

Write Upon My Heart
Patience

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CHARACTER—WHAT IS IT?

What is character? Why do we say that one person has good character and another poor character, or that someone has character and someone else does not? What is being measured? It is not really a person's actions, for people often make mistakes acting in good faith, and we do not consider that bad character. No, it has to do with who a person is—or has become—by the *habits* that he or she has formed.

Good habits become good character, and bad habits become bad character; and yet character is not just the sum of one's habits. In many cases it has taken only a single bad habit to destroy a life. In other cases, just one outstanding good habit has prevented an otherwise mediocre life from totally crumbling. We cannot know which habit might be our most powerful support, or which might cause our complete downfall. So, the safest venture is to develop as many good habits or traits as we can, especially in areas displacing any habits that we have which may not be good.

It takes work to form habits, but the good news is that once they are formed they are a snap to keep, for then they come naturally to us! How nice it is to be so used to doing the right thing that we actually prefer to do it! *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”* —Galatians 6:7. Develop good habits when you are young, and you will reap the benefits for all of your life.

Where can we look to find the best essence of good character? How about God's Word? It has the essence of everything good. Jesus was an example of perfect character. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,”* —1 Peter 2:21. As we study His life and God's Word, they will give us the guidelines by which to form our own habits and lives.

HABITS—WHAT ARE THEY?

Habits are those things that we do most naturally or instinctively—without having to make a decision, because the decision has been made enough times that we do not have to think about it any more. Things said and done by habit are

sometimes done without thinking.

For example, you do not contemplate whether or not to dress in the morning. You do it out of habit. If you brush your teeth every morning, you do not ask yourself if you should each day. You do it out of habit. Each good habit that we build—diligently—doing the best thing in an oft-repeated situation—is like a fence that we build between ourselves and some sort of heartbreak. However, it requires no effort to develop bad habits, and bad character is exactly what lack of effort becomes. So, a little work early in life can do much to prevent the manifold grief and loss encountered as a poorly formed character limps on through the years of life.

HABITS—THEY BEGIN IN THE HEART

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,” —Proverbs 23:7a. That means that we are what we think. We say what we think, and we do what we think. What determines what we think? We do. Why do we think the way that we do? We taught ourselves to think that way. Often when people say, “I really didn’t think about it,” they had already taught themselves exactly what to think about “it.”

Each thought makes a tiny connection in the brain like a thread. Each similar thought strengthens that connection by adding another thread. Eventually, the threads become great enough in number that they become a rope. Often a mind becomes bound by such a rope, whether it is a good rope or a bad rope. Habit begins to affect our thinking. We begin to do things almost automatically because what we think is what we will do.

It is important to form good habits *now*. Later may be too late. We are becoming *right now* what we are going to be. We are going to become what we are thinking *now*, because *“as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* Our thoughts are very powerful. We cannot touch them or see them, but nevertheless, they are very real. They are more powerful than our actions because they control our actions. However, we can decide what we think! We can make our thoughts subject to our will and the will of God. We have access to a power stronger than our thoughts—the power of God. He tells how to control our thoughts. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and*

every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” —2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

So, why is it so important to form good habits early? Is not God powerful enough to break bad habits? Yes, He has the power to break any habit, but there are very many that He never breaks. The reason is that people grow to like their habits. They begin to hate the thought of breaking them—even the bad ones. People do not like change. The ropes that bind their minds are of their own making, and they are loath to give them up. How many drug addicts live absolutely horrid lives, bound to drugs from which they wish they were free, yet who will lie, cheat, steal, fight, and even kill to continue taking the drugs causing them so much misery? People grow to like their bad habits so much that they often will not let them go for what they wish they could have.

How do we learn not to like our bad habits? By learning to like new ones. Do what is right, and soon you will like doing it. There is a saying, “Your actions will determine your emotions.” We become comfortable with something only after we do it for a while. Another saying says, “Eat olives nine times and you will like them.” Proverbs 16:3 teaches, “*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*” Do you want to think rightly? Do you want to feel good doing right even if you do not like it right now? Just do it anyway! See how much it changes the way you think and feel. Replace bad habits and have good character by simply making new habits in place of the old ones!

Lastly, it is not enough to have good character. We can have the very best character, and yet become lost for eternity, for there are none who have not sinned. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for our debt of sin. Only by trusting Him will we see the Celestial City.

It is said that “character has its own reward,” and so it does. People with good character instinctively feel much better about themselves than people without it. This is a far better and happier way to live. However, this reward pales at the prospect of eternal reward. It is great to have character. But, remember, it is infinitely more rewarding to belong to Jesus, and have character for His glory.

PATIENCE

*If I am short of temper,
If I want things right now, my way,
If I quickly snap at people,
If my tongue is sharper than a knife,
I know nothing yet of patience.*

All of us want people to be patient with us. Patient people are kind, understanding, accepting, merciful, and loving. When we make honest mistakes, they never scold or criticize. When we fail, they never make us feel badly. When we get out-of-sorts, they seem to understand and overlook our shortcomings. Patient people just seem to know all about us, and love us just the same as if we were perfect.

