Patience

Do you like surprises? God loves to show Himself strong, often in unexpected ways. You may pray and ask God to work in a certain way, but He may have something even better for you. For example, maybe your dog is lost and you are searching for it. During the search, God may direct you to speak with someone who connects your dad to a better job! Remember that God is all-knowing and all-wise. He can take the worst circumstances and produce marvelous results. Through an accident or illness, God may be arranging for your path to cross with someone who needs Christ or for you to encourage someone else’s faith. God may even use a seeming disaster to give you new direction. When difficulties arise, expect God to delightfully surprise you as He works in unexpected ways!

The Long Wait and the Unexpected Visitor

Accepting a difficult situation from God without giving Him a deadline to remove it
Patience Overview

What Is Patience?

Read aloud and discuss what patience means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of patience is “accepting a difficult situation from God without giving Him a deadline to remove it.” Difficult situations, along with pain and suffering, are consequences of the Fall of man. These include natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes, as well as results of unwise decisions or sinful choices. Some difficulties are brought about by the intentions of evil people who are serving Satan in his opposition to God. When experiencing circumstances that we do not like and cannot control, we must endure patiently. In time, the trial will pass. God does not want His children to be harmed as a result of difficult situations. He gives us grace to endure hardships and causes us to be more like Jesus as we trust and yield to Him.

The opposite of patience is restlessness. A restless person is unable to calm his heart because he is not trusting God. He may try to control a situation or act impulsively. Rather than accept his circumstances, he may resent them and complain, directing anger and blame toward those he holds responsible for his predicament. Because he is anxious, he will not graciously wait or endure through distress. Even normal delays or disruptions are trials to him. He may become frustrated with a sister who is taking too long to get ready, or he may burn his tongue on some hot chocolate because he is unwilling to wait for it to cool. The restless person may often be told to “slow down” or “relax.” Peace will come more easily to the impatient person as he believes that God loves him and is in control.

The key to exercising patience is knowing that God can work powerfully in all circumstances, including the worst ones. (See Psalm 18:30, Romans 8:28–29.) Responding in frustration or looking for an easy way out can hinder God’s perfect purpose from being accomplished. James wrote: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2–4). Every day we encounter small irritations that allow us to practice gracious endurance. Remember that these inconveniences and experiences can build patience to endure future difficulties well. Although life will sometimes be painful, we will find God faithful. He is glorified by our faith, obedience, and patience. (See I Peter 1:6–7.)
Patience in Scripture

As you read and study God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will become a radiant expression of Him. God will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

The Character of God

We see examples of patience in God’s character in the following ways:

- God is patient and longsuffering.
  (See Psalm 86:15, Romans 15:5.)
- God lovingly waits for people to turn to Him.
  (See II Peter 3:9.)
- Jesus waited for the right time to go to the Feast of Tabernacles.
  (See John 7:2, 8–9.)
- Jesus endured mistreatment from enemies without complaint or retaliation because He trusted in His Father’s righteous judgment.
  (See I Peter 2:23.)
- When Jesus was urged to demonstrate His power, He waited, saying the time was not right.
  (See John 2:3–4, 7:3–6.)
- The Holy Spirit is patiently conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ.
  (See II Corinthians 3:18.)
- The indwelling Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit, including patience.
  (See Galatians 5:22.)

Patience in My Life

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out patience daily.

- What perspective will help me endure through difficult times?
  (See II Corinthians 4:15–18.)
- How does God instruct me to interact with everyone, including my family?
  (See Ephesians 4:1–2.)
- What type of attitude can God give me as I am waiting?
  (See Colossians 1:10–11, James 1:2–4.)
- What is the result of hearing God’s Word with a pure and honest heart and obeying it?
  (See Luke 8:15.)
- Rather than striving or arguing, what attitudes would help me to be effective when presenting truth to relatives or friends?
  (See II Timothy 2:24–26.)
- How can I avoid restlessness and experience God’s perfect peace?
  (See Isaiah 26:3.)
- How can I regain the right perspective when it seems that the wicked are prospering and the righteous are outnumbered?
  (See Psalm 73:17–19, 28; Lamentations 3:26.)

