

OUR IMPATIENCE AND GOD'S LONGSUFFERING

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Introduction: The Problem Of Impatience

- We Become Impatient With God's Timing And Instructions (Gen 16:1-2)
- Impatience Is Rooted In Pride (Eccl 7:8)
- Impatience Manifests Itself In Being Quick Tempered (Eccl 7:9)

I. We Learn Patience From Gratefulness That God Is Patient With Us (12-14)

Q: If I'm really grateful to God for a salvation and opportunities to serve Him, why should I be frustrated?

A. To Give Us Strength, He Had To Work Through Our Weaknesses (12a)

^{12a} I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord,

B. To Judge Us Faithful, He Appointed Our Service Despite Our Unfaithfulness (12b)

^{12b} because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, (cf. 1 Cor 15:9-10)

C. To Grant Us Mercy, He Graciously Poured Into Us Faith Despite Our Unbelief and Love Despite Our Rebellion (13-14; cf. Acts 9:1-5)

¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

II. We Learn Patience By Realizing Great Salvation From Our Great Sin (15-16a)

¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ^{16a} But I received mercy for this reason,

Q: If God forgives my great sin, how can I be impatient with someone else's lesser sin?

III. We Learn Patience By Following Christ's Example Of Perfect Patience (16b)

^{16b} that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (cf. Heb 12:2-4)

Q: When I see what Christ endured, even to the cross, how can I learn endurance from Him?

3 Lessons From God's Longsuffering Patience:

1. Because God Is Longsuffering, He Has A Long Fuse When Demonstrating Wrath On Our Sin Giving Opportunity For Our Repentance (Rom 2:4; 9:22; Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Gen 18:22-33)
2. Because God Is Forebearing, He Puts Up With A Lot From Man (Rom 2:4; Jer 15:15)
3. Because God Is Patient, Man Has Hope Of Salvation (2 Pet 3:8-10,15)

IV. We Learn Patience By Worshipping Our Sovereign, Immortal & Eternal Lord (17)

¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion

1. God May Teach Us Patience By Slowing Down Our Lives And Agenda

Psalm 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

2. Patience Comes Through The School Of Hard Knocks

James 1:2-4 ² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Romans 5:3-4 ³ More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Hebrews 5:8-9 ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

3. Patience Is Rooted In Love

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is **patient** and kind

4. Patience Is Gifted By The Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control;

5. Patience Is A Choice

Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

6. Patience Is A Mark Of Discipleship

2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

2 Timothy 3:10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

Discussion:

1. What do we get most impatient with?
2. Are our expectation of others realistic (especially those we're most impatient towards)? How can we make allowances for the imperfection of others?
3. How can we develop the habit to remind ourselves of God's mercy and forgiveness towards us when we're impatient with another?
4. Read James 1:2-4. How is our current trial (or trials, generally) teaching us patience? Or, how can we see our trials as an opportunity to learn patience?

OUR IMPATIENCE AND GOD'S LONGSUFFERING

1 Timothy 1:12-17

1 Timothy 1:12-17 ¹²I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction:

1. Patience, Now!

- A frequent prayer: "God give me patience and I want it now!"
- Type-A personalities and action-oriented personalities can struggle with issues of patience towards others and even God
- Dutch Proverb: "A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains."
- Is patience really a virtue?

2. Patience Is A Rare Commodity Today

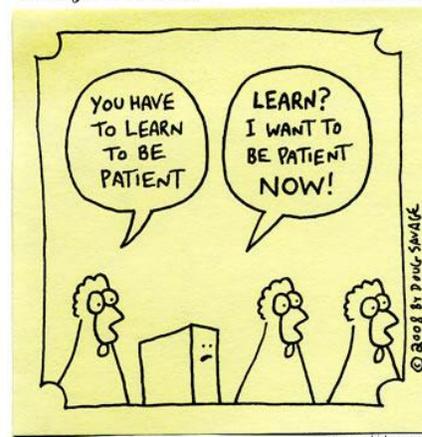
- Microwaves
- Fast foods and instant noodles
- Cliff Notes and Wikipedia
- Express lanes and express toll lanes
- Computers and speed