Since patience is such a wonderful virtue, and we want people to have patience with us, should we not strive to develop patience and be patient with all those around us? And, even more, did you know God’s Word exhorts us many times to have patience? As we do this study on patience, we will find that there is only one thing that keeps us from acting patiently, and that is our self. So, let us patiently begin this study to learn just how we can develop patience.



LEARNING THE TRAIT

The word “patience” means to have the ability to endure something very disagreeable without grumbling or complaint, and usually to endure it for a long time. The synonym list for the word “patience” includes some pretty large words, but they are not too hard to understand: forbearance, longanimity, resignation, longsuffering, and uncomplainingness. Look up the definitions of the following words using a dictionary and write them in the space provided.

Forbearance _____

Longanimity _____

Resignation _____

Uncomplainingness _____

Longsuffering _____



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verses.
James 1:3-4

What do these verses mean?

How can these verses be applied to your life?

BIBLE EXAMPLE

The story of Joseph is truly one of patience. It is a long story found in Genesis, beginning with chapter 37. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers, and while he was in Egypt, he was falsely accused of a serious crime and put into jail. Throughout those years Joseph worked very diligently and hard to do a good job and serve his masters. While in jail he helped Pharaoh's butler by interpreting a dream, and asked the butler to remember him when the butler was released from jail, but the butler did not remember.



1. Read Genesis 40:23 through Genesis 41:40.
2. Answer the following questions.

(1) Regarding the very brief sketch of Joseph's life, how did Joseph respond to unfair treatment at the hands of others in his life?

(2) What kind of character traits did Joseph display as he spent years as a servant and then in jail?

(3) How might Joseph have felt when he was left in jail for two more years?

(4) If anybody had a right to become impatient as the years slipped by, it would have been Joseph, and yet he did not seem impatient. Why do you think this was so?

(5) What kind of advice did Joseph give Pharaoh?

(6) As a result of Joseph's advice, what was Pharaoh's opinion of Joseph? _

(7) How did Pharaoh reward Joseph?

(8) How do you think Joseph's relationship with God helped him to have patience?

(9) How do you respond when things do not go your way?

(10) When things are not as you like, do you still work hard to be diligent and pleasing to your parents and teachers?

(11) Joseph really had a strong faith and trust in God to endure many wrongs and still be faithful to God. Pharaoh even recognized that the Spirit of God was in Joseph. What do people recognize about you?

(12) What will you begin to change about the way you live your life to reflect your trust in God?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Romans 5:3

What does this verse mean in your own words?

How can this verse be applied to your own life?



MORE ABOUT JESUS

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

—Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus, the King of kings, Lord of lords, our Creator, mighty Counselor, and the Son of God, Who begins our faith and ends it, Who for the JOY that was set before Him, endured man’s cruelty, Who let men lie about Him, persecute Him, whip Him; He despised the shame, and yet He endured. He ENDURED it all for us, and is now at the right hand of the throne of God!

Awesome! Incredible! Read it again! and again! and again! This is our Jesus, Who did this and set this example for us.

Now, let’s think about it some more—

Did Jesus complain about His hard lot in life? Did He whimper that He wasn't having any fun in life? Did He envy the prosperity of others? Did He pout because others were mean to Him? Did He cry because others told lies about Him? Did He fight back? Did He defend Himself? No! NO! No, He did not!

He took it all *patiently*. Why? Well, He *loved* us. The Bible says that man is as the grass or flower of the field: here today, gone tomorrow. Man, although he may think he is quite strong and powerful, really is weak, frail, powerless—just made of dirt. Jesus knows all about us, but the reason Jesus could live His life so patiently was because—He knew it was His Father's will. It was necessary that He should take up His cross, die on it, and rise again. He knew the outcome, that He would sit on the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus told us “. . . *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,*” —Matthew 16:24. Wow! We are given the same opportunity. We can for joy endure our cross, which is set before us! We may despise the shame, but we will follow Jesus to Heaven and be gathered around our Father's throne with Him. Can we, too, not live our lives patiently?

1. Why do you think that it might have been difficult for Jesus to be patient with those who accused Him and lied about Him?

2. Do you think Jesus could have lied about His accusers?—given a few punches?—climbed down off the cross if He wanted to? Explain your answers.

3. Why would Jesus consider what He went through to be “joy”?

4. What might your cross be?

5. How can you bear your daily trials joyfully and patiently?

STORY ABOUT PATIENCE—

BE PATIENT

“Be patient, my dear, be patient!”

Mrs. Brownleaf said those words many times one morning while she was helping Johnny, her young son, to get dressed. But it did not seem to do much good, for restraint of any kind, however gentle, was like a galling chain to the restless, wide-awake fellow. If the comb pulled a bit, he was sure to cry with vexation. Then, too, he was always in such a hurry about everything. “I can’t wait! Oh, I can’t wait!” he kept saying, and sometimes he would stamp his foot.

Alas! It was plain that young Johnny had no patience, not a single bit; and though his dear mamma tried very hard, both by precept and example, to teach him to be quiet and good under all circumstances, she sometimes feared he would never learn the lesson.

