

Understanding Patience James 5:7-11 (NKJV)

7 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. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Therefore. Because the rich oppress the righteous poor and life is filled with struggles we must have patience.

Jesus said that we ought to pray and not to faint.

Many see the troubles of this life as more than they can handle.

They think that wickedness and bribery will continue forever and we ought just throw ourselves into it and become a part of the system.

James has an entirely different perspective, that not only recognizes what is right but that the Lord will one day return.

Therefore we must have patience.

But what is patience?

Is it simply and endurance of those things that we are subject to and cannot change?

Or is it more than that?

Let us look at what James tells us and have hope beyond today.

I. Be patient, brethren,

A. Patient

1. James. In unjust suffering, makrothymía is perseverance in expectation of Christ's coming (5:7ff.). Awareness of the nearness of Christ quenches angry feelings, produces triumphant steadfastness, and confers the certainty of fruit. *Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 551.*
2. Patience. Ability to take a great deal of punishment from evil people or circumstances without losing one's temper, without becoming irritated and angry, or without taking vengeance. It includes the capacity to bear pain or

trials without complaint, the ability to forbear under severe provocation, and the self-control which keeps one from acting rashly even though suffering opposition or adversity. *Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Patience," Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1619.*

B. God is patient

1. Exodus 34:6 (NKJV) 6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,
2. Numbers 14:18 (NKJV) 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.'
3. Psalm 86:15 (NKJV) 15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.
4. Joel 2:13 (NKJV) 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

C. God's people are to be patient

1. James 1:3 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.
2. Ephesians 3:14-19 (NKJV) 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
3. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (NKJV) 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, 13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

D. What is the alternative to patience

1. Anger

2. Despondency
 3. Fainting
 - a. Luke 18:1 (NKJV) 1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,
- E. The farmer, the illustration.
1. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.
 2. We surely don't need to explain this illustration.
- II. Until the coming of the Lord
- A. The Lord is going to return.
1. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
 2. Matthew 24:32-33 (NKJV) 32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors!
 3. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NKJV) 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
- B. Oppression will continue until then.
1. Galatians 6:9 (NKJV) 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

What does it mean to be patient until the Lord's coming? It means to do what God also is doing: enduring human evil for a season. *Kurt A. Richardson, James, vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 218.*

1 Peter 2:20 (NKJV)

20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

Romans 15:4–5 (NKJV)

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

The Christian's patience in respect of persons (*makrothymia*) must be matched by an equal patience in respect of things (*hypomons*, that is, in face of the afflictions and trials of the present age (Rom. 5:3; 1 Cor. 13:7; Jas. 1:3; 5:7–11; Rev. 13:10). God is the God who gives such Christlike patience (Rom. 15:5; 2 Thes. 3:5), and Jesus is the great Exemplar of it (Heb. 3). He who thus endures to the end, by his patience will gain his soul (Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:19; Rev. 3:10). *J. W. L. Hoad, "Patience," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., New Bible Dictionary (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 873.*