3. The Problem of Impatience

- Speeding, not making complete stops, running red lights, getting mad at person who cut us off
- Yelling at kids before understanding them
- Jerry Bridges defines "impatience" as: "a strong sense of annoyance at the (usually) unintentional faults and failures of others. This impatience is often expressed verbally in a way that tends to humiliate the person (or persons) who is the object of the impatience." (*Respectable Sins*, Navpress, 2007, p. 116)
- Les Carter: "Impatience is a feeling of restlessness that stems from a desire for relief or change. It is an intolerance of something that is hindering a personal goal or preference. It implies an irritable and testy nature. It is the opposite of calm and composure." (*Mind Over Emotions*, Baker Book House, 1985, p. 84)

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



- Les Carter identifies traits of impatience:
 - Time-consciousness; wanting to be prompt; always in a hurry
 - Heavy use of such words as “should” or “have to”
 - Preconceived notions of how people should behave
 - Desire to be influential
 - Strict in discipline
 - Single-minded in thought
 - Insistent in communication practices
 - Super-stern in rules of morality
 - Tendency to tune people out; to be preoccupied
 - Tend to be self-centered
 - Frustrated when things don’t go as planned
 - Intent to be well organized
 - Inner struggle with anger
 - Have a stubborn streak
 - Exhibit insecurity in social or family relationships
 - Crave freedom; do not want to be tied down
 - Rigid in thought and habit; lacking spontaneity (*ibid*)

a. We Become Impatient With God’s Timing And Instructions

Genesis 16:1-2 ¹ Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ² So Sarai said to Abram, “See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

- Les Carter: “People who are prone to impatience are usually unrealistic in what they desire from people or events. They have high standards which is fine – but their standards set them up for disappointments. Failing to make allowances for the imperfections of the world, impatient people add ‘must’ to their list of requirements.” (*Mind Over Emotions*, p. 86)

b. Impatience Is Rooted In Pride

Ecclesiastes 7:8 Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

- Margaret Thatcher: “I am extraordinarily patient, provided I get my own way in the end.” (Observer, April 4, 1989)
- Les Carter: “When impatience is a problem, too often there is a deeper problem of **self-absorption**.... ‘Do things my way!’ There is an intolerance for differing styles or plans.” (*Mind Over Emotions*, p. 86)
- Carter: “Many times, impatience springs from a **desire to control**.... Impatience erupts when they lose their grip on the controls.” (p. 87)
- Carter: “Impatient people are often prisoners of an **imperative style of thinking**. That is, they have very strong notions regarding what should or should not be done.” (p. 88)

c. **Impatience Manifests Itself In Being Quick Tempered**

Ecclesiastes 7:9 Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools.

- Carter: "Impatience is a close cousin to anger. It is virtually impossible for a person to be impatient without being angry to some degree.... Often people who have persistent struggles with impatience find that they do not have a good style of assertive anger. Failing to establish a pattern of assertiveness, they fall prey to aggressive anger. They may cover up their aggressiveness by calling it frustration or irritation, but whatever they call it, it is anger." (pp. 87-88)

4. **Are You In One Of God's Waiting Rooms?**

- Waiting to be married
 - Waiting for economy to rebound
 - Waiting for treatment or therapy to end
 - Waiting for a job offer
 - Waiting for school to be over
 - Waiting for your kids to be responsible
 - Waiting to move out of your parents' home

 - Rick Yohn points out what is in God's waiting room:
 - Not a voluntary decision on my part
 - I could not determine the outcome
 - A place of high stress
 - Face the issue of my own inadequacy – felt so helpless
 - A place where God would gradually unfold the next chapter of my life. He did not give me all the answers at once.
 - I experienced a great deal of perplexity ("Why has God brought me to this place?" "What have I done to deserve this?")
- (*God's Waiting Room*, Navpress, 1988, p. 6)

5. **Learning Patience Ultimately Means Learning Dependence**

- Why would God put Moses in a desert for 40 years before He uses Him to lead Israel?
- Why would Job lose his family, wealth and health?
- Why would Israel be exiled for 70 years in a foreign land?
- Why was Joseph sold into slavery and placed in prison when he deserved neither?

I. We Learn Patience From Gratefulness That God Is Patient With Us (12-14)

¹² ***I thank him*** who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Q: If I'm really grateful to God for a salvation and opportunities to serve Him, why should I be frustrated?