Now you must not think, my dear readers, that Johnny was the worst boy in the world, for he was not *always* impatient. When everything went just as he wanted it to, he was as nice a child as one could wish to see. At such times his mamma often took occasion to talk with him about his hasty temper, and he would be very humble and sorry, and promise to do better in the future. Now, he did not really mean to break his good resolutions, and he would be very good so long as everything

went right; but the first time his little (*big*) will was crossed, there was sure to be a storm of squalls and tears, for he would forget all about his promises, and not try to govern himself at all.

You may be sure this unhappy disposition in Johnny caused Mrs. Brownleaf a great deal of trouble, and her heart was very sad whenever she thought of the future of her child, for she knew that he never could be an honorable or a happy man unless he could learn the lesson of self-control in childhood.

As soon as the morning meal was over, Mrs. Brownleaf took Johnny into the garden. It was a glorious morning. The flowers were in bloom, the birds warbled their songs of joy in the trees, and the golden sunlight smiled brightly down; but little Johnny did not appreciate these blessings, for his heart was in a state of sad rebellion, and he was fully determined not to be pleased with anything.

As they approached a small bench, Mrs. Brownleaf said, "Come and sit down by me, my son. I have something I wish to say to you." And Johnny, though with an ill grace, did as he was requested.

Then the mother put her arms about him, and talked long and earnestly with him, and before she was through the stubborn little heart was quite melted and subdued, and in tears, he sobbed out: "Oh, forgive me, Mamma, for being bad, and I will try to be more patient in the future; indeed I will!"

"But you have promised me so often," said the mother sadly.

"I know I have," replied Johnny, "but this time I will try real hard, harder than I ever have before, to put down the wicked feelings inside of me when they come up."

The mother was about to reply, when the sweet voice of a child began to warble a song of praise, and she paused to listen to the music. The singer was evidently on the other side of the wall, and at no great distance from the place where they were sitting. Catching hold of his mother's hand, Johnny said in a whisper, "Oh, who can it be, Mamma? Let's go and see."

And the two went softly out from the little arbor and along by the wall, until they came to a place where the creeping vines and roses had woven their branches



and tendrils together so as to hang in rich festoons on either side. There, just over the wall, sat a little boy, not much bigger than Johnny, with his hands clasped and his face upturned to the clear sky, while from his lips, or his heart rather, came that song of praise. So intent upon his music was the little singer that he did not hear the approaching footsteps. Mrs. Brownleaf and Johnny stood quite still till the last note died away; then, as the child turned, his eyes for the first time fell upon his watchers. He gave a little start of surprise at first, but the smile still lingered around his lips, and the glad light did not go away from his pale blue eyes.



“You seem quite happy,” said Mrs. Brownleaf kindly.

“Yes, I am,” replied the child.

“And why are you so happy? What had happened to cause you so much joy?”

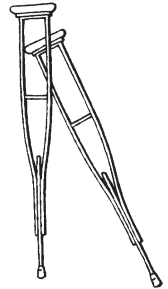
“Oh, just what happens everyday,” replied the child with a quiet smile. “The sun shines, the birds sing, the flowers bloom, and my dear mother is alive and well. Indeed, kind lady, the blessings which I daily receive are enough to make my heart sing for joy all the time.”

Mrs. Brownleaf looked at Johnny, who stood beside her with a very grave and thoughtful expression on his face; then turning to the child, she asked him if he would not like to come and walk in the garden.

“Oh, thank you, kind lady, for I do so love to look at the beautiful flowers! I was just wishing you would ask me to come in,” and stooping forward, the child picked up a small crutch from the ground.

“Oh, see those funny sticks, Mamma!” exclaimed Johnny. “What are they for?”

“It is my *walker*,” said the child, still smiling sweetly. “I have to use them when I walk, for I am so lame that I cannot get around without them.”



“What, lame and so happy!” cried Johnny in astonishment. “I’m sure I don’t see how you can ever laugh or sing, or take one bit of comfort!”

“I have learned to be *patient*,” replied the child quietly, and bracing his little crutches against the stone wall he slowly raised himself to an upright position, and hobbled round to the gate, where Mrs. Brownleaf and Johnny met him.

“Poor child!” said Mrs. Brownleaf kindly, as she held the gate open for him to

enter. “What is the cause of your lameness?”

“It is a bad sore on my limb, ma’am. It has been there a long time, and I believe the doctors think it will never get well, for they left off doctoring it a long time ago,” replied the child in a cheerful voice.

“Oh, that is dreadful!” exclaimed Johnny. “So you will have to hobble about in this way as long as you live!”

“I expect so.”

“Oh, how can you speak so pleasantly about it! I’m sure if I was lame, I should worry myself to death.”

“But it wouldn’t do any good,” replied the boy. “I used to cry and fret at first, but I soon found that it only made matters a great deal worse, so I went to work and *learned to be patient.*”

“And you find that you are much happier?” said Mrs. Brownleaf.

“Oh, yes, ma’am, and I wonder now how I ever could have been so unreasonable as to complain, when I have so many more blessings than I deserve.”

Mrs. Brownleaf looked at Johnny again, and he had a thoughtful expression on his face. She saw that he was learning a good lesson from the young crippled boy, so she asked the child into the house, and questioned him about his friends and home. In reply to her kind inquires, he told her how his father had gone to Heaven several years ago, and his mother supported herself and him by doing plain sewing.

