

Patience and self-control

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This message covers

- Biblical principles on patience and self-control
- Scientific tips for our generation on overcoming impatience and coping with fear
- How to stand on God's word as a rock.

Information notice board

- 1) **About me.** Before I became a devoted Christian, I spent 20 years of my life being a hedonist – one who seeks pleasure for the sake of it. I didn't thirst or hunger for righteousness. Instead, I drunk alcohol alot, I was a professional DJ and loved the music – infact my nickname was "Wickie Dickie". I had quite a number of girlfriends over the years and I lived for the fun of it because I didn't care about God - To my career and life was going well! Since God humbled me to turn me into his servant and I got baptized in May 2017, he has now overhauled my life to run after Him and to live by the Holy Spirit rather than the Flesh. You can read my full testimony [here](#):
- 2) **About these series.** The Lord Jesus gave me a single word "Blossom" as I was praying for a word for this season and series. This word will define a series of 12 topics he has also given me to tell his church about and build Christian character in his Holy Spirit. This lesson is one of those messages, but what does it mean to blossom?
- 3) **Pray for us!** Without the Lord, our effort is in vain. Pray that we remain faithful, humble servants.
- 4) **Subscribe to** our [YouTube Channel](#) and keep up with our videos which support the website.
- 5) **Looking for a ministry to partner with (pray, volunteer, give, subscribe to)? Consider supporting:**
polarisproject.org Help those who are [victims of human trafficking to find freedom](#).

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Part 1: Basics

My wife Brenda doesn't understand how I can have patience self-control in an area where she is a "WORK in a Progress" I often chuckle to myself. It's not really my own making. I have learnt this in a secret place - with my Lord. In the secret place from when I was just a baby in the Lord and when I was also a newly married man, my Lord taught me a secret. I needed to fast to ensure I don't fall in the area of sexual temptation. What's the connection between fasting and sex and patience/self control?

So, we all know that sex is a physical part for us humans - like food, like running, like anger, like jealousy.

What he taught me, through fasting is this: If you can control hunger - go through the motions of smelling the food your neighbour cooks but not taste it, see your work colleagues eat to their heart's delight and yet you are under great training, THEN you can control other things - your fits of rage for example. You can then know that there is more to life than foodⁱ.



From the lessons on being patient when hungry, he graduated me to this point where SOME TIME LATER, being 3 years after my initial lessons, I am writing down the lessons to encourage someone else in how to have patience and self-control, a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Examples from the bible

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great." Genesis 15: 1 (NLT).

"Some time later" ... The bible is funny. I say this because when you read a sentence like that, you imagine it's perhaps a movie shifting from scene 1 to 2 in a space of minutes whereas in bible language, this is often YEARS. In Abraham's case in the story above, the sometime later meant about 10 years after a previous encounter with God.

What do you do in your "some time later" season?

So, we are in a series of 12 messages called "Blossom" to represent the period in which fruit of the Holy Spirit come. Now the background to this is to use an orange tree as an example.

For an orange tree to bear fruit, there is a period of about 5 years in which it goes through a number of stages:

1. Planting;
2. Sprouting;
3. Growing;
4. Blossoming (flowering);
5. Pollination; and
6. Bearing fruit.

So as an example, sometime later after the blossoming in stage 4 and pollination in stage 5, an orange tree will bear fruit. How long does this last? For the orange tree it could last for 5-18 months from the time of blossoming to bearing fruit.

For you and me in the season of spiritual growth it could last years, decades. What do you do in between? You let the LORD teach you patience and self-control.

So, the anchor verse on the fruit of the Holy Spirit including patience and self-control is this:

*"But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, **patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting]**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**. Against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23 AMP*

A few verses before that, in Galatians 5 it warns about giving up the race too soon:

"You were running [the race] well; who has interfered and prevented you from obeying the truth? This [deceptive] persuasion is not from Him who called you [to freedom in Christ]. A little leaven [a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers] leavens the whole batch [it perverts the concept of faith and misleads the church]." Galatians 5:7-9 AMP

And a few verses after that in Galatians 6, it then encourages us to persevere in doing good:

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6: 9 (NIV)

Which means you learn the lesson from Dory, the forgetful blue fish in “Finding Nemo”: “just keep swimming”, “just keep swimming”. You remember nothing else. You just keep swimming, keep serving, keep being faithful.

How do you remain patient? I.e. acting calm while waiting? How do you maintain self-control? That is being in control when circumstances dictate that you lose control and panic and fear? How do I remain patient and self-controlled when all face chaos?

Here are some principles from the bible.