PATIENCE KEY VERSE

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Romans 5:3–4
Jesus often gave answers or worked in ways that people did not expect. He called unlikely candidates to be His disciples. At a wedding in Galilee, Jesus performed a miracle which surprised the host. In the Temple, Jesus observed clerks and merchants cheating the people who came to pay temple taxes or buy animals for sacrifice. With zeal for His Father’s house and authority, Jesus startled everyone as He overturned money tables and drove out the animals, declaring His Father’s house was a house of prayer. Once, Jesus gave perplexing answers to the questions from a nighttime visitor. On His return to Galilee, Jesus rested at a well in Samaria where He proclaimed the Kingdom of God. This amazed His disciples, since Jews did not customarily speak to Samaritans. In Galilee, a certain nobleman begged Jesus to come to his house to heal his dying son. But Jesus had a different solution. He told the nobleman to return home, and he would find his son well. The man believed Jesus, and his son was healed! Afterward, as many Jews entered Jerusalem for a feast, Jesus approached a pool called Bethesda near the Temple. Whom would Jesus notice there? In what unexpected way would Jesus respond to a need?

Let’s read the Bible story in John 5:1–11 and then discuss the following questions.

1. Who was lying on the porches at the pool of Bethesda? What were they expectantly waiting for? (See John 5:2–3.)

What are you waiting for and expecting God to do for you? Is He capable of doing something even greater? (See Ephesians 3:20.)

2. What would happen at the “moving of the water”? (See John 5:4.)

What exciting event are you anticipating? Even if plans unexpectedly change, what can you hope for when you are disappointed? (See II Corinthians 4:16–17.)

3. How long had one man at the pool of Bethesda had an infirmity? (See John 5:5.)

What request have you been praying for a long time? Do you trust that God is working, even when you don’t see results? (See Psalm 6:9, James 5:16.)

4. What did Jesus know about the man? What did Jesus ask him? (See John 5:6.)

Does Jesus know what you are waiting for and how long you have been waiting? (See Psalm 139:3–4.)

5. How did the man expect to be healed? What predicament had hindered the man’s healing? (See John 5:7.)

Who is unhindered and able to empower you, even in seemingly impossible situations? (See Jeremiah 32:27, Matthew 19:26.)

6. What surprising command did Jesus give? Did the man obey? (See John 5:8–9.)

As you wait, are you patiently listening for God to speak to you? Does His answer sometimes come in a different way or time than you expect?

7. On what day of the week did Jesus heal the man? Did the Jews praise Jesus or criticize Him for His miraculous work? (See John 5:10.)

When God works in a way you do not understand, do you praise Him or resent that His way was not what you expected? (See Romans 11:33–36.)
Memory Verse
Romans 5:3–4

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.”

ROMANS 5:3–4

Memory Verse Game: Stop! And Go!
First, say the verse together several times. Then, with the teacher acting as a “policeman,” have the children begin quoting the verse again. Now, when the policeman holds out his hand (indicating “Halt!”), everyone immediately must stop saying the verse. Whoever does not stop immediately is out. When the policeman puts his hand back down, resume quoting the verse from the point where you last stopped. Play until one of the children thinks he can quote the verse from memory by himself. If successful, he becomes the policeman for another round of quoting the verse. After everyone has had a turn to say the verse by himself and become the policeman, end the game with the entire group saying the verse together from memory.

Doers of the Word: Romans 5:3–4
In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “see Your hand in difficulties,” “patiently wait with a good attitude,” or “gain wisdom from difficult situations.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ________________________________
______________________________________________
__________________________________________________.
I ask that You would develop patience in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
Word Puzzle
Crossword Puzzle

Instructions
Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the patience key verse and definition as you fill in the crossword puzzle below. *Italicized* words fit horizontally and *underlined* words fit vertically. One word is already done for you. *(Answers can be found on page 12.)*

![Crossword Puzzle Image]

Romans 5:3–4
“And not only so, but we *glory* in *tribulations* also: *knowing* that *tribulation* *worketh* patience; And patience, *experience*; and experience, *hope.***

**Patience**
Accepting a *difficult situation* from God *without giving* Him a deadline to *remove* it
Activity
From Caterpillar to Butterfly!

