

How to Cultivate Patience



Patience (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'm going to continue and complete the theme we've been studying this week, "Patience."

I do trust that my talks on this theme have been helpful to you and if so please take time to write to me, even if it's only a brief note. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please write today.

In my talk yesterday, I outlined the lives of three great servants of God who learned patience: Abraham, Moses and David. In each case, it was essential for the outworking of God's purpose in their lives. And I pointed out that that hasn't changed. It's just as essential for the outworking of God's purposes in our lives today. If we do not cultivate patience, we will frustrate God's purposes for us.

So, in my closing talk today, I'm going to deal with this practical issue, which is of such vital importance for each of us—how to cultivate patience. I want to suggest to you five principles or five things to practice.

1. Recognize that patience is essential.

Without it, we cannot receive our inheritance. If you underestimate patience, if you don't see how essential it is, you will not be willing to meet the conditions to acquire patience. You have to realize the value of patience if you are going to be willing to pay the price for it. So recognize it is essential. Without it we cannot receive our inheritance. This is what the writer of Hebrews says. Hebrews 6:11–12:

> "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (NAS)

A lot of people will tell you all you need to do to inherit God's promises is have faith. But the writer of Hebrews adds something else: "through faith and patience [we] inherit the

promises." We can have faith but if we don't cultivate patience we won't have faith until we receive the inheritance.

It's interesting to me that the writer of Hebrews suggests that the opposite of having faith and patience is being sluggish, or lazy. We wouldn't normally think that laziness is the opposite of patience but it really is because patience seems so inactive and yet it requires tremendous strength and it is often just sluggishness or laziness on our part that causes us to give up before we've achieved patience. The second principle that I would like to recommend to you is:

2. Submit to God's discipline.

In our contemporary culture, the word discipline is very unwelcome. But I have to point out to you that God is a God who disciplines His people, His children. This is what the writer of Hebrews says, and it's rather lengthy, but I'll read it. Hebrews 12:3–11:

> "For consider Him [Jesus] who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart [or, very simply, become impatient. Notice, Jesus had to exercise patience when He was persecuted and reviled and mistreated by sinners. Then the writer goes on:] You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,
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> 'MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD NOR FAINT WHEN YOU RE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.' [That's hard talk, isn't it? 'He scourges every son whom He receives.' What's the purpose of the scourging? One main purposes is to produce patience.]
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> It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. [Don't cry out to God and say, 'Don't discipline me.' Because what you're saying to God is, 'Treat me as illegitimate.'] Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? [Notice, that's a condition for living—to be subject to the Father of spirits, to accept His discipline.] For they [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. [Notice, the object of God's discipline is our good and sharing His holiness.] All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." (NAS)

Notice that key word, "afterwards." What brings us to the afterwards? What prevents us from giving up before we come to the afterwards? One single word, patience.

So, accept God's discipline. There's two ways you can react wrongly: You can regard it lightly, you can despise it; or you can be discouraged and give up. One's the rebellious way, the other is the way of just lacking what we call in modern English "character" or "guts." The third principle I want to recommend to you is:

3. Learn to see God's hand in frustrations.

Romans 8:28 is a wonderful verse, many Christians know it well.

> "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (NAS)

I want to point out to you, first of all, that you need to meet the conditions before you can apply that verse to your life. It doesn't say that God causes all things to work together for good for every one. But there are certain conditions: to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. So for that verse to apply in our lives we have to fulfill three conditions: we have to love God, we have to be walking in our calling, and fulfilling His purpose. Now, if we love God but are not walking in our calling or fulfilling His purpose, He will treat us in such a way that He'll force us into our calling and His purpose. But things will only really work together for good to those who meet those three conditions: loving God, being in their calling, fulfilling His purpose. But if we have met those conditions—we love God, we're walking in our calling, we're fulfilling His purpose—then everything that happens in our lives is for our good. And this is where we've got to refuse to allow frustration to conceal the goodness of God. So many times we're busy in the things of God and we have some frustration, a delay, people fail us, maybe our

physical strength fails, and we just can't do what we believe God wants us to do. At that point, we have to take careful stock and say, "I love God, I'm walking in my calling, I'm fulfilling His purpose. No matter how frustrating my situation may seem, nevertheless, it's working together for good to me." And an aspect of character that will enable you to say that is—what? I hardly need to tell you at this point. It's patience.

The fourth thing I want to recommend to you is simple but important.

