“How To Develop Patience”, Developing A Faith That works, Part 14 of 15 – April 21, 2013 at SBC

 James 5:7-12

Much of our life, . . . we spend waiting. As little kids, . . . we waited all our lives, to start school, . . . then, we couldn't wait, until we got out of school, . . . then, we couldn't wait to fall in love, . . . then, we couldn't wait to get married, . . . then, we couldn't wait to have kids, . . . we spend, a lot of our lives, . . . waiting.

There are many things in life, . . . that, test our patience: freeways, supermarket lines, doctor's offices, irritating people. We hate, . . to wait. We are the, . . . Now Generation. We do not, like to wait. Some of us, are very patient, . . . except, when we’re hungry. Then, we lose, . . . our character.

There are actually, five different waits, . . . when you go, to a restaurant. You wait to get a seat, then you wait to get the menu, then you wait to order, then you wait to get the food back, . . then, you wait for the bill. And, . . . they have the audacity, . . . to call that guy, . . . the waiter!

Today, we're going to look at, what James has to say, on “How to Develop Patience.” You need patience, . . . in every area, of your life. In this passage, James uses the word, "patience", or "perseverance", six times. He uses, three different illustrations, to teach us, . . . when to be patient, . . . why to be patient, . . . and, how to be patient.

**\*\* WHEN SHOULD I BE PATIENT?** James isn't saying, we have to be patient, all the time, . . . but, there are three special times, . . . when you need, . . . that, extra dose, . . . of patience:

**1. When circumstances, . . . are uncontrollable**. Have you figured out, . . . that, a lot of life, . . . is beyond, your control? You cannot, keep your thumb, . . . on everything. James uses a farmer, . . . as an example, of when circumstances, . . . are uncontrollable.

James 5:7 – *"Be patient, then brothers, until, the Lord's coming. See how the farmer, waits for the land, to yield its valuable crop, and how patient, he is, . . ."* Don't go into farming, . . . unless, . . you've got, patience.

Part of the job description, of being a farmer, is you do a lot of waiting: waiting to till, waiting to plant, waiting to prune, . . . there are a lot of factors, in waiting. Yet, more than the factors, of waiting on things to do, are the factors, that the farmer, has no control over -- weather, rain, heat, the economy, labor practices.

If you have a lot of faith, you can be a farmer, . . . but, if you don't have a lot of faith, don't be a farmer, because, it takes patience. You deal with, a lot of, . . . uncontrollable factors -- circumstances -- in life.

Have you noticed, . . . that, even when we realize, a situation, is beyond, our control, . . we still, try to control it? How do we, do that? By, worrying. We think, that worry, . . . will control, a situation. To worry about something, you can change is dumb, . . . to worry about something, you can't change, is useless. Either way, . . . you shouldn't worry. We need to have patience, . . . in uncontrollable circumstances.

**WHEN SHOULD I BE PATIENT? 2. When people, . . . are unchangeable**. When people, . . . won't change. When they won't, . . make a difference. He gives an example, of the prophets. James 5:10 – *"As an example of patience, in the face of suffering, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord."*

What was the duty, . . . of prophets? To help people change, bring them back to God, to be different, in their behavior. Have you noticed, that people, resist change? When you make, any little tiny suggestion, they resist!

Do you have anybody, in your life, right now, . . . who refuses, to change? Do you know, how difficult it is, to live with, that kind of person? We need patience, . . . with people.

Joyce Lander, calls these, "irregular people" -- they are people, . . . who only see, their own way. They may, never change. What are you, going to do, about it? James says, . . . to have patience.

The word "patience", in the Greek, is the word, "macrothumos" -- "macro" meaning "long", and "thumos" (from which we get the word, "thermometer"), meaning "heat". It literally means, "it takes a long time, . . . for you to get hot". You've got a long fuse, . . . you don't blow up, . . you don't get overheated, with people. If you're going to be, a success with people, you have to learn patience. If you're going to be successful parents, . . . you have to have, a long fuse. You don't, . . . get overheated.

James says, . . . you need to be patient, . . . when circumstances, are uncontrollable, . . . and, when people, are unchangeable, . . . and, won't cooperate, with us. And, . . . . .

**WHEN SHOULD I BE PATIENT? 3. When problems, . . . are unexplainable**. The classic example, he gives, is in James 5:11 – *"You have heard, of Job's perseverance."* Job played in, the Super Bowl, of suffering. He won, the championship. He was the wealthiest man, that ever lived. He had everything, . . . going for him.

In a two-day period, everything, fell apart. He went bankrupt, his children were murdered, he got an incurable, deadly disease, . . . that, was very painful. You think, you've got problems, had a rough day! He lost his family, his friends, his finances. He was suffering materially, physically, socially -- every kind of way.

