



The tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do

Issachar Ministries UK seeks to be a people who understand the times, listen to the Lord and know what should be done

Resourcing for Prayer Network

Spiritual Guidelines

The Fruit of the Spirit (v)

love, joy, peace, PATIENCE, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control Galatian 5.22

Patience is essential for a believer - but comes with practice!

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3.12)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:2-8)

Monica Hill

January 2016

Forbearance, long-suffering, fortitude, composure, peacefulness are all synonyms for patience - this aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit which shows God's presence within us enabling his work to be accomplished. It embodies the kind of maturity that enables us to stand firm 'Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience' (Colossians 1:11). We can then say with Paul 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength' (Philippian 4.13).

Patience is a virtue which is sadly lacking in today's culture which wants everything immediately. The amusing prayer 'Lord give me the gift of patience - and give it to me **now**' is a sad rebuke on our misunderstanding of the nature of patience. It is often confused with being a Gift of God rather than a Fruit of the Spirit which comes with the right use of the gifts we have been given. Patience is an important fruit of the spirit - a fruit gained by getting regularly into the presence of the Lord and understanding and accepting his timing for all that is happening.

In the Epistle of James, the apostle urges Christians to be patient as we look for the Lord's coming. '*See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains*' (James 5:7-11). In Timothy, I am reminded that I am shown mercy so that '*Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life*' (1 Timothy 1:15-17).

What does the Bible say?

Patience actually grows under trial so if you DO pray for patience, you may be asking God to send you trials to help you become mature!

There are many passages in the New Testament of how patience and fortitude are needed under tribulation. Paul reminds the Corinthians that as servants of God we need to be able to demonstrate to others in every situation 'in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and

hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love' (2 Corinthians 6.4-6).

To the Romans 'we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope' (Romans 5.3)

In James we read 'Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him' (James 1.12).

One of the most memorable references to patience is in the Old Testament when we read of the 'Patience of Job' and here we mean long-suffering which is another meaning lying behind this word. Long-suffering hardly seems to be a virtue to be aspired to or even desired - unless you are already in those circumstances when it is an essential which enables our faith to survive as Job's did when things did not go right.

Value of Patience

It may not be one of the three traditional cardinal values - faith, love and hope as defined by St Paul but fortitude (patience) does come next and indicates a tenacity to never give up. In the Seven Deadly Sins, Patience is seen as the opposite of Anger: in the Talmud patience is extolled as an important personal trait. Many of the Old Testament prophets were so at one with God that they exercised patience in some of the most difficult circumstances. Micah says *'But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Saviour; my God will hear me'* (Micah 7:7).

Patience is referred to in several proverbs, such as *'Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly'* (Proverbs 14:29); *'A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel'* (Proverbs 15:18); and *'Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city'* (Proverbs 16:32). In Ecclesiastes: *'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).

Patience as a Virtue

We say that patience is a virtue and we can recognise that it brings a serenity to an individual - and a composure which many of us desire. It enables the believer to endure many challenging personal circumstances and find strength to be delivered from the temptations around us - and even from trying to find answers for ourselves. It is often coupled with wisdom *'But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere'* (James 3.17). *'A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offence'* (Proverbs 19:11).

God's Patience with Us

Christians are encouraged to *'bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation'* (2 Peter 3:15) and they should not *'show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience as this is intended to lead you to repentance'* (Romans 2:4). God's patience with us far outweighs anything we can ever envisage and we should be eternally grateful for this. Hebrews encourages us to *'imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised'* (Hebrews 6:12).

But we do not often reflect and pass on this patience to others. Paul challenges the Thessalonians to *'be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good for each other and for all'* (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15). Paul himself exercises patience *'You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance'* (2 Timothy 3:10). We too are encouraged to be patient when we are preaching and sharing the good news, *'correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instruction'* (2 Timothy 4:2).

This is the challenge - that we not only value the patience shown to us but also encourage patience in others.

*This paper comes to you as part of the Issachar Ministries Resourcing for Prayer e-mail in January 2016
Reproduction is permitted but the office would like to know 'how many and to whom'*

© Monica Hill

ISSACHAR
MINISTRIES UK

(C and M Ministries Trust)
registered charity no 1029797

PO BOX 184, Sandy, Beds SG19 1EL

Telephone: 01767 223270

Website: www.issacharministries.co.uk

office e-mail: info@issacharministries.co.uk