

# Love Is Patient With Those Difficult To Love

## When Love Breaks Through, Part 2 1 Corinthians 13:4a

### I. What Is Patience?

- A. **Patience Defined** – lit. long suffering
- B. **Love Connection**

### II. Why Does God Want Us To Patient? To Be Like Him

- A. **God Has A Long \_\_\_\_\_ On His Wrath Giving Us An Opportunity To Repent** (Ps 86:15; Num 14:18; Rom 9:22; Ex 34:6-7; 1 Pet 3:20; Gen 6:3; 18:22-33)
- B. **God's \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates How Much He Puts Up With Man** (Rom 2:4; Jer 15:15)
- C. **God's Patience Gives Man The Opportunity For \_\_\_\_\_** (2 Pet 3:9,15)

### III. Why Is Patience Such A Struggle?

- A. **The Problem Of \_\_\_\_\_ – The Solution Of Humility** (1 Cor 11:20-22; Eccl 7:8)
- B. **The Problem Of \_\_\_\_\_ – The Solution Of Faith** (Gen 16:1-2)
- C. **The Problem Of A \_\_\_\_\_ Temper – The Solution Of Measured Anger** (Eccl 7:9)

### IV. How Does God Help Me Become More Patient?

- A. **God Teaches Us Patience By Intentionally Slowing Us Down** (Ps 23:2)
- B. **We Learn Patience Through The School Of Hard Knocks** (James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:17-18; Heb 5:8-9)
- C. **Patience Is Supplied By The Holy Spirit** (Gal 5:22-23)
- D. **Patience Is Modeled By Christ** (1 Tim 1:16)

### V. When Do I Need Patience?

- A. **Love Is Patient When Dealing With Difficult \_\_\_\_\_**
- B. **Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult \_\_\_\_\_**
- C. **Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult \_\_\_\_\_**

### VI. What Characterizes A Patient Ministry? 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9

- A. **Gentle Care (7; cf. Num 11:12; Dt 22:6; Gal 4:19)**
- B. **Protective Affection (8)**
- C. **Tireless Work (9)**

### Conclusion:

- 1. **Patience Is A Choice – Put It On** (Col 3:12)
- 2. **Patience Is A Proof Of Discipleship – Wear It As A Badge** (2 Cor 12:12; 2 Tim 3:10)

# **LOVE IS PATIENT**

## **A Look At Love, Pt. 2 – 1 Corinthians 13:4a**

### **I. What Is Patience?**

- A. Patience Defined** – lit. long suffering
- B. Love Connection**

### **II. Why Does God Want Us To Patient? To Be Like Him**

- A. God Has A Long Fuse On His Wrath Giving Us An Opportunity To Repent** (Ps 86:15; Num 14:18; Rom 9:22; Ex 34:6-7; 1 Pet 3:20; Gen 6:3; 18:22-33)
- B. God's Forbearance Demonstrates How Much He Puts Up With Man** (Rom 2:4; Jer 15:15)
- C. God's Patience Gives Man The Opportunity For Salvation** (2 Pet 3:9,15)

### **III. Why Is Patience Such A Struggle?**

- A. The Problem Of Pride – The Solution Of Humility** (1 Cor 11:20-22; Eccl 7:8)
- B. The Problem Of Control – The Solution Of Faith** (Gen 16:1-2)
- C. The Problem Of A Quick Temper – The Solution Of Measured Anger** (Eccl 7:9)

### **IV. How Does God Help Me Become More Patient?**

- A. God Teaches Us Patience By Intentionally Slowing Us Down** (Ps 23:2)
- B. We Learn Patience Through The School Of Hard Knocks** (James 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-4; 2 Cor 4:17-18; Heb 5:8-9)
- C. Patience Is Supplied By The Holy Spirit** (Gal 5:22-23)
- D. Patience Is Modeled By Christ** (1 Tim 1:16)

