

THE RED THREAD

PURSuing PATIENCE

PASTOR JOHN PACE | Publisher of the Red Thread

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Acknowledge to yourself and to God that you have sinned (Romans 3:23).

In sorrow for your sins, turn from them to God and ask His forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7).

By faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, believing that He died in your place on the cross (John 3:16).

WHY & HOW

THE RED THREAD exists to be an encouragement to the men and women currently separated from family and friends in correctional institutions. It is published on the 15th of each month by **Crimson House Ministries** at **1616 North Robberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803**. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org>

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11 KJV).

One can read the first ten verses later to see what the Apostle Paul admonishes Timothy to ‘flee’

because our focus today is not on fleeing but pursuing (follow after). The connection in fleeing and pursuing is, however, most interesting. Kenneth Wuest translates it: “But, as for you, O man of God, these things be constantly fleeing. But be as constantly eagerly seeking....” Or in my words, ‘run towards righteousness, godliness, etc, just as hard as you run away from those other things.’

What made Paul’s list so intriguing was his charge to pursue patience. I understood constantly seeking all the others—righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and gentleness. But to pursue patience? That’s like ‘hurry up and wait;’ busting it to get to the airport three hours early only to kill time in lines, uncomfortable chairs, and over-priced food.

Patience is translated from two different Greek words *hupoméno* (G5278) and *makrothumía* (G3115): *hupoméno* (G5278) means to persevere, or to remain under, a bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances; whereas, *makrothumía* (G3115)

focuses on being long-suffering or enduring towards people. *Hupomone* refers to that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. We see both words used in 2 Timothy 3:10 in describing Paul’s life, “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering (*makrothumía*), charity, patience (*hupoméno*).”

In the text *patience* is translated from

hupoméno. Thayer gives us a more in-depth definition: “in the N.T., the characteristic of a man who is unwavering from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.” Or, to put it another way: patience means “to stay put and stand fast when you’d like to run away.”

Oswald Chambers wrote, “Patience is not indifference; patience conveys the idea of an immensely strong rock withstanding all onslaughts.” I so want to be stronger; I want to be steadfast like the rock of Gibraltar.

• Paul’s Prayer for Patience

A lack of endurance often results in despondency or losing heart; if you find yourself losing heart and tiring of the test, one answer is prayer. Paul had prayed such for the Colossians as he asked God for a fortitude which no situation can conquer and a patience which no person can crush.

A spontaneous unction from sharing this message was for us to pray for each other using Paul’s prayer for the Colossians as a guide—a guide that included praying for both *hupoméno* and *makrothumía*. “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance (*hupoméno*) and patience (*makrothumía*) with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:9-12 ESV). (...Continued on page 2)



...Patience means “to stay put and stand fast when you’d like to run away.”



THE RIGHTEOUS: PSALM 92:12

C. H. SPURGEON | From ‘The Treasury of David, Volume 4’, 1883

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Psalms 92:12 KJV)

The song now contrasts the condition of the righteous with that of the graceless. The wicked “spring as the grass,” but “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,” whose growth may not be so rapid, but whose endurance for centuries is in fine contrast with the transitory verdure of the meadow. When we see a noble palm standing erect, sending all its strength upward in one bold column, and growing amid the dearth and drought of the desert, we have a fine picture of the godly man, who in his uprightness aims alone at the glory of God; and, independent of outward circumstances, is made

by divine grace to live and thrive where all things else perish. The text tells us not only what the righteous is, but what he shall be; come what may, the good man shall flourish, and flourish after the noblest manner. “He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” This is another noble and long-lived tree. “As the days of a tree are the days of my people,” saith the Lord. On the summit of the mountain, unsheltered from the blast, the cedar waves its mighty branches in perpetual verdure, and so the truly godly man under all adversities retains the joy of his soul, and continues to make progress in the divine life. Grass, which makes hay for oxen, is a good enough emblem of the unregenerate; but cedars, which build the temple of the Lord, are none too excellent to set forth the heirs of heaven. •

PURSING PATIENCE

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Filled, strengthened, and thanksgiving are the three prayer points Paul prayed over the Colossians and will serve as our outline. I am to pray that you are filled with the knowledge of His will by praying James 1:5 and 3:15, 17 over you. For in that spiritual wisdom and understanding you will walk pleasingly before the Lord, bearing fruit and increasing in knowledge.