4. Whenever you fail in this respect of patience confess it as sin and repent.

You see, most churches don't teach that impatience is sin. It's one of those religious sins which people get away with. It's like laziness. Laziness is another terrible sin in the sight of God but churches really don't reprove laziness. They reprove drunkenness, which is also a serious sin, but believe me, the Bible has got much more to say against laziness than it has against drunkenness. So there are some respectable religious sins which we tend to ignore and impatience is one of them. But the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins." It says also in Proverbs 28:13:

> "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."

So, if you're guilty of impatience, don't cover it up, don't offer an excuse, don't explain it away. Just humble yourself before God, confess it as sin, repent, He'll forgive you, He'll restore you, He'll renew you and you'll be able to go on into victory but if you don't deal with it, it will be like a kind of rope around your ankle that will trip you every time you try to move forward. The fifth, and the final thing that I want to recommend is:

5. Cultivate sensitivity to God's timing.

And I'm going to read once again the first eight verses of Ecclesiastes 3, which I read earlier in this week. One reason I'm reading them is I like them so much myself. I hope that I'll create a liking for them in you. This is all emphasizing the importance of timing.

> "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—
> A time to give birth, and a time to die;
> A time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted.
> A time to kill, and a time to heal;
> A time to tear down, and a time to build up.
> A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
> A time to mourn, and a time to dance.
> A time to throw stones, and a time to gather stones;
> A time to embrace, and a time to shun embracing.
> A time to search, and a time to give up as lost;
> A time to keep, and a time to throw away.
> A time to tear apart, and a time to sew together;
> A time to be silent, and a time to speak.
> A time to love, and a time to hate;
> A time for war, and a time for peace."

You see, none of those things that are mentioned there is always right and none of them is always wrong. But each of them is right at the right time and wrong out of the right time. So, to be right, you have to cultivate a sensitivity to God's timing.

Let me go back to that example of the conductor and the orchestra that I gave earlier in the week. You're one of the instruments in the orchestra. You can play the right notes, but if you play them at the wrong time the result is disastrous. So, in order to play the right note at the right time, you have to keep your eye on the conductor and move when he indicates it's time for you to move. He'll give you a little nod, He'll just stretch out His baton for a moment. He'll remind you now is your time. And God, the Holy Spirit, is our conductor and we can only be successful, we can only achieve harmony, we can only fulfill our appointed destiny if we keep our eye on the conductor.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another rich and exciting theme from the Word of God.

My special offer this week is my book, The Grace of Yielding. It contains vital lessons from my own experience that lifted me to a new level of Christian living. It will help you to cultivate patience in your life, too, and to reap all the benefits that flow from it. Also my complete series of talks this week on "Patience" is available in a single, carefully-edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.

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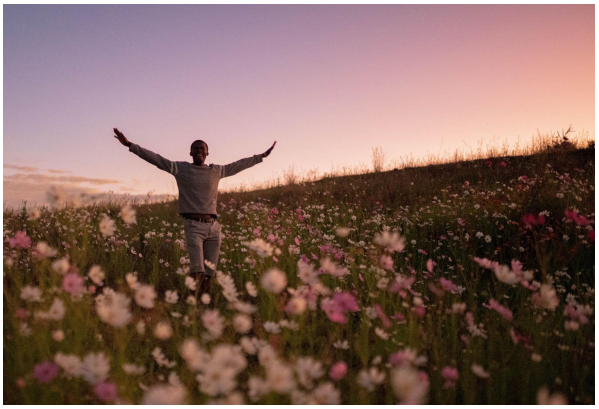
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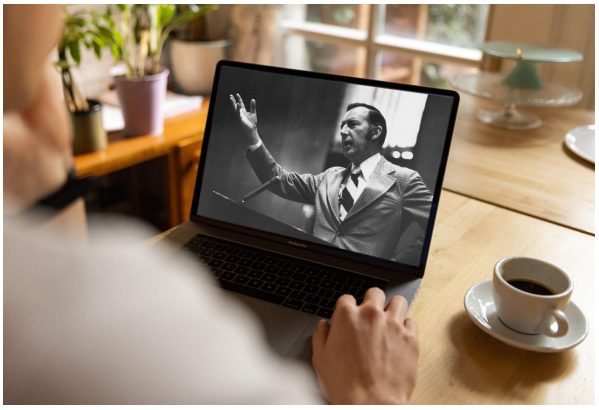
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