### **V. When Do I Need Patience?**

- A. Love Is Patient When Dealing With Difficult People**
- B. Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult Ordeal**
- C. Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult Decision**

### **VI. What Characterizes A Patient Ministry? 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9**

- A. Gentle Care (7; cf. Num 11:12; Dt 22:6; Gal 4:19)**
- B. Protective Affection (8)**
- C. Tireless Work (9)**

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Patience Is A Choice – Put It On** (Col 3:12)
- 2. Patience Is A Proof Of Discipleship – Wear It As A Badge** (2 Cor 12:12; 2 Tim 3:10)

# LOVE IS PATIENT

## A Look At Love, Pt. 2

### 1 Corinthians 13:4a

#### Introduction:

1.

#### I. What Is Patience?

##### A. Patience Defined

- "Longsuffering" = *macrothumos* = μακρόθυμος
- *macro* = long, *thumos* = suffering
- long suffering and forbearance when injured or wronged
- Does not seek retaliation, retribution or revenge
- Is not quick tempered – the word is the opposite of "short-tempered"
  
- "Intentionally putting up with a lot of junk"
  
- Lewis Smedes: "The paradox of longsuffering is that we must *choose* to suffer long. To suffer is to be a victim; to be longsuffering is in a sense to be free. To earn the description 'longsuffering' we have to make a decision for what we do not want, choose to live indefinitely with what we hate." (*Love Within Limits*, p. 2)
  
- Robert Thomas: "Patience or longsuffering does not fly off the handle quickly at the shortcomings of others or ill treatment by other people." (*Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, p. 212)
- William Shakespeare: "How poor are they that have not patience? What would did ever heal, but by degrees?"

##### B. Love Connection

- Agape love – sacrificial
- Smedes: "Agapic love is the liberating power that moves us toward our neighbor with no demand for rewards." (p. 3)
- *Eros* = opposite of longsuffering
  - Driven by a desire that wants immediate satisfaction – impatient
  - Eros is driven by fulfilling an emptiness inside with intimacy or passion. Agape love is when we are satisfied by God's love that we are not driven by emptiness.
  - To be full in Christ allows us to be givers to others as we love sacrificially.
  - Lust, infatuation, romance – they demand an immediate response
  - Major Harris: "Love Won't Let Me Wait" – that's the world's love, *eros*
- Agape is patient because it is giving not taking
- Agape is patient because it is unconditional and doesn't make demands
- Smedes: "Agape is born of divine strength; therefore, it has the power to be creatively weak. Because it is not driven by ardent need it has power to wait." (p. 4)
- Ie/ Wife going of alcoholic. Eros is over. But she can love sacrificially.
- Agape love can create an environment to resuscitate eros love.

## II. Why Does God Want Us To Patient? To Be Like Him

### A. God Has A Long Fuse On His Wrath Giving Us An Opportunity To Repent

**Psalm 86:15** But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious, **longsuffering** and abundant in mercy and truth.

**Numbers 14:18** 'The LORD is **longsuffering** and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

**Romans 9:22** What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much **longsuffering** the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

**Exodus 34:6-7** And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, **longsuffering**, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

- John Feinberg: "Literally, when the Bible says God is 'longsuffering' (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; etc.) it reads 'God is long of nose.' When he is angry, his nose becomes red and burns. It may be questioned whether in the living language the idioms had not already dropped their etymological associations and did not merely mean to be longsuffering and to be angry. When he is compassionate his nose becomes long, so long in fact that it would take forever to burn completely." (*No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, p. 364)
- "Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy, and is used of God." (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*)
- "*Longsuffering* is...the steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It includes the idea of forbearance and patient endurance of wrong under ill-treatment without anger or thought of revenge." (Kenneth Wuest, *Galatians In The New Testament*, p. 160)

**Genesis 6:3** My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.

- God was patient with the evil of men in the days of Noah
- He gave 120 years for them to repent
- But once that was over, the flood came – there was no 2<sup>nd</sup> chance