I am to pray strength over you through His power and according to His glorious might—endurance does not come by ourselves; rather, it proceeds from the power of God which He freely gives. “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13 ESV). But there is a *catch*: the endurance and patience is to be accomplished in joy! My prayer for you is for joy in any circumstance. “If joy is not rooted in the soil of suffering, it is shallow” (Moule).

Finally I close my prayer with thanksgiving for your salvation and for the inheritance “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4 KJV).

CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPATIENCE

Here is a quick self-test to check for signs of impatience.

RESPONSE	CHARACTERISTIC	RESPONSE	CHARACTERISTIC
True or False	Longsuffering: When provoked do I rashly respond to the degree that I am later sorry?	True or False	Endurance: Do I call divine providence into serious question?
True or False	Longsuffering: Am I vexed within when things don't go the way I think they should go?	True or False	Endurance: Are there times that I feel I could do a better job than God?
True or False	Longsuffering: Do I constantly see the negative side of people and thinking they'll never change?	True or False	Endurance: Is my spiritual life lived through the past, because those 'were better days'?

A 'true' response to any of the questions could mean that impatience is overcoming patience and ephemerality is challenging endurance, all of which are addressed by the Preacher in Ecclesiastes 7:8-10.

“Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit” (Ecclesiastes 7:8 ESV). A positive response to question one connects impatience with pride as seen in the Scripture. A proud and conceited person will treat people with contempt and does not weigh his words. He thinks that all must meet his approval and operate on his time schedule. He is never content with the outworkings of providence. He rebels against the ordained course of events. Pride of spirit, though flamboyant and dramatic, cannot sustain a person through difficult times.

“Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9 ESV). Answering 'true' to question two can lead to a life of skepticism where doubt overshadows belief. “Impatience and unbelief usually go together, just as faith and patience do” (Wiersbe).

“Say not, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For it is not from wisdom that you ask this” (Ecclesiastes 7:10 ESV). Embracing question three can reflect impatience's characteristic of negativism. By asking such a question about the past, the impatient person shows that he had not reflected wisely on the matter: “For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.” Every age has its light and dark side. The 'good old days' were not always so good, and the present is not so bad. The Israelites who yearned for the onions, garlic and meat of Egypt had blotted from their memories the bondage, toil and misery (cf. Numbers 11:5). Difficult times call for believers to look forward to the Promised Land, not back to Egypt. The future ultimately will be better than any past or any present, however good. ▪

1Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2looking 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. 3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

— HEBREWS 12:1 - 3

ON HEBREWS 12:3

J. VERNON MCGEE | From his 'Thru the Bible Commentary' on Hebrews

The words patience (in Heb. 12:1) and endured (in Heb. 12:2) are from the same root. Trouble generally produces patience and endurance.

These Hebrew believers had come out of a religion that had a tremendous ritual and a great temple. The temple of Herod, although it was not completed even at the time it was destroyed in A.D. 70, was a thing of beauty and actually awe inspiring. Also there was a great ritual that went with it. It had been a God-given religion at the beginning, but it had been debauched and prostituted by the time this Hebrew epistle was written. Nevertheless, as far as religion was concerned, they had it. Now these believers had given up all of that; they no longer were going through all that religious ritual. They had now come to consider Him, that is, Christ, and He was everything. He was the temple. He was the ritual.



“...Unless you stay close to the Word of God where the Holy Spirit can take the things of Christ and make them real to you, you are going to get weary of the Christian life...”