“And does your mother always have work enough to do?” asked Mrs. Brownleaf.

“Not always, but we never yet have wanted for bread. Mamma says the Lord provides for His children when they put their trust in Him,” replied the child.

The lady looked pleased, and she laid her hand caressingly on his head as she said, “That is very true.” Then a sweet voice seemed to whisper in her heart, “Here is an opportunity for doing good, comforting the widow and fatherless in their afflictions.” And in obedience the lady went straight into her closet and put on her bonnet and shawl. When she came out she said: “I have some sewing that I would like to get done, and if you will show me the way, I will go and see your mother about it.”

The little boy’s eyes sparkled with delight, and he said he was sure his mother would be very glad, for she was out of work just then. And he hobbled along by Mrs. Brownleaf’s side, talking so pleasantly and cheerfully all the way, that he

endeared himself to her.

After walking nearly half a mile, Herbert (this was the little boy's name) pointed to a little brown house by the roadside, saying, "This is where Mamma and I live."

"You have not been here long?" asked Mrs. Brownleaf.

"No, only a week. We used to live in Chesterville, but wood and rent were so high that Mamma thought it would be cheaper and better for her to come here," and hopping nimbly forward, Herbert opened the rickety gate and held it for the lady to pass. Then he went quietly in by her side, and said: "Mamma, here is a kind lady who has come to see you about some sewing." In a few words Mrs. Brownleaf told her that she wished to get some sewing done, and would pay her whatever was right if she would oblige her by doing it.

The woman seemed very grateful, and after talking a while, Mrs. Brownleaf took her leave saying she would call again in the morning. And she did call again in the morning, and the next, and the next. Every day for two weeks she visited Mrs. Doyle, and then she was so thoroughly convinced that she was in every way trustworthy, that she resolved to put the plans which she had been thinking of ever since she first heard Herbert's story into action.

She made one more visit to Herbert's mother and said: "I have an invitation for you. Some time ago my housekeeper told me that she would soon be leaving to get married. She could only stay this month with me, and I would have to find someone to replace her. And so, Mrs. Doyle, I would like to ask you to take the job of housekeeper. You can live with us. My work is not very hard, and I will pay you better wages than you can possibly earn with your needle. Beside this, Herbert shall have a home with us too, for he is such a good child that I want him to be a playmate for Johnny. Will you come?"

"Oh, certainly! You are very kind indeed," faltered the poor woman, while tears of gratitude brimmed over her eyes. "Perhaps now I can lay by enough to get Herbert's limb doctored as it should be, and who knows but by the blessing of God it may yet get well."

"What," said Mrs. Brownleaf eagerly, "then there is a possibility that he may yet be cured? I supposed his was a hopeless case."

"Only hopeless for the want of money," replied Mrs. Doyle sadly. "Dr. Batchell attended to it as long as I had the means to pay him."

“But, Mrs. Doyle, there are other physicians, and if you like, we will take Herbert to a physician tomorrow and see what can be done for him. If his limb can be cured, I will esteem it a pleasure and a privilege to bear the expenses and help take care of him.”

Mrs. Doyle was very grateful for all this unexpected kindness you may be sure; but when she tried to thank her new friend, the tears came so fast that she could not say a word, and she sobbed aloud. This attracted the attention of Johnny and Herbert, who had been looking at pictures in the farthest corner of the room, and Herbert came forward with a troubled look, and put his arms lovingly about his mother’s neck. “Don’t cry, dear Mamma,” said he, softly kissing away her tears. “Don’t cry, Herbert loves you.”

Mrs. Doyle folded the child into her arms, and in broken accents told him the good news. “Oh, how grateful we ought to be to our heavenly Father for all these blessings!” said she. “Surely He is a father to the fatherless, and the widow’s God.”

Well, the morrow came, as all morrow’s will, and Joe brought the carriage round to the door, and Mrs. Brownleaf and Mrs. Doyle, with the children, got in and were driven off to the village, which was a few miles distant.

They readily found the doctor they sought, and when he had carefully examined Herbert’s limb, he talked so encouragingly about it that the two ladies were very glad, and Johnny danced around the room with delight, while Herbert cried from very joy at the prospect of having the use of his limb once more.

“But,” said the doctor, “the dressings that I shall have to put upon your limb will be very painful. Do you think you can bear them patiently, my little man?”

“I will try, sir,” replied Herbert with a quiet smile; and then the man fixed some plasters, and gave them with a box of ointment to Mrs. Doyle, telling her in detail how to use them.

“I think,” said he, “if you follow these directions carefully, the applications will not fail to have a good effect, and I will be down in a day or two to see about it.”

