

# How To Develop Patience

MESSAGES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Be patient, then, my brothers,  
until the Lord comes. See how  
patient a farmer is as he waits  
for his land to produce  
crops.... You also must be  
patient. Keep your hopes high,  
for the day of the Lord's  
coming is near.  
– JAMES 5:7-8,  
Living Bible

The Lord says.... No one who  
waits for my help will be  
disappointed.  
– ISAIAH 49:23

We can rejoice, too, when we  
run into problems and trials for  
we know that they are good  
for us—they help us learn  
to be patient. And patience  
develops strength of character  
in us and helps us trust God  
more each time we use it  
until finally our hope and faith  
are strong and steady.  
– ROMANS 5:3-4,  
Living Bible

There are so many things in life that test our patience: freeways, supermarket lines, doctor's offices, irritating people. It's hard to be patient. We hate to wait—especially when we've been confronted with difficult people or circumstances over any length of time. Our tendency is to either seek retaliation or to despair.

The book of James provides some practical instruction on developing patience. Patience literally means “long before it gets heated,” and is the opposite of being “short-tempered.” As followers of Christ, we're encouraged to “strengthen” or “prop up” our hearts by setting our attention on the larger picture, rather than merely reacting to our immediate circumstances.

## WELCOME

A word or phrase that describes what had been happening with me since our last meeting is...

## WORSHIP

Psalms 130 captures the heart of one who, hemmed in with troubles, waits expectantly for God to act. For what are you waiting from God? Possible songs: “Teach Me Lord to Wait” (764), “Unto Thee, O Lord” (794), “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (57).

## WORD

Read James 5:7-12

1. Where do you need patience most at the moment? Perhaps it's a situation beyond your control, an unexplainable problem, or someone in your life who refuses to change. These are three specific occasions when everyone needs an extra dose of patience! How do you typically respond to these situations—with anger or despair? Explain.
2. What reasons does James give for being patient (vss 7-11)? [Because God is in control—vss 7-9. God rewards patience—vs 11; Matt. 5:13-14. Because God is working things out—vs 11.] Share a specific way that you've experienced one of these truths in your own life.
3. James mentions several ways in which we are to wait on God—like the farmer, we are to wait expectantly (vs 7), quietly (vs 9), and confidently (vs 11). What enables the farmer to wait patiently for rain? How are these factors relevant to your situation?
4. Why is it so easy to grumble against each other when we find ourselves in difficult situations (vs 9)? Do you struggle with grumbling? What are some practical ways you could deal with this problem?
5. Do you ever struggle with making rash promises or commitments when you find yourself under pressure (vs 12)? Instead, how should you respond? What principles could you draw from this passage that would be useful to you?

## WORKS

Something may be out of *your* control, but never God's. There is nothing beyond God's power. His purpose for your life is far greater than any problem you're facing right now. Spend time in prayer specifically asking for God's help in one of these areas—“God, please help me wait expectantly.... quietly.... confidently.”