

INTRO

- What is something you've struggled to have patience with?

In our Fall teaching series, we are looking at the way of life Jesus calls us to that cultivates deep Christlike character within us, and how to cultivate it, the result of which bears the fruit of God's transforming power at work in us.

READ

Gal 5:22-25

REFLECT & RESPOND

Patience is increasingly countercultural because impatience is on the rise and it is making us miserable as people. Technology has contributed to our impatience given the ease and speed at which we expect things today. Sustained impatience results in resentment (a form of anger). Cain's resentment of his brother Abel highlights the insidious nature of resentment and its danger to us.

Qu: Resentment is often a signal of unmet expectation. Can you recall a time you felt resentment? What was the unmet expectation in that situation?

The good news of Galatians 5 is that God wants to cultivate patience within us through the power of his Spirit. Scripture offers at least 4 ways of understanding patience:

1. Long-suffering (God's patience towards us)

The ultimate picture of patience in action is God himself towards us. Ex 34:6 describes God's character and it is out of his compassion and mercy towards us, that he gives us time to change and repent. As we receive and experience God's patience with us, we're better able to become like God in this characteristic.

Qu: in what way/s have you recognized God's patience with you? How does it make you feel?

2. Forbearance (patience towards others)

Love is patient (1 Cor 13:4) and scripture repeatedly calls us to "bear with one another." Patience creates a redemptive opportunity to show love in our relationships with others.

3. Perseverance (patience with circumstances)

Patience with our circumstances is called perseverance. Rom 5:3 reminds us that by persevering, we create an opportunity for growth and character to form within us.

4. Persistence (patience towards God)

Patience towards God means actively engaging God and his promises through prayer. It looks like persistence in prayer, and creates the opportunity for us to deepen dependency on God.

Qu: There are three ways we are to exercise patience: with others, our circumstances, and in prayer. Which of these is the hardest for you and why?

It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit and a persistence in prayer that we can be patient with others and persevere in our circumstances. As we encounter and remember God's patience towards us, we are able to exercise patience and perseverance which creates redemptive opportunities for God to work both in and through us.

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for one another to be strengthened in patience and be guarded against resentment
- Take time to thank God for his patience out of his great love, mercy and compassion.