Then the party re-entered the carriage and chatted merrily all the way home, for they were very happy. Oh, it would have done you good, could you have seen them as they sat there, with faces so radiant and hearts so light, and you would have fully



realized those beautiful words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

That night poor little Herbert suffered very much, for the powerful medicine seemed searching to the very root of the bad sore to cleanse and purify it. But he did not cry or complain, and only once in a while a little moan escaped his white lips. Johnny stood by the bed for a long time, and when he saw how much the boy suffered, and how quiet and patient he was through it all, he said to himself: “How foolish I have been to fret and whine so much when I had so many blessings, and almost nothing to trouble me. I am ashamed of myself, indeed I am; and in the future I will be a different boy. I will learn a lesson from Herbert Doyle, and *patience* shall be a study with me from this time forward.

Well, the days and weeks passed away quickly to Johnny, for he was full of life and health; but slowly to Herbert, whose limb seemed determined to make as long a job of it as possible before it concluded for certain to get well. But at length the dressings were taken off, and though very tender as yet, the doctor pronounced the sore quiet cured, and said it would not break out again. Then you may be sure the boy and his mamma were very grateful, and Mrs. Brownleaf and Johnny were happier than they had ever been before.

Now, my dear children, I have only to add that Johnny, after many trials, kept the good resolutions he made at Herbert’s bedside pretty well, and my story is done. But first will you not let me whisper a little advice to you? Is there one among your number who thoughtlessly gives way to a hasty and fretful temper? I hope there is not; but if there is, will you not listen to a few words of friendly advice? I fancy I hear you say “Yes,” so here is the lesson I would write, if I could, in letters of gold on your hearts: *Learn to be patient*. Begin now to practice self-control, and in after years you will be led to exclaim, “Surely he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city!”

Answer the following questions concerning the story.

1. What were some signs of Johnny’s impatience?

2. Why was Johnny's mother sad at the thought of Johnny's future?

3. Why would impatience cause someone not to be honorable or happy?

4. Where did Herbert find his joy?

5. Why does impatience make matters worse?

6. Why did the doctor ask Herbert if he was able to bear the dressings for his sore patiently?

7. What important lesson did Johnny learn from watching Herbert in pain?

8. In learning to be patient, why is self-control necessary?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

1 Timothy 6:11

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

Patience

Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, and the teacher of humility. Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, and consummates martyrdom.

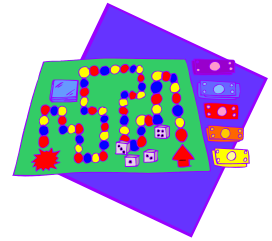
Patience produces unity among the brethren and harmony in families; comforts the poor, and moderates the rich. It makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach. Patience teaches us to forgive those who have injured us and to be first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured. It delights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving; adorns the woman, and approves the man; is loved in a child, praised in a young man, admired in an old man, and is beautiful in both man or woman of every age. Selected

DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

A Pest?

There was a little boy named Timmy, and he was a very cute and nice little boy. Tiffany was Timmy's big sister. One day Timmy asked Tiffany if she would please read him a story. In fact, he said it in just this way, "Tiff, would you pwease read me a story. I like it when you do." When the story was over, he asked her if she would play a game with him. Then he was full of energy, so they went outside to play in the snow. When they came inside Timmy asked, "Can I have a cup of hot cocoa?" Tiffany said "Okay" and made him a steaming cup of cocoa with whipped cream on top. "Hey, Tiff, can we . . ." Tiffany had become tired of being asked for things and seemed to be getting less patient with her brother. Tiffany raised her voice to Timmy and said, "Alright! I have had enough! You are beginning to be a pest!"



Timmy's eyes grew big and he said, "I didn't know I was being a pest."

In a moment Tiffany started feeling ashamed of how she had talked to Timmy. She then ran to her little brother and told him that she was sorry for being impatient.

1. Was Timmy trying to be a pest? _____

2. What was Timmy trying to do? _____

3. How did Tiffany show her patience with her small brother?

4. Why should Tiffany have not called her brother a name?

5. How could Tiffany have handled the situation differently? _____

It is okay to say “no” to some things before we run out of patience. Tiffany might have said, “That is all for this morning. I have some other things to do. You will have to play with your toys now.” That would have solved the problem for both of them. However, if it was her “job” to watch Timmy, then she should have kept amusing him until her “job” was over.

6. Are you ever impatient with your brothers and sisters? _____

7. Why are you? _____

8. A person really has to doublecheck his heart to make sure he is not being selfish. We usually become impatient with others when they are bothering us or keeping us from doing what we want to do. What does your impatience show about you?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

Romans 15:5

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

Patience
O make me patient, Lord,
Patient in daily cares;
Keep me from thoughtless words
That slip out unawares.
And help me, Lord, I pray,
Still nearer Thee to live:
And as I journey on,
More of Thy Presence give.
Selected

DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

A Day in the Life of Impatient Ike

Ike was a smart and strong young man. He could do many things quickly and well, but he seemed to be short of temper, always complaining, and frequently upset. Perhaps he was just impatient, but impatience may show itself in many ways. Let's take a look at a typical day in Ike's life.



Ike was hurrying to get his chores done before school. He pulled the garbage bag out of the kitchen can, and a small tear in the bag became bigger, and the contents spilled out onto the floor. "Ugh! Now look what happened!" Ike sputtered. He whisked open the cabinet; hurriedly grabbed another bag; slammed the cabinet door, and cleaned up the mess, all the while growing more irritated. Ike took the bag out to the trash can.