- V. 12 – "I thank Him" – "I am grateful to" (BAGD)

A. To Give Us Strength, He Had To Work Through Our Weaknesses (12a)

^{12a} I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord,

- "given me strength" – aorist
- The Provider of this strength is "Christ Jesus our Lord"
- George Knight: "Paul identifies Christ who strengthens him as 'our Lord' because he is aware that his lordship and strengthening is available for all who believe in Christ." (*The Pastoral Epistles – New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Eerdmans, 1992, p. 93)
- We have strength when we acknowledge His Lordship in our lives
- If we don't acknowledge His Lordship we are merely weak in the flesh
- Ie/ This week I battled disappointment, frustration and asked God for a trial to quickly end
 - If results were dictated by me, I wouldn't find the strength in the fact that God is Lord over my life

B. To Judge Us Faithful, He Appointed Our Service Despite Our Unfaithfulness (12b)

^{12b} because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,

- Christ judged Paul faithful – though he was a blasphemer, persecutor and an opponent
- That's Grace!
- That's Patience!
- "He judged my faithful (*pistis*)" = God granted his faithfulness to a point where God sees Paul as trustworthy
- Knight: "It is not that Paul at the time of his conversion had already proved his faithfulness, but that the Lord was willing to consider him then and there worthy of trust and therefore as one who would be faithful. Paul's gratitude is to the strengthening Christ who transformed him forthwith from the persecutor to the trustworthy servant." (p. 94)
- "appointing me to His service" – Paul is marveling that he gets to serve the despite what he was before

1 Corinthians 15:9-10 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

C. To Grant Us Mercy, He Graciously Poured Into Us Faith Despite Our Unbelief and Love Despite Our Rebellion (13-14)

¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

- “received mercy” = *eleethen* – Paul was spared punishment
- “grace of our Lord”
 - Martin Luther: “Just as the sun is not darkened by the whole world enjoying its light, and could, indeed, light up ten worlds; just as 100,000 lights might be lit from one light and not detract from it; just as a learned man is able to make a thousand others learned, and the more he gives, the more he has—so is Christ, our Lord, an infinite source of all grace, so that if the whole world would draw enough grace and truth from it to make the world all angels, yet it would not lose a drop; the fountain always runs over, full of grace.” (Cited by: Hughes, R. Kent. *1-2 Timothy and Titus (ESV Edition): To Guard the Deposit (Preaching the Word)*. Crossway. Kindle Edition.)
- “overflowed for me with the faith and love”
- “that are in Christ Jesus”
- “formerly” – pre-conversion
- “blasphemer” – speaks slander towards Christ
 - Homer Kent points out: “Robertson traces this term either to the roots *blax*, stupid, and *pheme*, speech, or to *blapto*, to injure. It denotes evil and injurious speech directed usually against God.” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, Moody, 1982, p. 86)
- “persecutor” – Paul was persecuting Christ Himself (Acts 9:4-5)

Acts 9:4-5 ⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

- “insolent” – disrespectful and violent
 - Luke described Saul as an aggressive predator towards Christians
 - He threatened murder
 - He searched letters like China searches Google to find Christians (who belonged to the Way)

Acts 9:1-2 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

- A. T. Robertson: "Threatening and slaughter had come to be the very breath that Saul breathed, like a warhorse who sniffed the smell of battle." (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 3, Acts, p. 113)
 - R. Kent Hughes: "He was a callous, pious, self-righteous, bigoted murderer hell-bent on a full-scale inquisition. His hatred soon reached well beyond Jerusalem. He sought and received extradition papers from the Sanhedrin so he could go to Damascus and ravage the Christian community there as well." (1-2 Timothy and Titus (ESV Edition): To Guard the Deposit (Preaching the Word) . Crossway. Kindle Edition.)
- "acted ignorantly in unbelief"

II. We Learn Patience By Realizing Great Salvation From Our Great Sin (15-16a)

¹⁵ *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.* ^{16a} *But I received mercy for this reason,*

Q: If God forgives my great sin, how can I be impatient with someone else's lesser sin?

