

The Perfect Work of Patience

Bible Study Starters

Patience is an important part of being a Christian, but it's not an easy part. This Bible Study Starter will ask you to look at patience from multiple perspectives and consider how to develop more resilient patience in your own life.

JAMES 1:2-4, 19-25

(New King James Version)

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

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

STARTER QUESTIONS

1. Paul identifies God as “the God of patience and comfort” (Romans 15:5) and lists longsuffering (a trait similar to patience) as a component of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Why do you think patience is important to God?
2. In what ways is patience a part of God’s character?
3. In what ways has God shown patience to you? (See Christ’s parable in Matthew 18:21-35 for ideas.)
4. Patience doesn’t always mean choosing not to act. Often it means choosing **when** to act. What are some of the limits of God’s patience with us? Should we have limits on our patience with others? What would those limits be—and why?
5. Are there specific triggers (conversation subjects, personality quirks, common interactions, certain people, etc.) that make it easy for you to lose your patience? What about these triggers make it difficult to stay patient?
6. If it’s not feasible to avoid the triggers from the previous question, are there ways you can prepare yourself in advance to better handle them when you encounter them?
7. What aspects of your own personality are most likely to test the patience of others? What can you do to change that?
8. Patience requires endurance. When you’re tempted to give into frustration and anger, what are three steps you can take to continue enduring? (See James 5:7-11 for ideas.)
9. How does patience help us develop the character of God?