He sat down to do his schoolwork, and did his math work in short order. When he presented his paper to his mom for a check, she marked off six problems with errors and told him to redo it. "What? I know I did them right. They can't be wrong!" he exclaimed. Mom calmly asked him if he had checked his answers.

"Well, no! I did not have time. Besides, I was sure they were right."

Mother responded, "Why didn't you have time?"

"Well, I wanted to get on with my English so I could finish early, and practice on my banjo, and then still have some time to shoot some hoops," Ike explained.

Ike went back to his desk and redid his work. He was more than a little angry with himself and his math. Why did he have to learn math anyway? And why did his papers have to be right? And why couldn't he do things right the first time? Now he was going to waste another half hour redoing his math problems! His face took on a more sour look.

Finally, the math was finished correctly, and he began typing his essay on the

computer. His fingers kept hitting the wrong keys, and he had to retype and correct and redo. “Ugh! Why can’t I do it right the first time? This is taking way too much time!” The banjo practicing did not go well, because by the time he got to it, he was already bothered way too much to focus on it. He hated that he could not get a certain portion of it correct, and he had to go over it again and again.

He only had a few minutes to shoot hoops before he went to his afternoon mowing job. His day did not go as he planned it should, and he was angry with everyone, and especially himself. He was bitter too, that it had to be this way. Somehow this was not how life should be!

1. Name some of the ways Ike showed his impatience.

2. With whom did Ike show his impatience?

3. If a person shows impatience with himself, do you think he will also act impatiently with others? Why?

4. How does acting impatiently damage your own life and the life of others?

5. Do you think acting impatiently is a sin? Why?

6. What causes you to act impatiently with yourself?

7. What do you need to change?

Hand in Hand

Love and Patience really go hand in hand. How can we say that we love someone, and then yell at them, or act impatiently, or express disappointment in them because they are not as quick as we think they should be? We hurt them when we express our dissatisfaction with their behavior.

Or how can we say that we love God and then act impatiently with how things are going in our lives? When we complain and are impatient we are really saying that God does not know what He is doing, and He should get busy and give us our way—and do it now.

Or when we are impatient with ourselves because we cannot learn something quickly enough, or we have made a mistake, or we have failed, we are really expressing disappointment with ourselves and our abilities, instead of forgiving ourselves and trying again.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

2 Peter 1:6

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

In the Light of Eternity

When you are tempted to be impatient with someone or something, stop and ask yourself this question: In the light of eternity, what will it matter? Ten thousand years from now, will it matter? Will anyone remember? Will you remember? Of course, the answer is "no." It matters not at all. Well then, let us live our lives with this eternal view in mind. That thought will help us to be patient!

INSTRUCTIONS IN PATIENCE

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” —Revelations 14:12

Patience, *patience*, PATIENCE! A much talked about topic is the subject of patience. Everyone wants people (teachers, parents, brothers and sisters, and friends—ok, that is everyone) to be patient with them. Yet how few people who expect patience from others *are patient with others!* Patience is a virtue, and our God is a God of patience (Romans 15:5), and yet some folks tell us not to pray for patience, because they believe God will really send us a ton of problems to teach us about patience. By the way, that statement is just not true. The more problems people have does not seem to make them more patient; in fact, the truth appears to be, that impatient people just become more impatient. And patient people are just that—patient people.

So, how does an impatient person change his nature to become a patient person? The answer is twofold: First, the answer, as always, lies in God’s Word. Second, we need to obey God’s Word. And, even more simply, we need to put God’s Word into action; we need to practice it, daily, hourly, and momentarily.

Three Things to Know About Patience

1. We need to know who we are. We are created in God’s image. We are created to bring honor and glory to Him, and yet, we need to realize a few things.

A) *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”*
—James 4:14

B) *“As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”* —Psalm 103:15-16

Our earthly lives are short, just a few years in the light of eternity. We are just little flashes in time. We are like “steam” or a blade of grass.

C) According to current estimates, there are over 6.6 billion people on the earth. That makes one of us pretty insignificant. We are all basically the same, all 6.6 billion of us.

2. Most people who are impatient are proud people. They are self-centered people. They think that the world revolves around them: their needs and their wants come first. They have the attitude toward others that comes out in such behaviors as: “Don’t get in my way. Hurry up. I want to talk. I want the most. I want to be first.”
3. The Bible says, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves,*” —Philippians 2:3. Impatient people esteem themselves better than others. They do not care how much strife they cause, they just want to get their own way and get it now.

We need to realize that we are just blades of grass—here today and gone tomorrow. We need to examine our behavior in light of the Bible. We need to think on these things:

Be ye kind.

Be tenderhearted.

Have longsuffering.

Have forbearance (patience).

Esteem others higher than self.

Six Practical Steps to Patience

1. Always allow someone to go before you—through doors, helping themselves to food, getting a drink, getting into the car. Practice this daily until it becomes a habit.
2. Let the other person speak first and speak long. That is preferring him before yourself.
3. When you are waiting, wait quietly. Don’t drum your fingers, sigh, roll your eyes, or make noises. Just be still and wait.
4. When you don’t get your school work right the first or second or third time,

keep working quietly at it. Don't throw your books down; don't give up; don't complain. Just try again.

