

SOMETHING GIVEN

James 1:12-17 "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shade due to change. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

Galatians 5:22-26 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

Would you agree that patience is a gift from God? Its something given to you. Its so needed in our lives, because you need it every day.

Colossians 3:12-14 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

If you had a spiritual toolbox you carried every day (or if you're like Jennifer Fontenot - a fanny pack - a spiritual fanny pack), what kind of tools would you have in there? Super Glue of love that binds everything together? Your heart level to keep everything balanced. What about a hammer of patience? Scratch that - let's make it the duct tape of patience so you're not killing everyone if you lose your patience and moms can use the tape for the kids' mouths. My dad joke for this morning...

The reality is that God has gifted us these incredible tools. They are to be used. You don't need me to tell you this, but you know you'd need that duct tape every day. That would be worth putting in the tool fanny pack. Yes, we need this tool, because its used every day. We need it when going through trials - sometimes all we are called to do is wait and trust. We need it in preaching (reprove, rebuke and exhort with complete patience and teaching). We need it in our marriages, parenting and friendships. We need it while living in the world - living around worldly people. We need it. But patience isn't something that man alone practices. God has been perfectly patient with His creation. Mankind witnessed it throughout time (we still do today), but it was seen in a vey special way through Jesus.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:1-8** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind,

having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

I remember one brother speaking on the above passage. I've shared it with you before, but once more won't hurt. He said when he reads the passage, he's reminded how humble Jesus was. The obvious picture (and most powerful one) is that of the cross. But he also sees moments like [John 13:1-5](#) come to mind. Jesus left His home and "came down", not only to the cross, but to our feet. You'd not be wrong to point out that this scene speaks more to Jesus' love and service. But, there's another element at play, another tool Jesus used, that allowed Him to show that love and service. **It was patience.** We forget this (or maybe we didn't yet know this), but that evening, in the upper room, the apostles argued among themselves who the greatest was, one individual was about to betray Him, and all dogmatically argued that none would abandon Him.

Listen, I could go through the Bible and show you examples where Jesus exercised patience when most people would have lost their cool. You'd start to see that what you go through isn't unique - Jesus experienced it long before we did. You'd also be reminded of the reason why you serve Him. We love that about Jesus - how loving and patient He was. How He knew when to rebuke, reprove and exhort. How He knew to distinguish what was worth ones time or not. When to take a stand and when to walk away. When to engage and when to disengage. You love that about Him . . . how lovely He was, and is, and will always be.

Have you ever wondered what it was like to wash the feet of Judas? I wonder if it was more difficult. Not because of Jesus' anger, but because He knew that would be the last opportunity to show Judas love, patience and kindness. It was the last time to serve him. It was the last time.

I look at that passage and think, "How could Jesus do that?" In fact, if I were an atheist challenging the claims of Christianity, I wouldn't necessarily go after the low-hanging fruit like miracles and the resurrection. I would challenge the picture of Jesus. Its too good. He's perfectly balanced . . . all the time . . . under intense pressure. You just don't see people like that in the world.

Don't you want to see that today? Wouldn't you want others to experience Him as well? He lives in us, brethren. God abides in us, so in a true sense, they see Him through our actions. Patience is a given gift, given to others. So this week, don't simply try to not be impatient. Don't think of it that way. Think of it as a gift given to you, given to others. The gift of God's goodness. Use it in your family (marriages and parenting). At work (boss or not) towards those you're around every day. Those who don't share the same beliefs or experiences. It's not about us - it's about the Lord. That's who the world needs to know and see.