strengthened in our spirit, "with all power according to his glorious might."

Affirmation: I am growing in understanding, grace and faith. As my faith grows I am becoming stronger in spiritual things.

Reflection: How does the way we gain spiritual strength compare to the way we gain physical strength? What are some spiritual exercises you could add that would strengthen your faith?

Day Twenty Nine

Patiently Endure Testing

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. - James 1:2-3

I experienced the most trying time of my life in one three month period a few years ago. During this time I went through open heart surgery, followed five weeks later by a heart attack; my wife was diagnosed with cancer while I was in recovery from the heart attack; our 11 year old son had been falsely accused of a horrible crime and had been arrested and taken from school in hand cuffs; our 16 month old grandson was severely injured and was taken by the authorities; criminal charges were filed against our daughter… Our faith was being tested to the limit.

It was difficult to consider these trials "pure joy." Nearly every night my wife and I would hold hands, pray and cry ourselves to sleep. We felt the attack, but we never gave in to defeat. You're story of going through severe trials may be as bad as ours, or even worse, but to us it was as hard as it gets.

Then came the breakthrough. Sitting in service one morning, it was the first time I was to preach after the surgery and heart attack, God spoke a word to my heart. His word was, "Be prepared, I am about to pour out a blessing upon you that you will not be able to contain."

I fully recovered from the surgery and heart attack. My wife got the word that, mysteriously, they couldn't find any cancer. The false charges against our son were

dropped. Our grandson was returned and our daughter was vindicated. This all happened in one very trying period of time.

The only way our enemy can attack us is through the flesh and the physical world around us. And, we should rest assured; he will attack us. We should be equally assured that the one who has begun a work in us will complete that work (Philippians 1:6). Patiently endure testing – there is great joy beyond the test.

Prayer: Lord, the test is never pleasant, I know that. I don't ask to be spared the test, I ask to be given the courage and patience to endure it. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Affirmation: It is difficult to consider trials to be joy, but I can endure all things because I know his grace is sufficient to carry through every trial.

Reflection: The devotion today tells the story of a tough time in the author's life and the victory that affirmed his faith and endurance. Reflect on a time in your own life when you endured hardship and came out victorious.

Day Thirty

A Patient Man Has Great Understanding

Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city... A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly. - Proverbs 16:32, 14:29

I once had a friend who was so high strung that if you said something to offend him he would explode physically so fast that you were on the ground before you realized you had been hit. He was a very good fighter, and would have made a good warrior, but he was lousy for any kind of mature relationship.

You have probably known someone like that. They were all right to be around until something crossed them then they just blew up and made life miserable for everyone around them. These are good friends to have in a brawl, but it is difficult to maintain any kind of real friendship with them.

As we mature in life we find that our best friends are those who are thoughtful and considerate of others. In fact, one of the things we learn with maturity is that as we become more thoughtful and considerate of others we attract the same kind of people around us.

One of the characteristics I have noticed of a patient person is they are usually looking beyond their own comfort to a purpose greater than themselves. They seem to be able to keep a focus on the issues that are important and they tend to not be bothered by things of little consequence.

Another characteristic of a patient person is they seem to have a heart that understands situations and circumstances better than others. They have the ability to weigh the consequence of their actions before they take action. Patient people understand how their actions are going to affect others.

Our hope is that these devotions on patience will inspire you to grow in the grace of God and increase your desire to be like him. Remember, patience is not only a virtue but it is also a benefit in your relationships.

Prayer: Father, thank you for the opportunity to learn your way and to discover the areas where I need to improve. Grant me the grace of patience as you are working your will in me. Amen.

Message: A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly

Affirmation: I am committed to gaining understanding so that I will not be quick to become angry and act foolishly.

Reflection: A statement made in the devotion for today is, "One of the characteristics I have noticed of a patient person is they are usually looking beyond their own comfort to a purpose greater than themselves. " Give some thought to that.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PRINTED COPY
EMAIL ME AT : paul@nhmresources.org