**1 Peter 3:20** when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah

**Genesis 18:22-33** 23 Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 ... Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the

fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" 26 And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." 28 ... And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ... 32 Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." 33 And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

- Tony Evans: "God's wrath comes when His patience is ignored. God does not just come out of nowhere and lower the boom on unsuspecting people who had no chance to do anything about their eternal destinies." (*Our God Is Awesome*, pp. 245-246)

## **B. God's Forbearance Demonstrates How Much He Puts Up With Man**

**Romans 2:4** Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, **forbearance**, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- Feinberg: "God is slow to judge sinners, but not because he doesn't care about their sin or because he isn't powerful enough to judge. He is patient in order to give them a chance to repent." (*No One Like Him*, p. 366)
- Jabez Burns: "Forbearance is that disposition in Deity which causes Him to withhold punishment when it is justly due; to restrain His wrath, when it might be righteously poured out on the heads of His enemies. Forbearance is the result of His infinite goodness—long-suffering is forbearance extended, carried out, day after day, and year after year, although the sinner is increasing in the number and enormity of his sins." (Al Bryant, compiler, *Sermon Outlines on the Attributes of God*, p. 51)

**Jeremiah 15:15** O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your **forbearance** take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach.

## **C. God's Patience Gives Man The Opportunity For Salvation**

**2 Peter 3:9.** 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

**2 Peter 3:15** And count the **patience** of our Lord as salvation,

- Tony Evans: "God's patience lasts a lifetime. He waits on us, He forgives us, He doesn't give us what we deserve, He holds back His wrath toward us. He says, 'Come to Me now.' But we keep putting Him off, not submitting and turning to Christ." (*Our God Is Awesome*, p. 246)
- John Frame: "We might ask why God's patience shows his love, rather than an arbitrary decision in his eternal decree to arrange the temporal sequence in one way rather than another. ...when God formulated his eternal decree, he takes into account all the creatures he intends to make. His decree takes into account his knowledge of creatures, just as his

knowledge of creatures takes into account his decree. So his decree to lengthen the temporal sequence genuinely reflects his knowledge of, and love for, those he intends to create." (*The Doctrine Of God*, p. 432)

### III. Why Is Patience Such A Struggle?

- Speeding, not making complete stops, running red lights, getting mad at person who cut us off
- Yelling at kids before understanding them
- Jerry Bridges defines "impatience" as: "a strong sense of annoyance at the (usually) unintentional faults and failures of others. This impatience is often expressed verbally in a way that tends to humiliate the person (or persons) who is the object of the impatience." (*Respectable Sins*, Navpress, 2007, p. 116)
- Les Carter: "Impatience is a feeling of restlessness that stems from a desire for relief or change. It is an intolerance of something that is hindering a personal goal or preference. It implies an irritable and testy nature. It is the opposite of calm and composure." (*Mind Over Emotions*, Baker Book House, 1985, p. 84)
- Les Carter identifies traits of impatience:
  - Time-consciousness; wanting to be prompt; always in a hurry
  - Heavy use of such words as "should" or "have to"
  - Preconceived notions of how people should behave
  - Desire to be influential
  - Strict in discipline
  - Single-minded in thought
  - Insistent in communication practices
  - Super-stern in rules of morality
  - Tendency to tune people out; to be preoccupied
  - Tend to be self-centered
  - Frustrated when things don't go as planned
  - Intent to be well organized
  - Inner struggle with anger
  - Have a stubborn streak
  - Exhibit insecurity in social or family relationships
  - Crave freedom; do not want to be tied down
  - Rigid in thought and habit; lacking spontaneity (*ibid*)

#### A. The Problem Of Pride – The Solution Of Humility

- At Corinth, they had "love feasts" (1 Cor 11:20-22)

