

[← Back to Home](#) · [Browse All Pieces](#)

Are You a Patient Believer?

Reflections [Prayer, Repentance and the Spiritual Life](#) 10 October 2013

[John 15:5](#)

[John 14:16](#)

[Colossians 1:10-14](#)

Recently, my son bought his nine-year-old daughter a sleek Lenovo laptop. Before she began to use it, he asked me to have the memory upgraded from two gigabytes to four, since he "felt" the machine was slow to load its programmes. I wondered what he would have said about the first computer I used, back in 1983. It ran on a processor known as the Z80A, had fifty-six kilobytes of memory, and supported two eight-inch floppy disk drives of one-point-two megabytes each. It never so much as warned me when I deleted something — sometimes an entire floppy disk's worth — and there were no recovery programmes to help. Though I have kept pace, after a fashion, with the evolution of computing technology, working with computers of that kind taught me to be patient. That may be so, but I am not, in truth, a man of patience, as the Bible tells me I ought to be. Do not rejoice yet, I am afraid: neither, I suspect, are you a patient person.

Patience has been defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious." There are many other definitions to be found: "patience is a person's ability to wait something out, or endure something tedious, without becoming agitated" (perhaps close to the Oxford definition); "tolerant and even-tempered perseverance; the capacity for calmly enduring pain, trying situations, and the like"; "patience is self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate against a wrong." All close enough, but what we are after is this: patience is the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Seen from that perspective, the fitting description of patience might be that it is a calm endurance, founded on the certain knowledge that God is in control.

Patience, however, is a virtue very difficult to cultivate and to practise, if it is treated as a stand-alone attribute within the complex mindset of a person. That is why most of us fail to practise it. Take, for example, the experience of driving on a busy road. Everyone seems to be in a great

hurry; no one seems to have any patience left. When the traffic light turns green, and before you have even shifted your gears, several people behind you will begin to sound their horns. If a car passes you on the wrong side, brushing dangerously close, what would your reaction be? A curse, perhaps a mild one. However, if you are deep-rooted in Christ, and know that He is always in control, you would instead simply offer a word of prayer, and thank Him.

Abraham's faith in God was so persevering that he waited patiently, without questioning, for years, for God's promises to be fulfilled. The Apostles consistently urge believers to practise perseverance. Though perseverance is not quite the same thing as patience, it is difficult to remain rooted in faith unless one does so patiently. To make any progress in developing a strong attribute of patience within us, the first and foremost step is to understand what Jesus said to us: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). He said, "He that abideth in me..." If anything is to progress, we need to abide in Jesus, believe in Him without doubting, and accept that He is in control of our lives. As we achieve that, Jesus will abide in us. He has told us how He will do this. He said: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). We, as believers, should not become frustrated or impetuous, but should allow the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to work within us. He alone can grant us the inner courage and strength to be patient in every circumstance, however trying or impossible the situation may seem.

Paul summarised it thus, in Colossians 1:10-14: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

[Download as PDF](#)

[← Back to Home](#) · [Browse All Pieces](#)

Logos Ministry Archive — a collection of sermons, studies and devotional writing.