5. When learning a new skill, don't expect to do it perfectly the first time. Don't throw a tantrum and wail, "I can't do this!" Just quietly, patiently tell yourself that you haven't gotten it yet, but you will.
6. When you are faster than others at a game or craft, don't ever be impatient with those slower than you. Don't tell them to hurry. Wait patiently or slow down yourself to allow them to catch up.

Jesus said, "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*" That really sums it up. If you want others to treat you patiently, you should treat them patiently.

And then we need to not only be patient with people, but with things. We need to learn to save our money and wait to buy things instead of impatiently demanding that we have them now. Sowing and reaping, working and earning, all these things take time, and time requires patience.

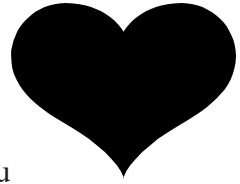
We need to be patient in troubles, sickness, and sorrow. Instead of complaining and whining about it, we need to remember that we have an all-seeing heavenly Father in Heaven, and He knows all about it. He knows what is best, and He is working out His plans for good in our lives.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," —Romans 8:28. Knowing this Scripture helps us to realize that God is working in our behalf, and that helps us to be patient and trusting.

Also, if we obey the Scripture, *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you,"* —1 Thessalonians 5:18, we will be developing a patient heart. It is difficult to be thankful and impatient at the same time.

We feel good when we have acted patiently, and when we have been impatient, the opposite is true. We feel pretty badly. God's ways are always best and bring much joy and peace with them.

SEARCHING YOUR HEART



Answer the following questions.

1. When are you impatient, or what things make you impatient? List at least three times or three things.

2. Why do these times or things make you impatient?

3. Should they make you impatient? _____ Why? _____

4. What effect does your impatience have on those around you? In other words, how does it make them feel?

5. Talk these things over with your parents. Ask them to help you begin changing. They will be happy to pray for you and remind you to be patient.



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Hebrews 12:1

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

DECISIONS TO MAKE

Decisions are choices that we make. We are responsible for them. We can blame no one else but ourselves when we make wrong decisions. Our aim or goal should be to make good, godly decisions. Won't you decide now to—



1. Not expect yourself or others to be perfect.
2. To realize that others and you will make mistakes.
3. To wait quietly and calmly.
4. To put yourself last with a smile.

You Want Patience Now!

*You want it all and you want it now,
You want it all and you don't care how.*

*Yell and scream and raise your voice,
But always remember, you do have a choice.*

*People will push you, of this I am sure,
But if you try to be patient, you will endure.*

*Be slow to anger, be slow to rile,
Just wait on the Lord, He'll make it worthwhile.*

*So ask God for patience when you wake up and pray,
Then wait for His answer as you walk in His way.*

Brandon Mitchem.

A STORY ABOUT PATIENCE—

LITTLE BY LITTLE

Think how almost all that is good comes to us. Did you ever see a farmer planting and sowing? Down in the moist earth goes the seed, grain by grain, little by little. God sees the farmer at his work, and kindly sends the gentle rain, drop by drop. The raindrop moistens each tiny grain of wheat; it is as if the seeds of grain are dead in their graves (earth), and God sends the raindrops to raise them up. There is nothing impossible with Him; so when the raindrop has done its errand, a spark of life shoots out from the very heart of the tiny grain, which is dead and buried, and little by little it makes its way out of the tomb, and stands, a single blade, in the warm sunlight. That is nobly done; and if the great God pleased, He could make that little blade strong and fruitful in a single moment. Does He do this? No. Little by little does the stalk wax strong, and its leaves grow very slowly, leaf by leaf.

Is it not so with everything that is good? Should we like another way better? *Impatience* would. It was only a few days ago that I heard a little girl say, "I am tired! Here is a whole stocking to knit, stitch by stitch! It will never be done."

"But was not this one knit stitch by stitch?" I asked, taking a long one from her basket and holding it up.

"Yes."

"Well, this is done."

The little girl was counting, instead of knitting her stitches. No wonder that she was tired.

Did you ever see a mason building a house of bricks? "Poor man!" *Impatience* would say, "What a hopeless undertaking!—to start from the earth and go so far toward the sky, brick by brick!" Oh no, not hopeless at all. People can get nearer the sky than that, and upon the same principle too, step by step.

The world has wandered far away from God. He meant that we should be happy; but so many have chosen the paths of disobedience and misery, and so lost their way—the way to holiness and peace. Jesus Christ came to be our way, so that we might not be forever lost. But even in this way, His Way, once we have come to Him for salvation, we still have to go step by step in His way.

This necessity of doing things little by little, step by step, drop by drop, need be

no discouragement. Listen now, and see if you do not hear a voice saying, “Try, try, try.” Who ever saw a patient, persevering person try, and not succeed at last? So, then, step by step, which is God’s way, must be the best way.