**1 Corinthians 11:20-22** 20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

- These proud Corinthians went to the potluck eating their food before others. The rich brought their food and ate it up before the poorer people got there.
- If you're going to be a selfish pig, gorge at home, but don't come to the Lord's house and act selfishly
- Love does not seek its own

**Ecclesiastes 7:8** Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

- Margaret Thatcher: "I am extraordinarily patient, provided I get my own way in the end." (Observer, April 4, 1989)
- Les Carter: "When impatience is a problem, too often there is a deeper problem of **self-absorption**.... 'Do things my way!' There is an intolerance for differing styles or plans." (*Mind Over Emotions*, p. 86)

## **B. The Problem Of Control – The Solution Of Faith**

**Genesis 16:1-2** <sup>1</sup> Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup> So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

- Carter: "Many times, impatience springs from a **desire to control**.... Impatience erupts when they lose their grip on the controls." (p. 87)
- Carter: "Impatient people are often prisoners of an **imperative style of thinking**. That is, they have very strong notions regarding what should or should not be done." (p. 88)
- An impatient person demands control
- Control over the clock
- Control over the reigns
- An impatient person is like a sailor who mutinies against the captain of a ship
- Ie/ You work in a group pooling for creativity among
- Les Carter: "People who are prone to impatience are usually unrealistic in what they desire from people or events. They have high standards – which is fine – but their standards set them up for disappointments. Failing to make allowances for the imperfections of the world, impatient people add 'must' to their list of requirements." (*Mind Over Emotions*, p. 86)

## **C. The Problem Of A Quick Temper – The Solution Of Measured Anger**

**Ecclesiastes 7:9** Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools.

- Carter: "Impatience is a close cousin to anger. It is virtually impossible for a person to be impatient without being angry to some degree.... Often people who have persistent

struggles with impatience find that they do not have a good style of assertive anger. Failing to establish a pattern of assertiveness, they fall prey to aggressive anger. They may cover up their aggressiveness by calling it frustration or irritation, but whatever they call it, it is anger.” (pp. 87-88)

#### **IV. How Does God Help Me Become More Patient?**

##### **A. God Teaches Us Patience By Intentionally Slowing Us Down**

**Psalm 23:2** He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

- God will make us lie down, even when we don't plan on it.
- Ie/ illness, layoff, etc.
- Sheep follow the shepherd. They don't know where the best place to go find the greenest pastures or the still waters (clumsy sheep with full wool coats feared rushing water that could drown them easily).
- We don't know when we need to rest or to take a break.

##### **B. We Learn Patience Through The School Of Hard Knocks**

**James 1:2-4** <sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- Patience – endurance, perseverance
  - God will teach us to not make impulsive decisions
  - Growth is a long process
    - Don't pray for patience – God will answer with trials
- Faith tested brings a steadfast life
  - Ie/ football – fumble and tripping drill
- Perfect & complete
  - Outfitted ship

**Romans 5:3-4** <sup>3</sup> More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

**2 Corinthians 4:17-18** <sup>17</sup>For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup>while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Hebrews 5:8-9** <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

- “Patience is waiting. Not passively waiting. That is laziness. But to keep going when the going is hard and slow - that is patience.” (Anonymous)

##### **C. Patience Is Supplied By The Holy Spirit**



**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control;

- The fruit of the Spirit are the manifestations of Christlikeness bestowed by the Holy Spirit

## D. Patience Is Modeled By Christ

**1 Timothy 1:16** But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

- Even when you factor in Jesus' scathing rebuke of the Pharisees (Mt 23) and His turning over the tables of the money-changing thieves in the Temple, Christ is the perfect model of patience.
- Patience doesn't mean that you never get angry.
- It means that you get angry at the right time.

