

Love is Patient

Enduring trying circumstances with even temper- dictionary.com

To be of long spirit, not to lose heart; to persevere in misfortune; to bear the offenses of others; slow to anger - blueletterbible.com

How has God loved me with patience:

Gives Hope: To endure trials bravely is not a standard to achieve without help or hope. God, who knows the end and cannot lie, tells me that a reward is coming. This reward is described as an abundant entrance into the kingdom, a hope that is realized, and a participation in the divine nature!

Gives Example: The idea of looking unto something not yet in hand and enduring through hardship to gain that hope is manifest in Jesus Christ. Who, for the hope of joy, endured the suffering of the cross and now sits at the right hand of God the Father. Christ realized his hope after death, giving us the assurance that we do not hope in vain. God Himself is patient and long suffering, slow to anger and abounding in love. As I work towards patience in my own life I am rightly reflecting His character. There is also a “great cloud of witnesses” both Biblically and historically who demonstrate that patience can be worked out on a human level.

Gives Grace: Finally, God himself gives many gifts that will enable me to be patient. He gives me Resurrection power, the help of the Holy Spirit, strength to have joy and the scriptures as a comfort. He has given all I need for godliness and His love is poured into my heart. The trials themselves are an evidence of God’s love for me as part of His work to “prove” me, building my confidence that I love Him and He loves me. God even has mercy and blesses me in the midst of the trials sent to strengthen me. Between the help God gives, the hope He offers and the knowledge of the present benefits produced, New Testament writers can then reasonably tell us to rejoice because what seems hard is actually incredibly good!

How I can use patience to love God:

In Attitude: I am to have joy while waiting. Some of this comes from hope of personal reward, some actually comes from hope of God’s greater glory. Patience, even in suffering, is not the end goal, just part of the process. My focus is Jesus; some were commended for their patience but then rebuked for leaving their first love. An eternal perspective while working with the present is where patience and ultimately joy, comes from.

In Action: Patience is not merely waiting out a storm in the cellar. A combination of yieldedness and striving produces the fruit of patience. In suffering at the hands of others I must guard against sin, particularly with my

mouth and commit myself to God as the perfect judge. I am to hear and keep the word of God with a pure heart. I must hold on, keep up the good work, do the will of God, demonstrate kindness, increase in knowledge and gratefulness; striving for the intangibles which are the currency of the kingdom. In working with others - children, store clerk, slow driver - the eternal focus allows me to see them as more than an obstacle keeping me from my own end.

How has this played out in my life this month:

I entered this study with a bit of trepidation, wondering what trial might come my way. Nothing life shattering happened but I did fight a chest cold for two and a half weeks. And really, this is part of patience, taking each ordinary moment of life and living it back to God. Some days I would just be tired of being sick but the phrase Brian and I jokingly share during illness, "I hate being sick," seemed to stick on my lips. Was letting out a complaint suffering patiently? In the sedated fatigue of illness I actually felt calmer than usual and more focused on being than doing. I lost my voice for a week and a side benefit as I told Brian, was "at least I can't yell at the kids." It disciplined me to slow down, get their attention and not repeat myself. Now, while observing this to myself and patting myself on the back, I did lose all patience the day after I got well. I rode the frustration of the moment and lost all eternal perspective. I used my voice to command authority rather than listen which cost me a chance for discipleship which had to be bought back through repentance and apology to the offended offender. So my imperfect attempt to love God was swallowed in His overwhelming love for me. Praise to a long-suffering, slow to anger, patient God whose mercies are new every morning.