

Building Character: “Patience”
2 Peter 1:6

Patience, the fourth quality to be added to faith, is perhaps the one godly attribute and attitude that men most lack. Yet, to some degree it is necessary to the attaining of every goal. *“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise (Heb. 10:36).”* In the original language “patience” means long suffering; steadfast endurance. The modern dictionary defines it beautifully: “Possessing or demonstrating quiet, uncomplaining endurance under distress or annoyance; tolerant, tender and forbearing; capable of tranquilly awaiting results.”

Patience logically follows self control, for without patience self control would be impossible. Lacking patience, men have spoken harshly, acted rashly, abandoned caution and safety to put themselves and others in unnecessary danger. Lacking patience many have given up short of the goal, remaining unfulfilled, unsatisfied and unrewarded. James teaches us, *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain (Jas. 5:7).”* Jesus, tenderly directs us, *“By your patience possess your souls (Lk. 21:19).”* In the Revelation, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus while maintaining steadfast and faithful endurance of persecution and tribulation is called *“...the patience of the saints (Rev. 14:12).”* This verse is followed by one of the most beautiful and thrilling verses in the New Testament, *“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them” (Rev. 14:13).”*

We owe our very existence today to the patience of God (2 Pet. 3:9). Not willing that any should perish He awaits the repentance of the unredeemed, and He waits for the faithful to carry on in preaching repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ among all nations (Lk. 24:47). Therefore, we must quietly and steadfastly endure, without complaint, that our task might be accomplished and that our goal might be won. We must patiently strive to do God's will God's way, for to do otherwise is to fail to do His will (Mat. 7:21-23), lest after we have preached to others we should fail to meet the test (1 Cor. 9:27).

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