He was Christianity. He was all of it. There was this simplicity in Christ, and the writer now calls them to consider Him.

They are to know what He endured when He was down here and how He learned patience. We are told in the beginning of this epistle, in the section which presented His humanity, that He learned a great many things down here although He was and is God. In the flesh He learned something which God had to experience by taking on our humanity and suffering for us. He endured and He learned patience.

"Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." May I say this to you very candidly: unless you stay close to the Word of God where the Holy Spirit can take the things of Christ and make them real to you, you are going to get weary of the Christian life, and you are going to faint in your minds. This is the reason there are so many discouraged Christians around today. My friend, if you come to the Word of God and get close to Jesus Christ, you are going to be encouraged. You will not grow weary of this life down here. Oh, my friend, we are living in the greatest days that have ever been! ▪

YOU SAID IT! We love hearing from you and so do our readers. Please send your articles, poems, praise reports, testimonies, etc..., to *The Red Thread, Crimson House Ministries, 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, MO, 65803.*

HAVE YOU EVER?

Have you ever...

Have you ever cried while you were praying? has your heart broken for those who are lost?

Have you ever felt the pain of your loved ones? or felt the weight of the cross?

Have you ever prayed so hard your body trembles your voice quivers and shakes?

Have you ever thanked God for all your blessings and asked Him to forgive your mistakes?

Have you ever stopped what you were doing to drop down to your knees?

Have you ever thanked God for His mercy and hearing each of your pleas?

Have you ever spread the word of His undying love?

Have you ever told a friend about Gods son sent from above?

Have you ever reached out to a stranger to tell him that you care?

Have you ever prayed for forgiveness for those who hurt you though it may not seem fair?

Have you ever...?

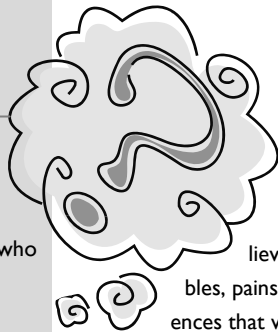
—Casey Nanez, VA

peace

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in it's bright increase.
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.
Stayed upon Christ, hearts are fully blest,
Finding as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

—Submitted by KB

From the hymn "Like a River Glorious" by Frances R. Havergal (1876)



equipped for MINISTRY

How can one better serve the Lord? I believe through our problems, troubles, pains and trials. The painful experiences that we go through in life are what God uses to prepare us for the ministry. In fact, our greatest pain will most likely be the birth of our ministry. Who can better minister to the parents of a Down Syndrome child than another parent who have a child afflicted in the same way? Who can better help an alcoholic recover than someone who fought that demon and found freedom through the Lord Jesus Christ? Who can better comfort a spouse whose mate has left for an affair than someone who has gone through that agony themselves?

I believe God allows us to intentionally go through painful experiences to equip us for the sole purpose of ministering to others. In the Word of God, it says, "He comforts us in all our tribulation so that we can comfort others" (2 Corinthians 1:4). When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given to us.

Those of us who truly desire to be used by the Lord must understand this powerful truth. The very experiences that we've tried to hide and have resented most in life are the experiences God wants to use to help others.



That, my friend, is our ministry! In order for

God to be able to use our painful experiences, we must be willing to share them. I had to get to that point in my life—where I would no longer try and hide them or be embarrassed by them and try to cover them up. I believe that there comes

a time in a person's life when one step below where he's at is death, and if there's any hope left in his life, it's that the next step is up! For me, it took me getting honest with God and myself, my wife, and being honest with other people—admitting my faults, failures, fears, and, the most difficult of all, admitting my addiction to crack cocaine. As I sit here and write these words, I see now that God has been equipping me for the ministry. People are always more encouraged when we share how God's grace has helped us in our times of weakness.



The Apostle Paul understood this truth, so he was honest about his bouts with depression. He says "I think you ought to know, dear brothers, about the hard time we went through in Asia. We were really crushed and overwhelmed, and feared we would never live through it.