One day, his wife comes to him, and says, "Curse God, and die!" Now that's, . . a support system! God allowed the devil, to take away everything in his life, . . . except, . . . a nagging wife. The worst part, of Job's suffering, was that he had absolutely, no idea, . . . why it was happening. For 37 chapters, in the book of Job, God doesn't even talk to him, . . . and, tell him why, it's happening. There was no apparent reason, for his misfortune. Of all people, . . . Job had the privilege, to say, . . . "Why me?"

Life, is not, . . fair! That, is true. God never said, it would be fair. A lot of things in life, just, don't make sense. Maybe, we'll never understand, . . . on this side, of heaven. Job didn't, . . . understand. In all of those unexplained problems, . . . Job maintained, his faith. Sometimes, we just can't figure out, our problems.

When circumstances, are uncontrollable, . . . when people, are unchangeable, . . . and, when problems, are unexplainable, . . . you really need patience. **Why? II. WHY BE PATIENT?**

**1. Because, . . . God is in control**. James 5:8 – *"Be patient, and stand firm, because, the Lord's coming, is near."*  Three times, in this passage, . . . James says, “The Lord's coming, is near, . . . Jesus, is coming back. That is the ultimate proof, that God, is in control. Nothing, . . . can stop it.

The Bible, talks more about, . . Jesus' second coming -- when He comes back, to judge the world -- than, it does about, His first coming.” God is in control, of history -- "his story". He's got it all, . . . planned out, . . . everything, is on schedule, nothing is late, . . . it's all moving, toward a climax. God is, . . . in control. God's purpose, for your life, is greater, . . than, any problem, you're facing right now. God is, in control.

Phillips translation, *". . . resting your hearts, on the ultimate certainty, . . ."* Though, a situation, may be out of my control, . . no circumstance, is out of God's control. Although, I can't control everything, that happens in my life, God can, so I ought to, trust Him. Because, God is in control, and everything is working out, . . be patient.

Job, persevered. God's timing, is perfect, . . . He's never late. Some of you, are experiencing, a real delay, right now, . . . but, God's delays, . . . never thwart, . . . His purpose.

**2. God rewards, . . . patience**. James 5:11a – *"As you know, we consider* ***blessed****, those who have persevered."*  The second half, of Job's life, was more blessed, than the first half. God doubled, everything he had.

It pays, . . . to be patient. There are, all kinds, of rewards. Your character grows, you get along, with people better, you're more happy, you reach your goals. There are lots of benefits, . . . of being patient. God, rewards it. You'll be honored, by others. They'll say, . . . "He's, a patient person."

But, not just, on this side, of eternity, . . but, on the other side, you're going, to be rewarded. Matthew 5:13-14 – *"Blessed are you, when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say, all kinds of evil, against you, because, of me. Rejoice, and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted, they the prophets, which were, before you."* When people, put you down, . . . when they criticize you, . . . be patient, . . . because, there's going to be, . . . a reward, in heaven.

It is our, natural tendency -- one of the strongest, desires in life -- that, when you're hurt, you want to, get even. You want to retaliate, get revenge, . . . take matters, into your own hands. When you get criticized, you want to, criticize back. If you get insulted, you want to, insult back. Revenge, retaliation, are the natural thing -- but, . . . that's, the opposite, of patience.

James says, that the next time, someone criticizes you, . . before, you strike back, . . think about this, is it worth, giving up the reward, . . . I'm going to have, in heaven? I'm going to enjoy that, a whole lot longer, . . . than, the temporary pleasure, . . . of revenge.

You need to be patient, . . . because, God is in control, . . . and, He's going to reward, patience.

**3. Because God is, . . . working things out**. Often, behind the scenes, things we don't even see, He's at work, but, we don't see Him at work. James 5:11b – *"You have heard, of Job's perseverance, and have seen, what the Lord, finally, brought about. The Lord is full, of compassion, and mercy."*

God was working, all the time, that Job was not knowing, what was going on, what was happening. God, was working. A delay, . . . does not mean, . . . a denial.

If you've been praying, . . . for an answer to prayer, and, you haven't gotten it, . . you think God, doesn't want to, give it to you. No. A delay, . . . is not a denial. We have to learn, the difference between, "no" and "not yet". Big difference.

We want it, . . . and, we want it now. But, we have to, be patient. God is at work, . . . even, when we don't see, what's going on. God was at work, in Job's life, . . even, when he didn't know, "Why is this, happening to me?"

