



Bob Chisholm

Love Is Patient

1 Thessalonians 5 / James 5 / 1 Samuel 13

Small Group Plan

Some time ago a good friend gave me a copy of **The World According to Mister Rogers** as a birthday present. It's a collection of quotes by Fred Rogers with a forward written by his wife of 50 years, Joanne.

Mr. Rogers tells the following story and then makes his application:

A young apprentice applied to a master carpenter for a job. The older man asked him, "Do you know your trade?" "Yes, sir!" the young man replied proudly. "Have you ever made a mistake?" the older man inquired. "No, sir!" the young man answered, feeling certain he would get the job. "Then there's no way I'm going to hire you," said the master carpenter, "because when you make one, you won't know how to fix it."

One of the greatest paradoxes about omnipotence is that we need to feel it early in life, and lose it early in life, in order to achieve a healthy, realistic, yet exciting sense of potency later on.

— pp. 110-111

Stop for a minute and think about the stories in scripture where God says, "later" when we would have said "now." Or, God says, "slowly" when we would have said, "quickly."

*A patient man has great understanding,
but a quick-tempered man displays folly.*

Proverbs 14:29

*A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension,
but a patient man calms a quarrel.*

Proverbs 15:18

*Better a patient man than a warrior,
a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.*
Proverbs 16:32

*A man's wisdom gives him patience;
it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*
Proverbs 19:11

*Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.*
Proverbs 25:15

I'm sure you've heard the so-called prayer for patience, "Lord, I want patience, and I want it NOW!" Why is it easier to joke about patience than to be patient? We say that we want to "slow down" but do we really? Do we really want to take the time to inventory our lives and begin to eliminate those things that cause hurry and war against patience? It's a personal question. It's an individual choice.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- At what times and circumstances are we most impatient?
- How does patience or impatience affect our personal relationships?
- Look again at Proverbs 16:32. Why does he say that a patient person is better than a warrior?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— DEFINING PATIENCE —

1 Thessalonians 5:14

¹⁴ *And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*

- Patience means "long-tempered." How has God demonstrated this quality?
- What is the difference between being patient and being passive?
- How can a person be patient and yet feel God's power?
- How are patience and perseverance related?
- As a group think of other similar words (synonyms) for patience? Describe how each one adds to our understanding of patience.

— OBSERVING PATIENCE —

James 5:7-11

⁷ *Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until 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.* ⁸ *You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.* ⁹ *Don't grumble against one another,*

brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

- From the first story James gives, what can the farmer teach us about patience?
- What cause us to “grumble against each other” (v. 9) as we wait?
- What happens to our fellowship when we grumble?
- What did Job need (v. 11) from his friends that he didn't get?
- How was he able to remain patient?

— BECOMING PATIENT —

1 Samuel 13:6-11

⁶When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. ⁷Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. ⁸He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. ⁹So he said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” And Saul offered up the burnt offering. ¹⁰Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. ¹¹“What have you done?” asked Samuel.

- Why does Saul take matters into his own hands?
- What qualities do you see in Saul that would make it difficult for him to become patient?
- If you had been his advisor, and you knew he would listen, what advice would you have given to him?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- The Greek word for patience is *makrothumos*. *Macro* means big or much. *Thumos*, means heat. Patience means able to handle a lot of heat. *Makrothumos* in 1 Corinthians 13:4 has been translated in several ways:
 - *patient* (NIV)
 - *endures long* (AMP)
 - *suffereth long* (KJV)
 - *never tired of waiting* (Basic English)
 - *never gives up* (MSG)

- Which translation especially speaks to you? Explain.
- How can slowing down and being still help us develop patience?
- What would help you to slow down (talking, driving, etc.)?
- Finding value in slowing down can be hampered by our view of others that we think are moving “too slowly.” How do you respond when others around you don’t move as fast as you would like – with patience or with irritation? Why?
- Close in prayer, asking God to remind us that no one on earth has ever quickly understood the full depth of God’s power and our potential. Praise and thank God for his amazing patience.