- "Jesus came into the world to save sinners"
 - Christ left heaven as God
 - Took on human flesh to represent Man
 - Died on the cross to pay for our sins
 - His purpose was to save sinners
- "of whom I am the foremost"
 - "foremost" = *protos* – first in time and/or rank
 - German Reformer Martin Luther saw the depth of his sin
 - Though ordained a priest at 23 (1507), he tried to find peace with God through self-denial, penance, good works – but he could not ease the conviction of being a condemned sinner.
 - John Hannah: "Though he entered the nearby monastery and applied himself to religious duties, peace proved elusive for the young monk. An official trip to Rome to represent his order only heightened his anxiety; there he ascended the *scala sacra*, the holy stairs that Christ is believed to have ascended in Pilate's palace in Jerusalem, but wondered if contrition could truly appease a holy God and quiet a guilty conscience." (*The Kregel Pictorial Guide To Church History, Vol. 4 – The Reformation Period of the Church (The Early Modern Period) A.D. 1500-1650*, p. 5)
 - Howard Vos: "As Luther pursued the monastic life, he saw Christ as a stern judge, and he spent days in fasts and bodily mortification, seeking release for his sinful soul. During his struggle he came under the influence of Johann Von Staupitz, vicar-general of his order, who urged him to think on God's love for the sinner as evidenced in Christ's death." (*Exploring Church History*, Nelson, 1996)

- English Reformer Thomas Bilney were so impacted by this passage in studying the Greek NT that he came to a true saving knowledge of Christ as Savior apart from following the rules of the church
- John Bunyan wrote a book called: "Grace Abounding To The Chief Of Sinners"

III. We Learn Patience By Following Christ's Example Of Perfect Patience (16b)

^{16b} that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Q: When I see what Christ endured, even to the cross, how can I learn endurance from Him? (Heb 12:2-4)

- "display" = *hupotuposis* – a pattern, example
 - Even when you factor in Jesus' scathing rebuke of the Pharisees (Mt 23) and His turning over the tables of the money-changing thieves in the Temple, Christ is the perfect model of patience.
 - Patience doesn't mean that you never get angry.
 - It means that you get angry at the right time.

Hebrews 12:2-4 ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and ³is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

- "patience" = long suffering – *makrothumian*
 - *Makro* – long period of time
 - *Thumos* – anger, rage
 - This refers to restraining anger for a long period of time
- "perfect" = utmost, supreme
 - Paul, in comparing his sin, to Christ's patience modifies it with "perfect"
- Knight: "The patience of both God and Christ, in both Paul and Peter, has in view our sin and God's delay of judgment (cf. Rom 9:22; 1 Pet 3:20)" (p. 103)

3 Lessons From God's Longsuffering Patience:

A. Because God Is Longsuffering, He Has A Long Fuse When Demonstrating Wrath On Our Sin Giving Opportunity For Our Repentance (Rom 2:4; 9:22; Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Gen 18:22-33)

- "Longsuffering" = *macrothumos* = μακρόθυμος
- *macro* = long, *thumos* = suffering
- many translations use the phrase "slow to wrath/anger" (ESV, NIV) in place of "longsuffering"
- Paul uses *macrothumos* in conjunction with God's wrath

- John Feinberg: "Literally, when the Bible says God is 'longsuffering' (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; etc.) it reads 'God is long of nose.' When he is angry, his nose becomes red and burns. It may be questioned whether in the living language the idioms had not already dropped their etymological associations and did not merely mean to be longsuffering and to be angry. When he is compassionate his nose becomes long, so long in fact that it would take forever to burn completely." (*No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, p. 364)
- "Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy, and is used of God." (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*)
- "*Longsuffering* is...the steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It includes the idea of forbearance and patient endurance of wrong under ill-treatment without anger or thought of revenge." (Kenneth Wuest, *Galatians In The New Testament*, p. 160)

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and **longsuffering**, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Romans 9:22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much **longsuffering** the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Exodus 34:6-7 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, **longsuffering**, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Numbers 14:18 'The LORD is **longsuffering** and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

- Moses pleaded upon the mercy and longsuffering of God to not destroy Israel

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious, **longsuffering** and abundant in mercy and truth.