Phillip Brooks, was a Pastor. One day, he was in his office, pacing the floor, . . . frustrated. Somebody walked in, and saw him, and asked, "What's the matter, pastor?" He said, "I'm in a hurry, . . . and, God isn't!"

God says, "Be patient, . . . because, I'm working things out." While I am waiting, . . God is working. You need, to remember that! Your hands, may be tied, . . . and, the situation, may be uncontrollable, . . . but, . . . it is not uncontrollable, . . . in God's viewpoint.

In advance, thank God, . . . because, He's working things out. He gives the illustration, of the farmer. When the farmer, plants the seed, he's waiting, for that seed. While he's waiting, . . . God is working, behind the scenes, to cause that plant, to sprout. He's creating the conditions, . . . so, at the right time, . . in the right way, . . . there will be, a harvest. The farmer waits, . . . God works.

Philippians 2:13 – *"God is at work, within you."*  Maybe, you can't see it, . . but, . . He is. Romans 8:28 – *"And, we know, that in all things, God is working."* In every circumstance, in your life, . . . God is working.

Be patient. I don't know, what kind of problem, you have this week, . . . but, regardless of the problem, you're going through (financial, relational, health, job), God is working, in that problem. Be patient, and trust Him.

**\*\* WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING, . . . WHILE I'M WAITING ON GOD?**

 James says, **consider these three illustrations**: look at them, and realize, what they did, . . . and, do what they did, while, you're waiting on God. First, . . . the farmer. What did, . . . the farmer do?

**1. Wait expectantly**. I must, . . . expect, a harvest. I must believe, that it is inevitable, . . . that, I've done, the right thing. What does a farmer do, . . . while he's waiting on God? Just sit, and watch reruns, on television, all day? No, while he's waiting, on the harvest, . . . the farmer is preparing, for the answer. He's getting, . . . ready.

Waiting, is a time, for preparation, . . . which shows, your expectation. We demonstrate, our expectation, . . . by our preparation. We get ready, for the answer, . . . in advance.

Psalm 130:5 – *". . . I wait* ***expectantly****, trusting God to help, for He has promised."* What are you, waiting for, from God? Maybe, to heal, a long-term illness, . . . or, to transform your marriage, . . . or, to reverse your financial problems, . . . or, for God to reach your teenagers, for Christ? Do you really, expect Him, to do that?

The Bible says, *"According to your faith, it will be done, unto you."* If you do, expect God, to do it eventually, prove it! How can you prove, . . . that you're expecting God, to do something? Simple. What are you doing, . . . to get ready for it? Are you preparing, for the answer?

If the answer came, today, . . . would you be ready? How can, . . . I prepare? The way, you get ready, . . . for something, . . . is by preparing, in advance. While you're waiting, . . . you're preparing. Preparing, . . . demonstrates, . . . expectation.

A lot of times, when we’re waiting on God, . . . He's really, . . waiting on us. He was ready, to give the answer, a long time ago, . . . but, we weren’t ready, to receive it. He's saying, "Grow up! Get some, spiritual depth, . . . in your life. I want to bless your life, . . . but, you can't handle the blessing, . . . I want to pour on you.”

“It's so great, . . . and, you're such, a puny pip-squeak, spiritually, . . you're not ready, . . to handle, this blessing. When you've got, some spiritual muscle, in your life, . . . I'll bless you, beyond, what you can imagine." Waiting, is a time, . . . to get ready. Prepare.

Jesus waited, thirty years, . . before, he began, His ministry. Thirty years, of preparation, and He accomplished more, . . . in three years, than we would, . . . in a lifetime. Isaiah 49:23 – *"The Lord says, . . . No one, who waits, for my help, . . . will be disappointed."*

**2. Wait quietly**. James points out the fact, that we have a tendency, . . . to run off at the mouth, when we're irritated, when we're tense, when we're under pressure, when things aren't going our way, . . . and, things aren't under, our control. James warns us, . . . of **two things**, to avoid:

1. James 5:9 – *"Don't grumble, against each other, brothers, or you will, be judged."* Why does he, talk about grumbling, . . . right, in the middle of patience? It's hard, to be quiet, . . . when you're frustrated. When you're frustrated, you want everybody, to know about it. You want to grumble, mumble, moan, . . . and, complain. We don't mind waiting, . . . if we can complain about it. I'll wait, . . . if I can gripe, while I'm waiting. James says, “Don’t grumble”. *“Don’t blame your troubles, on one another.”*

When you get up, in the morning, . . . do you rise, and whine? Hit the ground, . . . griping? Everything, is bad! If you come home, at night, dog-tired, . . . it's because, you growled, . . . all day!

