

We should try to be as patient with others as God has been with us

There are many stories in the Bible that teach us *we should try to be as patient with others as God has been with us*. None, however, is any more powerful than the one in **Mt. 18:21-35**. There Jesus told about the servant whose gracious master forgave him a debt amounting to a vast sum of money. This servant then proceeded to go out and beat a fellow servant unmercifully who owed him a much smaller debt. Drawing what ought to be an obvious conclusion, Jesus said that God will not forgive us our sins if we are not willing to forgive those who have sinned against us. The story is a lesson in forgiveness, but it is also a lesson in patience — because forgiveness and patience are very closely tied together.

Both patience and forgiveness are characteristics of love. As Paul pointed out so beautifully in **1 Cor. 13:1-13**, love imparts steadiness and stability to all that we do. Love makes it possible for us to endure considerable hardship without complaining or giving up. Because the loving heart is strong and stable, it can forbear and be longsuffering when others persist in doing wrong to us. Irritability, grudge-bearing, and the impulse to retaliate are failures of love. Imagine what would have happened to us long before now if God's strong love had not held Him back from giving us what we deserve! We can be thankful He has loved us and been patient with us — and forgiven us. Considering this, we ought to “keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (**1 Pt. 4:8**).

The longer we live in this world, the more we can look back and see that others have loved us and been patient with us. In fact, it is somewhat embarrassing to recall situations in which those around us were being patient with us and we didn't even realize it at the time. Some of these people may have passed on, and it not possible to thank them now. So let's pay the debt forward and look for others to whom we can show the same kind of patience that has been shown to us.

Throughout this week, let's each try to concentrate on patience. Let's meditate on the immensity of the patience that God has demonstrated toward us, and let's show our gratitude for His patience in our dealings with one another. Let's remember that others have to be patient with our impatience!

Monday: Matthew 7:1-5

Key Idea: We should not expect more of others than we expect of ourselves.

Questions for Family Growth: In this text, what does Jesus say is the wrong way to judge others? What does James mean when he says that “judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy” (**Jas. 2:13**)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 13:13,14.**

Tuesday: Matthew 18:21-35

Key Idea: Forgiveness is a part of patience.

Questions for Family Growth: What did the servant do after his master forgave him a huge debt? What exactly does it mean to “forgive” someone? How often did Jesus say we should forgive another person? Should we be eager to forgive or reluctant?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 13:15,16](#).

Wednesday: Colossians 3:12,13

Key Idea: Since Christ has been forgiving toward us, we should be forgiving toward others.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some ways we can show appreciation for the forgiveness Christ has extended to us? In [v.13](#), what does it mean to “bear with” one another? In [v.12](#), what are “kindness” and “patience” (or “longsuffering”)?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 13:17](#).

Thursday: 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Key Idea: In helping others overcome their problems, we should be gentle.

Questions for Family Growth: In [v.24](#), what does Paul say the servant of the Lord should not be? What does it mean to be “kind” (or “gentle”) with someone? According to [Gal. 6:1,2](#), in what spirit should we deal with people who are struggling?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 13:18](#).

Friday: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Key Idea: Patience is a part of loving others.

Questions for Family Growth: Which should we be toward other people: short-tempered or long-tempered? In [v.5](#), what does the expression “is not provoked” (NKJV) have to do with patience? What does [v.7](#) say about the way love behaves?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 13:19](#).

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