Let us see that we do every day what we can. But we must remember one thing: the buried grain of wheat would never start into life if God did not send it help; and it is by the same help that it increases day by day. As the little raindrop—God’s beautiful messenger—descends into its tomb, so in the darkness and death of sin the Holy Spirit comes to us. When He breathes upon our hearts, we live to do good; without Him, we do nothing good. Let us obey God’s Holy Spirit, and all good will be ours, as we learn to follow Him little by little.

Answer the following questions concerning the story.

1. What brings life to the seed of grain? _____

2. Does the plant grow slow or fast? _____
3. Do buildings, knitted garments, or gardens take lots of time or are they done in a short amount of time?

4. Why do you think God designed His world in this way, the taking of time?

God’s creation is never in a hurry. There is a delightful pattern to His Work—morning and evening, days, weeks, seasons, years, sowing and reaping, planting and harvest. There is time for everything that is important. There is time to do our work well. Our God is a patient God, and longsuffering with us. Perhaps God’s creation is a reflection of Him—perfect work, created in a timely manner, not hurriedly, nothing wasted, everything growing and blooming in its own time. Shall we pattern ourselves and our lives after Him? Will you patiently begin to work, work well, and blossom into a lovely child of God? We hope so.

THINGS TO DO

It is one thing to study a character trait, learn definitions, and ponder Scriptures. It is another thing to put those ideas into action and make them a part of your life. Following is a list of things that you can do to build the habit of patience in your life. Complete as many items as you can (no fewer than four) from the following list.

1. Pray and ask the Lord to show you what things cause you to be impatient. Make a list.
2. Take your Impatience List and write down how you will change your thoughts and behaviors to reflect patience.
3. Memorize four verses on patience.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
4. Find and learn a hymn about patience.
5. Practice putting yourself last for one month.
6. Write an essay about patience discussing the patience of God toward mankind.
7. Practice “waiting” patiently. Keep track for two weeks.

Remember . . .

When you are tempted to be impatient with someone or yourself—

- ✓ **Never** say anything! Keep your mouth closed.
- ✓ **Never** push or shove or throw something down. Keep control over your actions.

Always . . .

- ✓ Pray immediately.
- ✓ Slow down and think.
- ✓ Behave as Jesus would.

Do say . . .

- ✓ “I’m happy to wait.”
- ✓ “I will finish this.”
- ✓ “It’s okay. It will be fine.”

Can you find these words in the puzzle?

calmness

long suffering

patiently

uncomplaining

forbearance

patience

peaceful

longanimity

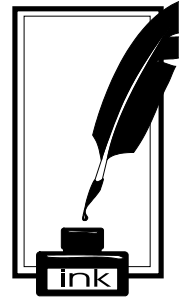
patient

resignation

U	W	F	G	P	A	T	I	E	N	T	L	Y
S	N	M	P	U	R	G	X	R	E	I	U	T
H	E	C	N	A	R	A	E	B	R	O	F	I
I	Q	L	O	O	T	J	E	K	Z	O	E	M
K	T	P	A	M	R	I	V	E	T	H	C	I
B	N	A	D	W	P	A	E	T	I	U	A	N
I	A	T	B	D	P	L	E	N	I	J	E	A
O	A	I	T	N	A	E	A	I	T	L	P	G
S	S	E	N	M	L	A	C	I	S	A	E	N
L	U	N	V	Q	I	N	Z	G	N	A	R	O
E	K	C	U	N	E	Z	A	P	T	I	O	L
G	R	E	S	I	G	N	A	T	I	O	N	K
L	O	N	G	S	U	F	F	E	R	I	N	G

KEEPING A JOURNAL

Many people say that it takes thirty days to create a habit, and that is just what we are trying to do—create the habit of patience! The next thirty pages will be set aside to record your progress in making the character trait “Patience” an integral part of *your* character. At the end of each day ask yourself the following questions, and write down the answers, and anything additional concerning your “patience” trait.



Following are a few *reminders* or *goals* to help you begin focusing on patience each day.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write the word “patience” in large letters, and place it where you will see it the first thing in the morning when you awake.
2. Upon awakening and seeing the word “patience,” say a prayer for God to help you to be patient that day.
3. Purpose in your heart to wear a bright, sunny smile all day.
4. Purpose in your heart to not be in a hurry, and to act in a patient manner no matter what happens that day.
5. Using index cards or small sheets of paper, write the word “patience” on them, and put them in places in the house where you will see them.
6. Place one of the cards in your Bible; place others in your schoolbooks or reading books.
7. At noon or lunchtime, go to your room and kneel down and pray, and ask God to continue to help you to be patient.
8. At dinnertime, have another private prayer time with God, and ask for continued help in establishing the habit of being patient.



Day 1 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 2 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 3 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 4 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 5 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 6 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 7 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 8 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 9 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 10 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 11 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 12 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 13 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 14 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 15 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 16 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 17 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 18 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 19 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 20 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 21 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 22 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 23 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 24 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 25 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 26 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 27 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 28 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 29 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 30 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

Day 31 Date _____

1. Did I keep a patient attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything that caused me to be impatient? What was it, and why was I impatient? _____

3. What sin or sins kept me from being patient today?

4. How did I show patience to others today?

5. What more could I have done to be patient today?

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience," —2 Timothy 3:10.

NOTES