I heard about a lady, . . . who griped at her husband, all the time. Constantly. The guy died, and she put on, his tombstone, "Rest in Peace". Then they went, and read the will. He willed $5 to his wife, and everything else, . . . to his secretary. She went back, and changed the tombstone, to ". . . ‘til, we meet again."

James 5:12 – *"Above all, my brothers, don't swear."* Does waiting, . . ever tempt you, . . to swear? Sometimes, when we get frustrated, . . . we feel like cussing. We might have, a lot of patience, . . . with people, . . . but, we don't have, a lot of patience, . . . with mechanical things. What about, computers?

What happens, . . . when you get, uptight? When you're frustrated, and things aren't going your way, and things are beyond, your control? How do you, normally respond? Typically, we take it out, on those, . . . closest to us. We unload, on our husbands, our wives, our children, . . and, it's not even, their fault. But, we're frustrated, and, impatient. We displace, our anger, and focus it on those, . . we love the most. James says, don't do that.

Lamentations 3:26 – *"It is good, to wait* ***quietly****, for the salvation, of the Lord."*  Hab. 2:3 – *"These things, won't happen, right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches, when the vision, will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things, will surely, come to pass. Just, be patient! They will not, be overdue, a single day!"*

Do you have a dream, a goal in life, . . . a vision, that God's, given you? God says, it will be right on target, at the right time, in the right way. You wait expectantly, . . and, you wait quietly.

**3. Wait confidently**. Job, never lost, his confidence, . . . in all, that he did. When the outlook is bad, you look up. Micah 7:7 – *"I will wait, confidently, for God."* How do you, do that? You have, . . . hope. Hope, is “Holding On, . . . Praying Expectantly” -- HOPE.

When you've got a problem, . . . that's, unexplainable, . . . a person, who is unchangeable, . . . a circumstance, . . that, is uncontrollable, . . . then, wait confidently. God, . . . is working.

How do you wait, . . . confidently? Sit still. Don't get nervous, anxious. You don't take matters, into your own hands, and work things out. Psalm 37:7 – *"Be still, before the Lord, and wait patiently, for Him, to act."*

\*\* Where do you need, . . . to have patience, this morning? Do you have, an uncontrollable circumstance, in your life, . . . right now? Maybe, you're in a job situation, and your boss, has told you to do something, that's beyond your control, . . . and, you don't want to do it. Maybe, you've had a financial reversal, that was beyond, your control. Maybe, you have a long term illness. Maybe, you've got an unchangeable person, . . . in your life.

It's frustrating, when you tell your kids, something to do, over and over, . . and, they don't do it. It's frustrating, when you want to make the marriage work, . . and, you're willing to change, . . . but, your partner, is not willing to change.

It's frustrating, when you have a parent, who's growing old; their idiosyncrasies are coming out, and they're dependent upon you. There's that cantankerous relative, . . . that, every time they are around, . . . they cause problems. They're never, . . . going to change. You need patience, . . . with an unchangeable person. You need patience, . . . with unexplainable problems.

What do you do, . . when you have these, kinds of things? Remember, what God has said, in James. God is, in control. It may be out of my control, . . but, it's not out of God's control. Nothing is beyond, His power, and His purpose for my life, is greater than the problem, I'm experiencing, right now. God will reward your patience, if not in this life, He will in eternity. God is working, behind the scenes, for a purpose.

“How To Develop Patience”, Developing A Faith That works - Part 14 of 15

James 5:7-12

Learning to wait is a hard lesson to learn in life. James shows us when, why, and how to develop patience.

**I. WHEN TO BE PATIENT**

\* WHEN \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"Be patient then brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is ..."* (vs. 7)

\* WHEN \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"As an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord."* (v10)

\* WHEN \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"You have heard of Job's perseverance ..."* (vs. 11b)

**II. WHY BE PATIENT?**

1. BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."* (vs. 8)

*"... resting your hearts on the ultimate certainty ..."*

2. BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered."* (vs. 11a)

Matthew 5:13-14 – “*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.”*

3. BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*"You have heard of Job's perseverance, and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."* (vs. 11b)

**III. HOW TO BE PATIENT**

(What to do while you're waiting on God)

1. WAIT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 7)

Psalm 130:5 – “*. . . I wait expectantly, trusting God to help, for He has promised.”*

Isaiah 49:23 – “*The Lord says... No one who waits for my help will be disappointed.”*

2. WAIT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs.9)

Lamentations 3:26 - *"It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."*

Habakkuk 2:3 – “*These things won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!"*

3. WAIT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 11b)

Micah 7:7 – “*I will wait confidently for God.”*Psalm 37:7 – “*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him to act.”*