## V. When Do I Need Patience?

### A. Love Is Patient When Dealing With Difficult People

#### 1. The Weak: When We Expect More Out Of People Than We Are Getting

"Patien[tly] bearing with one another in love," (Ephesians 4:2)

"Patient with them all [the idle, fainthearted, and weak]" (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

- Ministry deals with people in weakness
- Ie/ You can't be a doctor in a hospital of well people
- Ie/ We can't be pastors or leaders in a church of well people
- Jesus didn't come for the well and healthy, but for the sick

#### 2. The Sinner: When Dealing With Someone's Sin

**2 Timothy 4:2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with **complete patience** and teaching.

**2 Timothy 2:24-26** **24** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, **patiently enduring evil**, **25** correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, **26** and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

- Alexander Strauch: "Being patient doesn't imply passivity or a refusal to confront people's sins or problems." (*Leading With Love*, p. 42)
- Paul confronted sin, cautioned against discipline and judgment.

### B. Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult Ordeal

Ladies, if a man says  
he will fix it, he will.



There is no need to  
remind him every  
6 months about it.

## 1. When Suffering Through A Trial

**Romans 12:12** Be **patient** in tribulation

**2 Corinthians 1:6** **Patiently** endure [what]... we suffer

- holds a poor hand if longsuffering is one of its best cards. But in a world where suffering is almost a law of life, the power to suffer long may be one of life's most needed gifts." (*Love Within Limits*, p. 1)
- "To qualify as sufferers, we must want to be rid of something with such passion that it hurts.... Suffering is having to endure what we very much want not to endure." (ibid)

**2 Corinthians 6:3-6** We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, **4** but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, **5** beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; **6** by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love;

**James 1:2-4** **2** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**. **4** But let **patience** have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (NIV)

## 2. When Enduring Evil Done Against Us

**2 Timothy 2:24** Patiently enduring evil

- Strauch shares a story of a sharp division in Plymouth, England between John Nelson Darby (advocate of Dispensationalism) and Benjamin W. Newton (the lead teacher in the local church). They came to a disagreement on a theology teaching and Darby left to start another church rivaling the other church in the same city.
- The churches were at odds against each other making accusations
- Eventually, Newton would recognize his doctrinal error and made a confession that he was wrong
- But Darby and others considered his recantation disingenuous and shunned Newton
- Both sides got hurt
- A meeting of 12 influential leaders convened to stem the division
- It was there that a pastor named Robert Chapman made a memorable remark:
  - Chapman to Darby: "You should have waited longer before separating."
  - Darby: "I waited six months."
  - Chapman with an uncharacteristically testy tone: "But if it had been at Barnstaple, we should have waited six years."
- Darby's reputation as harsh would grow and others would shun him – but Robert Chapman never did. He loved this other man though Darby was difficult.
- Ie/ Large, famous church on the Peninsula that just went through a hurt-full split. I listened to the 2 hour elder meeting understanding their situation and the testimony of the Teaching Pastor that left the church with a large following. Both had good points. Both sides were very hurt.
- I wonder how much patience could have avoided this sad conclusion.

## C. Love Is Patient When Dealing With A Difficult Decision

### 1. When Growing In Your Christian Faith

**Hebrews 6:12** Imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promise

### 2. When Expecting An Answer Or Direction From God

**Psalm 37:7** Still before the Lord and wait patiently for him

### 3. When Anticipating The Lord's Return

**James 5:7** Patient...until the coming of the Lord

## VI. What Characterizes A Patient Ministry?

**1 Thessalonians 2:7-9** 7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. 9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God

### A. Gentle Care (7; cf. Num 11:12; Dt 22:6; Gal 4:19)

*7 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.*

- It can be so easy to get frustrated
- Ie/ on airplane sitting next to mother with a wiggly toddler – I told her she was a good mom

Imagery of Scripture of a mothering ministry:

**Numbers 11:12** - God told Moses to carry Israel "in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant."

**Galatians 4:19** "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."

**Deuteronomy 22:6** If you come across a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young.

- women can have a greater sense of the labor of ministry because they have an intimate knowledge of labor pains and mothering pains
- great pain yields great results
- parenting – glory-less

v. 7 Nurse Gently

ie/ hard work - making bottles, changing diapers, some babies are hard to put down to sleep - 18-24 hour task