Genesis 18:22-33 23 Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 ... Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" 26 And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 28 ... And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ... 32 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." 33 And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

- Tony Evans: "God's wrath comes when His patience is ignored. God does not just come out of nowhere and lower the boom on unsuspecting people who had no chance to do anything about their eternal destinies." (*Our God Is Awesome*, pp. 245-246)

B. Because God Is Forebearing, He Puts Up With A Lot From Man (Rom 2:4; Jer 15:15)

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, **forbearance**, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- Feinberg: "God is slow to judge sinners, but not because he doesn't care about their sin or because he isn't powerful enough to judge. He is patient in order to give them a chance to repent." (*No On Like Him*, p. 366)
- Jabez Burns: "Forbearance is that disposition in Deity which causes Him to withhold punishment when it is justly due; to restrain His wrath, when it might be righteously poured out on the heads of His enemies. Forbearance is the result of His infinite goodness—long-suffering is forbearance extended, carried out, day after day, and year after year, although the sinner is increasing in the number and enormity of his sins." (Al Bryant, compiler, *Sermon Outlines on the Attributes of God*, p. 51)

Jeremiah 15:15 O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your **forbearance** take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach.

C. Because God Is Patient, Man Has Hope Of Salvation (2 Pet 3:8-10,15)

2 Peter 3:8-10 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

2 Peter 3:15 And count the **patience** of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

- Tony Evans: "God's patience lasts a lifetime. He waits on us, He forgives us, He doesn't give us what we deserve, He holds back His wrath toward us. He says, 'Come to Me now.' But we keep putting Him off, not submitting and turning to Christ." (*Our God Is Awesome*, p. 246)
- John Frame: "We might ask why God's patience shows his love, rather than an arbitrary decision in his eternal decree to arrange the temporal sequence in one way rather than another. ...when God formulated his eternal decree, he takes into account all the creatures he intends to make. His decree takes into account his knowledge of creatures, just as his knowledge of creatures takes into account his decree. So his decree to lengthen the temporal sequence genuinely reflects his knowledge of, and love for, those he intends to create." (*The Doctrine Of God*, p. 432)

IV. We Learn Patience By Worshipping Our Sovereign, Immortal & Eternal Lord (17)

¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Q: Why should I focus on my limitations when I can be trusting in God's amazing attributes?

- Paul responds with a doxology of praise in v. 17
- Paul is **periscoping** up to God's attributes
- When we focus more on Him, we focus less on ourselves or people who test our patience
- In my personal trial, I'm feeling sorry for myself
- I should be amazing myself in who my LORD is!

- "King of the ages" – eternal king, ruler over every age period
 - My trial is temporary
 - My King rules this age and the next

- "Immortal" – "not perishable", indestructible
 - No evil person or evil ruler will outlast God

- "Invisible" – unseen

- "only God" = *mono theos* – there is no other God
 - God has no rival power

- "honor" = *timay* – respected
 - I'm to be in awe of God, not what I fear

- "glory" = *doxa* – weighty
 - God is the weighty one

Conclusion

1. God May Teach Us Patience By Slowing Down Our Lives And Agenda (Ps 23:2)

Psalm 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

- God will make us lie down, even when we don't plan on it.
- Ie/ illness, layoff, etc.
- Sheep follow the shepherd. They don't know where the best place to go find the greenest pastures or the still waters (clumsy sheep with full wool coats feared rushing water that could drown them easily).
- We don't know when we need to rest or to take a break.

2. Patience Comes Through The School Of Hard Knocks (James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:17-18; Heb 5:8-9)

James 1:2-4 ² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- Patience – endurance, perseverance
 - God will teach us to not make impulsive decisions
 - Growth is a long process
 - Don't pray for patience – God will answer with trials
- Faith tested brings a steadfast life
 - Ie/ football – fumble and tripping drill
- Perfect & complete
 - Outfitted ship

Romans 5:3-4 ³ More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Hebrews 5:8-9 ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

- "Patience is waiting. Not passively waiting. That is laziness. But to keep going when the going is hard and slow - that is patience." (Anonymous)

3. **Patience Is Rooted In Love** (1 Cor 13:4)

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is **patient** and kind

- When you get impatient with someone, take a step back and remember why you love them

4. **Patience Is Gifted By The Holy Spirit** (Gal 5:22-23)

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control;

- The fruit of the Spirit are the manifestations of Christlikeness bestowed by the Holy Spirit

5. **Patience Is A Choice** (Col 3:12)

Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

- “Put on” like putting on clothing. Choose what to wear each morning.
- Leonardo da Vinci: “Patience serves as a protection against wrongs as clothes do against cold. For if you put on more clothes as the cold increases, it will have no power to hurt you. So in like manner you must grow in patience when you meet with great wrongs, and they will then be powerless to vex your mind.”

