

I WANT PATIENCE...AND I WANT IT NOW!

Last week, we examined self-control, or temperance. This included restraint of bodily appetites, speech, and emotions.

When we see the word “patience,” we often think of the attitude of longsuffering because of the mistreatment by others against us. That concept is actually part of self-control. The patience mentioned in 2 Peter 1 is perseverance (patience with self). This is dependent on our faith, and we need to strengthen our faith by acquiring this trait which is necessary for any success in life.

The epistle to the Hebrews is written for this very purpose—to tell us not to give up. Endurance is the determination not to give up and to keep exerting all our energy towards the goal and the reward that God has promised.

Endurance is a mark of maturity. The seventeen or eighteen year-old is the gold medal winner of the 100 meter dash; the thirty year-old is the world champion in the mile and longer distances. This is true in the spiritual realm as well. Jesus speaks of those who receive the word immediately with joy but have no depth. Their faith is more emotion than conviction. When hard times come, their feelings change and their faith is too weak to hold up. When faith is a conviction based on the evidence, then it will endure through hard times. A person with conviction knows that the evidence doesn’t change so the faith shouldn’t change even when circumstances do change.

There is the story of the lady who prayed for patience in dealing with her problems, and her problems seemed to get worse. So she prayed for patience and faced even more problems. When she talked to the preacher about this, he simply showed her **Romans 5:3-4**. Paul said, *“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”*

The key to developing patience (endurance) is the same in the physical and the spiritual realms. It is a matter of enduring hardship. There is no short-cut.

We need patience and character to be pleasing to God, so do not be afraid to face troubles. God will give you the strength to grow from them.