We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were the help ourselves: but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us, for he can even raise the dead. And he did help us and saved us from a terrible death; yes, and we expect him to do it again and again."

I can see how God has been equipping me through my many bouts with the jail and prison systems, all due to my being addicted to drugs and alcohol. That lifestyle is what led me to commit the crimes I did, and, twenty-four years later, at the time of this writing, I find myself in prison again for the very same reasons. Only now, I see the birth of these experiences ready to be used for the purpose of God. "Though he was a son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

Some equipping takes longer than others, depending on the learning ability of each person. For me, it has taken 18 years. "Timing is all so very important." I believe that, according to the ministry that we've been called into, God has set a timeframe for each one of us to be equipped. Now I can say that I'm being equipped for ministry. All in the Name of Jesus....

—Bro. L.C. Stacker
Cameron, MO



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WAITING ON GOD: PATIENTLY

ANDREW MURRAY | From 'Waiting on God'

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the land." Psalms 37:7, 9

"In patience possess your souls." "Ye have need of patience." "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire." Such words of the Holy Spirit show us what an important element in the Christian life and character patience is. And nowhere is there a better place for cultivating or displaying it than in waiting on God. There we discover how impatient we are, and what our impatience means. We confess at times that we are impatient with men, and circumstances that hinder us, or with ourselves and our slow progress in the Christian life. If we truly set ourselves to wait upon God, we shall find that it is with Him we are impatient, because He does not at once, or as soon as we could wish, do our bidding. It is in waiting upon God that our eyes are opened to believe in His wise and sovereign will, and to see that the sooner and the more completely we yield absolutely to it, the more surely His blessing can come to us.

We have as little power to increase or strengthen our spiritual life, as we had to originate it. We "were born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the will of God." Even so, our willing and running, our desire and effort, avail nought; all is "of God that sheweth mercy."

All the exercises of the spiritual life, our reading and praying, our willing and doing, have their very great value. But they can go no farther than this, that they point the way and prepare us in humility to look to and to depend alone upon God Himself, and in patience to wait His good time and mercy. The waiting is to teach us our absolute dependence upon God's mighty working, and to make us in perfect patience place ourselves at His disposal. They that wait on the Lord

shall inherit the land; the promised land and its blessing. The heirs must wait; they can afford to wait.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." The margin gives for "Rest in the Lord," "Be silent to the Lord," or R. V., "Be still before the

Lord." It is resting in the Lord, in His will, His promise, His faithfulness, and His love, that makes patience easy. And the resting in Him is nothing but being silent unto Him, still before Him. Having our thoughts and wishes, our fears and hopes, hushed into calm and quiet in that great peace of God which passeth all understanding. That peace keeps the heart and mind when we are anxious for anything, because we have made our request known to Him. The rest, the silence, the stillness, and the patient waiting, all find their strength and joy in God Himself.

The need for patience, and the reasonableness, and the blessedness of patience will be opened up to the waiting soul. Our patience will be seen to be the counterpart of God's patience. He longs far more to bless us fully than we can desire it. But, as the husbandman has long patience till the fruit be ripe, so God bows Himself to our slowness and bears long with us. Let us remember this, and wait patiently: of each promise and every answer to prayer the word is true: "I the Lord will hasten it in its time." Isa 60:22.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Yes, for HIM. Seek not only the help, the gift, thou needest seek: HIMSELF; wait for HIM. Give God His glory by resting in Him, by trusting him fully, by waiting patiently for Him. This patience honors Him greatly; it leaves Him, as God on the throne, to do His work; it yields self wholly into His hands. It lets God be God. If thy waiting be for some special request, wait patiently. If thy waiting be more the exercise of the spiritual life seeking to know and have more of God, wait patiently. Whether it be in the shorter specific periods of waiting, or as the continuous habit of the souls. Rest in the Lord, be still before the Lord, and wait patiently. "They that wait on the Lord shall inherit the land." ▪