1. **You must have “Gazy faith”**ⁱⁱ... It means you gaze at God and God alone. You keep your eye on the prize. All you need is one seed, one breakthrough, one prayer, one opportunity... So you keep going. Abraham stumbled the first time he was tested.. when God promised him a son, after waiting for SOME TIME and becoming impatient, he ended up taking matters into his own hands ended up getting Ishmael. Luckily, he didn’t stumble the next time when he had to sacrifice Isaac – the son of promise born AFTER SOME TIME – over 25 years since the promise. By this time, God had taught him to patiently wait on him to put his faith in him alone.
2. **Spend time as a matter of Habit with God and he will teach you to slow down.** *““But I say, walk habitually in the [Holy] Spirit [seek Him and be responsive to His guidance], and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the sinful nature [which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts].”Galatians 5:16 AMP*
3. **Patiently endure your suffering.** Suffering is a test of character like Joseph. 30 years of waiting. The first 17 years for his brothers to acknowledge God’s anointing over him, then 13 years as a slave in Egypt - being falsely accused and being imprisoned while waiting for a prophesy to pass. His character was made in waiting patiently.
4. **Remember that even if God doesn’t answer your prayer, he will reward your patience - whether in this life or the next.** Pastor Rick Warren saysⁱⁱⁱ: *I can think of one prayer that I have prayed almost every day for 24 years, and it hasn’t been answered. I don’t know why God hasn’t chosen to answer that prayer, and I don’t understand it. But I have decided this: Whether or not God ever answers that prayer, I am going to die believing his promises. Because God is a good God, and he knows what’s best, even when I don’t understand it.*
5. **Have the same mindset as Christ.** Get to know what the bible says about patience and self-control^{iv}. When Christ was tempted, he repeated to the devil **“it is written”**! So, claim the verses on patience and control and SAY THEM OUT LOUD^v:
 - **IT IS WRITTEN:** *“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.” Romans 5: 3-4 (NLT).*
 - **IT IS WRITTEN:** *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” 1 Cor 13: 4 (NIV).*

- **IT IS WRITTEN:** *“But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.” 2 Peter 3: 8 (NLT).*
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** *For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. Habakkuk 2: 3 (NIV).*
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** *“But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.” 2 Chronicles 15: 7 (NIV).*
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** *“but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40: 31 (NIV).*
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. Hebrews 10: 36 (NIV).*

Our generation’s war: Developing patience to cope with fear during uncertainty.

Our generation today is in the midst of the war on the Corona Virus also known as COVID – 19. With The virus has come fear. With fear comes panic. With panic comes a lack of calm and a sense of loss of self-control. [Some of us are even beating our wives](#). How can we act with patience, how can we maintain self-control, even during uncertainty, in the midst of fear?

Some of the scientifically proven **tips for you to manage anxiety**^{vi} during the virus times are this:

- Get to know the facts however uncomfortable.
- Put the pandemic in perspective.
- Identify the source of your anxiety.

The same principles can be applied to any situation causing you anxiety and loss of patience.

And here are some **psychology-based tips for developing patience**^{vii}:

1. **Understanding the addictive nature of anger, irritation, outrage.** So the first step in growing patience is to get in touch with the addictive quality of the opposite of patience — anger, irritation, blaming, shaming.
2. **Upgrading our attitude towards discomfort and pain.** So many of us have the belief that being "comfortable" is the only state we will tolerate. Pain has its purposes. It pushes us to find solutions.
3. **Paying attention when the irritation/pain starts.** Most of us don't really realize it when we are feeling subtle — but very present — painful feelings. We ignore the fact that we are in pain and focus exclusively on fixing the problem.
4. **Self-talk.** When — not if — you find yourself impatient or irritated with yourself, you can remind yourself that you are growing, and that, "Sure, this is understandable, this is what happens to me when I'm bothered." You can say to yourself, "It's true, I don't like this, this is uncomfortable, but I can tolerate it."

So, let me wrap up by telling you a testimony you how the LORD who is the Holy taught me the above steps, even before I knew the science and read the article summarising the above.

I had never known personally from experience (rather than reading) that I am a naturally very anxious person. I also had never realised that in fear, my stomach clenched, my breath became shorter. This happened when I encountered a situation, a major upcoming medical procedure. It was a trying time for my wife Brenda and I.

The night before, the Holy Spirit at 3.00 am had to teach me a lesson on how to overcome. He did this in silence, Brenda sleeping soundly next to me. I heard his voice teaching me thus:

First, to feel the experience – for example my muscles clenching. Then to slow down by feeling my breathing. In and out, in and out. To slow down the feeling of panic.

Next, he taught me to stand on an anchor verse. *Arise and shine for the glory of God is upon you (Isaiah 60: 1)*. I had to memorise the scripture. I needed to say it to myself.

Then, he reminded me of Brenda as my Helper. During the training, I asked the Holy Spirit, “what will her role be?” He replied: “at the right moment, she will know what to do.”

Finally, He gave me a song of praise. To get my faith up. To keep me motivated - keeping my eye on the prize and remembering the promise. The song was [Made a Way](#) by Travis Greene.

What a victory he gave me when I went through the process? I am an overcomer!

How about you? will our generation let fear cripple them or shall we fall upon God’s word in these uncertain times:

- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “He will call on me, and I will answer him” (Ps. 91:15).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “No harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent” (Ps. 91:10).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all” (Ps. 34:19).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up” (Jas. 5:15).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 136:1).
- **IT IS WRITTEN:** “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:8–9).

Next steps

1. How will you recognise your own pattern of fear or when you are lacking in patience and self-control?
2. Develop your own “IT IS WRITTEN” list – verses from the bible to help you develop patience and self-control.
3. Tell someone about this message. Share this message of hope. Email it, share it on social media.

Notes

ⁱ Paraphrase of Matthew 4: 4 “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”.

ⁱⁱ Taken from the series “Crazy Faith” by Transformation Church of the USA. You can watch this particular episode here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMlg0br_OT8

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://pastorrick.com/when-god-doesnt-immediately-answer-remember-this/>

^{iv} <https://www.ryanhart.org/patience-bible-verses/>

^v The idea to list “It is written” verses is taken from <https://www.cfan.org.uk/free-offer/immune-fear-60-day-bible-study>

^{vi} See all the tips here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/smarter-living/coronavirus-anxiety-tips.html>

^{vii} <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-zesty-self/201109/four-steps-developing-patience>