- investing your life in people, as a parent does their child, can get **frustrating**

- Paul never lost his **gentleness**

## **B. Protective Affection (8)**

*8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

- **“Cherish/affectionately desirous”** - comes from word “to warm”
  - used of birds covering their young with feathers to warm and protect them
  - image of birds gently covering their young with themselves - for warmth

v. 8 Desire Affectionately = deep yearning

**Q:** What is your longing for the people in your fellowship group?

- perhaps you have none - which is why you don't go to fellowship any more

- **Go to fellowship** - not because it's a good or bad program, but because this is God's avenue for you to minister to people you should be caring for

- **or find another avenue of ministry**

## **C. Tireless Work (9)**

*9a For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil:*

- When
- “labor” – means to work to point of exhaustion
- “Toil” = Gr. *kopon* = fatigue incurred while expending themselves
  
- ministry is hard work
- hard on your time (spend time with kids in morning - because gone afternoon and nights) - **“night and day”**
- counseling over the phone - 2 hours easily
- in person - 4 hours easily
- hard on your emotions - tugged with sympathy up and down, heartaches
- hard on your mind - creative ways to apply
- hard on your self-perception - dealing with criticism, frustration

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

- “weakness,” “fear,” and “trembling” are what God gave Paul victory in

**Galatians 6:18** "Do not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

- we're farming – harvest takes time
- ie/ spent time with dairy farmers, hog farmers, grain farmers
  - corn & soy rotate, depending on type of corn – 150 days from seed to harvest
  - cows milked 3-4 times a day
  - sugar cane fields are burnt before the harvest to get the leaves out of the way
- ministry is hard work
  
- Start loving those whom you serve like a parent is to love a child
  - If you have had good parental role models, emulate them with those you serve
  - If you did not have good role models, or even if you did, emulate God the Father's love for His children
  
- Visit their homes, schools and/or work places to get a better feeling of what their daily life is like.
  
- Let them know you're praying for them – email, text message, phone call, pager signal.
  
- Spend the first 10 minutes after church/fellowship with the mindset of looking for those who are new, hurting and not fitting in. You can hang out with your close friends later.
  - Better yet, partner with your close friends in bringing in others
  
- Take time to listen not only their words, but their heart.
  
- Appreciate your whole congregation – young & old, cool & quirky
  
- Honor your pastors, leaders, professors, missionaries
  - Note of appreciation
  - Plate of cookies

## **Conclusion:**

### **1. Patience Is A Choice – Put It On**

**Colossians 3:12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

- "Put on" like putting on clothing. Choose what to wear each morning.
- Leonardo da Vinci: "Patience serves as a protection against wrongs as clothes do against cold. For if you put on more clothes as the cold increases, it will have no power to hurt

you. So in like manner you must grow in patience when you meet with great wrongs, and they will then be powerless to vex your mind.”

## 2. **Patience Is A Proof Of Discipleship – Wear It As A Badge**

**2 Corinthians 12:12** The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

- John Frame: “A true apostle is, among other things, one who does not expect instant results (even with spectacular divine attestations), but sticks to the work that God has given him, patiently waiting for the fruit of his labors.” (*The Doctrine Of God*, p. 432)

**2 Timothy 3:10** You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

- Questions for Further Thought (from Les Carter, *Mind Over Emotions*, p. 93)
  - When I feel impatient, what do I do? Am I inwardly edgy? Outwardly explosive?
  - How realistic are my expectations of others? How do I make allowance for the fact that we are all imperfect?
  - How do I handle my anger? When do I tend to let frustrations build inside, or am I properly assertive?
  - In trying circumstances what attitudes do I have? Am I able to view trials as opportunities to gain patience?
  - How do I keep my opinions and preferences from becoming dogmatic? How can I hold strong opinions and accept those of others at the same time?