Supplies:
• Buterflies template (on page 13) printed on cardstock
• A hole punch
• Yarn or ribbon
• Colored pencils
• Scissors

Instructions
Give each child at least two butterfly templates to color: one pair of wings with dots on the bottom and one pair of wings with dots on the top. These two templates fit together to make one butterfly.

Today we are going to learn about the caterpillar who waits in a chrysalis to become a beautiful butterfly! Similarly, God will work in times of waiting and resting to produce character in us. As you color and cut out the butterflies, listen as I read about the monarch butterfly.

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed leaves. When a tiny larva hatches, it immediately begins to eat! After eating its shell, the baby caterpillar begins to munch on the milkweed leaf. During the next month, the caterpillar will live on that one plant. As it eats, it outgrows its skin. When the time comes to shed its tight outer layer (molt) and get a bigger skin size, the caterpillar will lie still for hours. While lying still, its bright orange-and-black-striped skin darkens. The long wait continues as the caterpillar’s outer layer of skin loosens and wrinkles. A new layer forms underneath. Eventually the caterpillar crawls out of its old skin and continues feasting on the leaves of the same milkweed plant. The caterpillar will molt three or four more times before the transformation into a butterfly begins.

Finally, the day comes when the little caterpillar begins to weave its chrysalis about itself. Once this casing is completed, the little creature undergoes great transformation inside! Its jaw for chewing leaves disappears and is replaced by a specialized tongue to sip nectar and water for nourishment. The caterpillar’s legs are replaced with colorful wings. After approximately two weeks, the butterfly struggles inside the chrysalis to eventually emerge. Next, it patiently pumps its wings to help them dry and to increase blood flow. With the transformation complete, the beautiful monarch butterfly flutters across the summer sky!

Who would have thought that a stubby little caterpillar could be transformed into a beautiful, delicate butterfly! Similarly, God works in unexpected ways to bring beauty and blessings into our lives during times of waiting. As we consider the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly, we are taught to wait patiently, even through times of struggle, knowing that God is working something marvelous in our lives.

Now that you have colored both sides of the butterflies, cut the butterfly wings along the dotted lines. Slide the wing sets together to form a three-dimensional butterfly. (Punch a hole in 2 wings for each child.) Now thread the yarn through the holes to connect the butterflies. Then we will suspend them from a doorway as a reminder to look for the beauty God is working in your life.
In a Nutshell

2. Our sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23).
3. God sent His Son, Jesus, to provide the way for our sins to be forgiven and for fellowship with Him to be restored (Ephesians 1:6–7). Jesus accomplished our salvation through His crucifixion on the cross, His burial, and His glorious resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3–4).
4. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is a free gift from God that we receive by faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).
5. We receive that gift of salvation by confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9–10).

The Bible tells us about God. He is the Creator of the universe and He is holy. God loves us and created us to have fellowship with Him. (See Revelation 4:11.) Select a volunteer who would not mind standing to represent the sin of all people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Can you name some examples of sin? As the children answer, write their examples on sticky notes and place them onto the volunteer’s clothing (e.g., speaking unkind words, stealing, disobeying, doing good with wrong motives).

Because we have all sinned, and God is holy, we are eternally separated from Him. However, because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, Who died on the cross to pay for our sin and Who rose again to conquer death! Now we can have fellowship with God forever through Christ. (See John 17:3.) If we accept God’s gift of salvation, Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin, and His righteousness is put upon us! (See II Corinthians 5:21.) Remove the sticky notes and wrap the white sheet around the volunteer to represent Jesus’ robe of righteousness. Isaiah 31:10 describes what has happened this way: “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness…” In Romans 10:9–10, we are told how we can accept this gift: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If so, your sins are forgiven and Christ is living in you! Your new, inward identity is one of righteousness in God’s eyes. The more you realize that you are a new creature in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more your outward actions will demonstrate Christ living in you. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, you can also say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God gives us eternal life—sweet constant fellowship in the Spirit with our Savior—and then His righteousness is seen in us for His glory. (See John 15:4–10.)
Hymn History

“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”

Sing “Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting” and read about a missionary’s practicing patience in the manner expressed by the hymn writer, Jean S. Pigott.

The missionary stared at the letter in his hand. In the 1800s, the Gospel was spreading in China, but travel was difficult and the work was hard. In some areas, the Chinese vehemently rejected foreigners and threatened their lives. The letter Hudson Taylor held reported that riots were occurring in two missions in the region.

