

Patience

Christians must understand and practice patience

Other words meaning this are *long-suffering*, *slow to anger*, and *forbearance*.

The OT frequently describes “patience” by referring to the face, particularly the nostrils

- How one breathes conveys how one feels.
- When one gets angry, the nostrils widen; by taking a deep, long breath one’s anger is restrained (thus patience, forbearance, long-suffering).

1. *We Will Only Truly and Rightly Understand Patience as We Understand God’s Exercise of It.*

1) The Lord **describes** himself as patient.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Nah 1:3 The Lord is slow to anger and great in power

Rom 15:5 the God of patience and comfort

➔ Thus, the only way to know patience is to see God’s patience in action

2) Patience is an expression of God’s **mercy**, which is an expression of his **love**.

Psalms 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy

➔ God’s mercy is his compassion he shows to the undeserving. Every sinner deserves God’s immediate judgment. Yet he shows mercy by patiently enduring them.

3) God patiently endured humanity’s **sinfulness** until Noah finished the ark

1 Peter 3:20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

➔ Ultimately there came an end to God’s patience, but not while the ark was being built

4) God’s patience was evident in enduring Israel’s **rebellion** at Mount Sinai.

Neh 9:17 They refused to obey, And they were not mindful of Your wonders That You did among them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them.

➔ Despite God’s great mercies in saving them from Egypt, providing for them in the wilderness, giving them just and true laws

5) God's patience encourages saints to **ask** him to show mercy to others.

Num 14:18 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.

➔ Israel refused to trust the Lord and go in to Canaan...

6) God's patience encourages the troubled to **pray** for deliverance from evil men.

Psalm 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

➔ We *deserve* trouble, but God's longsuffering encourages prayer

7) God's people **praise** him because he is patient.

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ⁹ He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. ¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

8) God's patience urges sinners to **repent**.

Joel 2:12–13 "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 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.

Rom 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

9) God is patient with sinners to show his glory in **saving** them

Rom 9:22–24 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and *that He might make known the riches of His glory* on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

1 Tim 1:16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

➔ God is glorified by judging sinners, yet—could I say it?—he receives yet more glory by enduring sinners to save them!

10) The fact Christ has not yet **returned** shows his patience with sinners so they would be saved

2 Pet 3:15 consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation

➔ Think of how many millions have trusted Christ since Peter wrote! What patience the Lord has!

Think of God that he is

- Absolutely holy
- Entirely righteous
- Perfect
- Truth
- Love
- Does not change – he doesn't increase or decrease, he is perfect
- Sustaining Creator
- Is omnipresent – there isn't a place in all creation he is not present; no hiding
- Is omniscient – his knowledge of all things is exhaustive and perfect;

And yet human beings are

- Sinful anger
- Blaspheme, filthy language, curse
- Boastful and proud
- Brutal
- Covetous
- Despisers of good
- Disobey parents
- Drunk, partying
- Envious and jealous
- Greedy
- Hate and murder
- Hate God
- Have evil minds
- Immoral
- Lazy
- Lewd
- Lie and cheat
- Live for/worship everything but God
- Lovers of self, money, and pleasure rather than God
- Pervert his good gifts
- Selfish
- Steal
- Unforgiving
- Unloving
- Unmerciful
- Unthankful
- Vain use of God's name
- Violent
- Wicked

And yet God...

- Doesn't let loose his full anger though he would be entirely right to do so
- Still causes sun to shine and rain to fall
- Creates oxygen to be breathed, food provided, etc.
- Enables humans to live life on **his** earth
- Punished his Son to save these same sinners
- Patiently restrains judgment so they would repent and trust in Christ

Why is God patient and long-suffering?

- Because he is merciful
- God is merciful because he is love

God does not treat anyone on earth according to what they deserve.

Christian, God has especially showed patience to you!