



WHEN I AM IMPATIENT

So, when impatience knocks loudly on my heart's door, I resolve to imitate the patience of Joseph. I resolve to put my faith in the future grace of God—that He will turn the unplanned place and the unplanned pace into the happiest ending imaginable.

When I am impatient, I resolve to account with the Apostle, **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17).**

When delays and detours and frustrations and opposition ruin our plans and bode ill for us, faith in future grace lays hold on the sovereign purpose of God to bring something magnificent to pass. That is the key to patience.

This is the way of life that I am still learning. We hope, we pray, we join together in our daily battles. At the fundamental level, our daily battle is a battle against unbelief in the word of God. It is the root of impatience, which is also the root of so many other sins. So let us wipe away the mud that blurs our eyes and **get washed up by the water of the word of God.** Keep our eyes fixed on the precious and very great promises of God. Take up the Bible, ask the Holy Spirit for help, lay the promises up in your heart, and fight the good fight—to *live by faith in future grace.*

[Adapted from John Piper, *Battling Unbelief*, (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2007).]

WHEN I AM IMPATIENT, I fight the good fight of faith with the command of God in Psalm (37:7) to **"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him:"** and *resting* means to be silently waiting. The weeping prophet Jeremiah captures the word picture in his writing, **"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord"** (Lamentations 3:26).

A veteran pastor said, "The opposite of impatience is... a deepening, ripening, peaceful willingness to wait for God in the unplanned place of obedience, and to walk with God at the unplanned pace of obedience—to wait in his place, and go at his pace."

When I feel the urge of impatience and begin to murmur because my plan is interrupted, I fight the good fight of faith with the words of God in 2 Corinthians (4:16-18) that I shouldn't lose heart. This means I shouldn't succumb to murmuring and impatience. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, **yet the inward man is renewed day by day**. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us **a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

[See also Galatians 6:9, James 1:19-20, Proverbs 25:8; 29:20, Ecclesiastes 5:2, and Romans 8:28.]

When I am tempted to burst out oaths and threats or harsh criticism, I resist this false idea. It is not true that I am strong if I display outbursts. I am reminded that the Apostle Paul earnestly prayed for the church that they would be **"strengthened with all might**, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;" (Colossians 1:11). I see that patience and longsuffering are true strengths.

When I am impatient, I fight this with God's words in Ephesians (5:22) that impatience is not the product of the Holy Spirit of God. Impatience, therefore, is a product of my flesh because "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [**patience**], gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance" [that is, self-control].

The key to patience is to get into my head and heart that what God allows to happen, **He means it for my good**. The bad things that happen to me I don't have to call "good." The bad things that some people do to me are obviously bad—I don't have to call them "good." I have to see to it that my nose is clean. I do that which I know from God's word what His will is for my life—this I have to make sure. I can't control how people react to that. But I can control how I respond to the bad things that happen to me. I know from Scripture that Joseph responded with a patient attitude towards all the evil which his brothers brought to him! In the end, Joseph said to his brothers, "But as for you, **ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good**, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20).