A coworker was present when the letter arrived. As he moved toward the door to leave Mr. Taylor with the letter, he heard the soft whistling of the hymn “Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting.” Surprised, the coworker turned around and asked Mr. Taylor, “How can you whistle, when our friends are in so much danger?” Hudson Taylor looked up and calmly replied: “Would you have me anxious and troubled? That would not help them, and would certainly incapacitate me for my work. I just have to roll the burden onto the Lord.”

“Rolling his burden upon the Lord” was a demonstration of Hudson Taylor’s faith. Other missionaries reported seeing him often times playing on a little reed organ and softly singing this hymn. However, “resting” had not always been his practice. Mr. Taylor had founded the China Inland Mission in 1865, but after four-and-a-half years, work and worry so overwhelmed him that he nearly suffered a nervous breakdown. In late 1869, a friend and fellow missionary wrote to him:

*Abiding [in Christ], not striving or struggling, looking off unto Him; trusting Him for present power . . . .
This is not new, yet 'tis new to me . . . . Christ literally all seems to me now the power, the only power for service; the only ground for unchanging joy.*

Impacted by his friend’s letter, Mr. Taylor excitedly shared this spiritual insight with his sister in England. After explaining how overwhelmed he had been with the mission work, he wrote:

... a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy [a friend] was used to remove the scales from my eyes . . . . [He] wrote: “But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith but by resting in the Faithful One.” As I read, I saw all! . . . [W]hat light the Blessed Spirit poured into my soul!

Patience is “accepting a difficult situation from the Lord without giving Him a deadline to remove it.” Patience does not come by striving or struggling but is acquired as we give our rights and expectations to God. Only then can we rest in Him.

Little is known about the author of Hudson Taylor’s favorite hymn. An Irish woman, Jean S. Pigott lived only until her late thirties. This hymn she wrote greatly encouraged a missionary to patiently trust Jesus. May it also encourage you to give your cares to the Lord and patiently rest in Him!
Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting

Jean S. Pigott (1845–1882)

James Mountain (1843–1933)

1. Je - sus, I am rest - ing, rest - ing In the joy of what Thou art;
2. Oh, how great Thy lov - ing kind - ness, Vast - er, broad - er than the sea!
3. Sim - ply trust - ing Thee, Lord Jes - sus, I be - hold Thee as Thou art,
4. Ev - er lift Thy face up - on me, As I work and wait for Thee;

Je - sus, I am rest - ing, rest - ing In the joy of what Thou art;

I am find - ing out the great - ness Of Thy lov - ing heart.

Oh, how mar - vel - ous Thy good - ness Lav - ished all on me!

And Thy love, so pure, so change-less, Sat - is - fies my heart;

Rest - ing 'neath Thy smile, Lord Je - sus, Earth's dark shade - ows flee.

I am find - ing out the great - ness Of Thy lov - ing heart.

Thou hast bid me gaze up - on Thee, And Thy beau - ty fills my soul;

Yes, I rest in Thee, Be - lov - ed, Know what wealth of grace is Thine,

Sat - is - fies its deep - est long - ings, Meets, sup - plies its ev - ery need,

Bright - ness of my Fa - ther's glo - ry, Sun - shine of my Fa - ther's face,

For, by Thy trans - form - ing pow - er, Thou hast made me whole.

Know Thy cer - tain - ty of prom - ise, And have made it mine.

Com - pass - eth me round with bless - ings, Thine is love in - deed!

Keep me ev - er trust - ing, rest - ing, Fill me with Thy grace.
“And a certain man was there [pool of Bethesda], which had an infirmity thirty and eight years” (John 5:5).
Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

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

Recommended Resources

- 2021 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar
- Hymns for the Family CDs (“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 2.)
- The Power for True Success
- Understanding Spiritual Gifts
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- Character Sketches, Volumes I–III
- Achieving True Success
- Heroes of Faith: Adoniram Judson audiobook (CD) and booklet
- Through Gates of Splendor by Elisabeth Elliot
- “Abide: Christ in You” (message by Rise Up, World Changers, available at embassymedia.com)

To view these resources and many more, visit us at: store.iblp.org

Hymn History Bibliography