6. **Patience Is A Mark Of Discipleship** (2 Cor 12:12; 2 Tim 3:10)

2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

- John Frame: “A true apostle is, among other things, one who does not expect instant results (even with spectacular divine attestations), but sticks to the work that God has given him, patiently waiting for the fruit of his labors.” (*The Doctrine Of God*, p. 432)

2 Timothy 3:10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

Discussion:

1. What do we get most impatient with?
2. Are our expectation of others realistic (especially those we’re most impatient towards)? How can we make allowances for the imperfection of others?
3. How can we develop the habit to remind ourselves of God’s mercy and forgiveness towards us when we’re impatient with another?
4. Read James 1:2-4. How is our current trial (or trials, generally) teaching us patience? Or, how can we see our trials as an opportunity to learn patience?

Appendix: What Does God Want To Teach Me Through Waiting?

A. **God’s Waiting Room Is For Our Personal Benefit**

Isaiah 64:4 For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who **waits** for Him.

- God puts us in His waiting room to give us good news
- He is the Doctor who tells us to wait but He is working on behalf of us

B. **God’s Waiting Room Is A Place Where Our Strength Is Renewed**

Psalms 27:14 **Wait** on the LORD; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; **Wait**, I say, on the LORD!

Isaiah 40:31 but they who **wait** for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

- Rest, refreshment, renewal, and regaining perspective can bring us strength in waiting times
- Athletes need down time to renew their strength (unless they're on steroids). Pitchers are on a 5 game rotation.
- The waiting time is not about failure. It's waiting, resting and preparing for the next game.
- "Did you know that an eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? The eagle will fly to high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle does not escape the storm; it simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm. When the storms of life come upon us, we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us; we can allow God's power to lift us above them. God enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure, and disappointment into our lives. We can soar above the storm. Remember, it is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them."
(<http://www.allaboutprayer.org/waiting-on-god.htm>)

Colossians 1:11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,

C. **God's Waiting Room Is Where Our Comprehension Grows Heavenward**

Isaiah 55:8-9 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

- "thoughts" = Heb. *Mahashaba* – devising, creating new ideas and different concepts
- Rick Yohn: "There is nothing wrong with planning. But planning without God is mere presumption. As you wait for God to work through that situation in which you find yourself, make plans, but do so by seeking God's will to be done. Ask Him for the necessary discernment as you walk through your difficulty." (*God's Waiting Room*, p. 69)

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Isaiah 48:17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go."

D. **God's Waiting Room Is Where Silence Speaks Loudly**

Psalm 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

E. **God's Waiting Room Is A Place Where We Learn Faith And Obedience**

Psalm 37:32 **Wait** for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off.

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

F. God's Waiting Room Is A Where We Realize God Is Our Only Hope

Psalm 62:5 For God alone, O my soul, **wait** in silence, for my hope is from him.

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I will repay evil"; **wait** for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

- St. Augustine: "Patience is the companion of wisdom."

G. God's Waiting Room Provides The Time For God To Complete His Work And Bring About Good

Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

- God doesn't take short cuts or use the Clift notes versions of his Word
- He is crafting and perfecting us in His plan and time

H. God's Waiting Room Is Where Faith Brings Blessing

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who **wait** for him.

Acts 1:4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to **wait** for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;"

- The disciples were being tested after Jesus' ascension
- They were to wait 10 days in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (50 days after resurrection)
- The disciples could have grown impatient – not like the wait, the conditions, the food, the company – but they would have missed the blessing

I. God's Waiting Room Is Where Thanksgiving Is Heightened

Psalm 30:11-12 11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, 12 that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

- The longer we wait, the more we appreciate.

