

Pursue Patience

Ponder: The Importance of Patience

Scripture: “. . . pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience . . .” (1 Timothy 6:11, NKJV).

For most of us, patience is in short supply. You have probably heard the joke about praying, “Lord, give me patience, and please give it to me right now!”

We live in a fast-paced society. At the restaurant, we want our food served immediately. The boss wants our work completed quickly. TV programs introduce the problem and solve it inside of thirty minutes, including commercials. At church, some think of ways to shorten the time we take to observe the Lord’s Supper; and if the sermon exceeds 15-20 minutes, our eyes glaze over.

Patience in Scripture focuses on endurance and waiting. Jesus spoke of the seed (God’s word) being sown in the soil of a noble and good heart, where it brings forth fruit with patience. In the physical world, even a summer squash takes a few weeks to bear fruit; a mature tree takes decades or even centuries. In the spiritual realm, good fruit often takes considerable time to grow; hence the need for patience.

The Hebrews writer exhorts us to “run with endurance (the same New Testament word as patience) the race that is set before us” (12:1). Seldom is our Christian race a fifty-yard dash. Most often it is a cross-country marathon. Along the way, we may be tempted to quit. It’s like a long road trip when we were young. We cried out, “When are we going to be there?”

Like so many other things, patience does not come naturally or easily. Paul exhorted Timothy (and, by extension, exhorts us) to pursue it – to chase after it and catch it. That takes work! Patience comes through the endurance of trials (James 1:1-4) and the imitation of great examples of patience such as Job (James 5:11) and, of course, our Lord Jesus (Revelation 1:9).

Oh, and it wouldn’t hurt to pray. But be prepared to wait!