

DEVELOPING PATIENCE by Linda Ensley



Patience: (noun) the capacity, habit or fact of being patient.

Patient: (verb) 1. waiting calmly for someone or something. 2. bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint. 3. Manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain. 4. not hasty or impetuous. 5. remaining steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity.

There are examples of patience around us every day. Think of the farmer or gardener who plants, and then waits. He or she waits for the sun to shine and the rain to fall but is helpless to do anything to speed up the process. God must send the rain and the sunshine at the right time. The initial growing process is hidden under the earth until that first blade appears. They have no choice but to wait patiently.

Think of a new mother. She knows she is pregnant but still she must wait patiently for weeks or even months before that baby bump is noticeable and she feels life. Then she can see evidence of the baby's growth. Then she continues to wait until the baby reaches his or her full term. (Extra patience is required for those who see their due date come and go.) But in God's planned and perfect time, the baby arrives. The mother has no choice but to wait patiently.

The Bible is filled with examples of God asking His people to be patient. **Abraham** was 75 years old when God promised him that he would be the father of a great nation, and yet, he had already waited years for his first child. Abraham was faithful to God and held onto that promise for 25 more years before Isaac was born. **Abraham was patient.**

Joseph waited year after year for God to fulfill the vision He had given him in a dream while he was in his teens. That dream did not become a reality for many years. Joseph was 13 years old when his brothers sold him into slavery. He spent 17 years serving Potiphar and then (through no fault of his own) spent at least 3 years in prison. He was 30 years old when the Pharaoh exalted him to the second highest position in Egypt. Joseph was close to 40 years old when his brothers bowed before him asking for food. Through all those years **Joseph was patient.**

As a young boy **David** had already learned to love and trust in God. He was probably in his teens when Samuel anointed him to be the King over Israel. David was in the King Saul's service for more than 10 years, fighting Israel's enemies, while Saul repeatedly tried to kill him. Saul was killed in battle and David became king at age 30, more than 15 years after he had been chosen by God and anointed for this position. **David was patient.**

Jesus' disciples were told to wait in Jerusalem. In **Luke 24:49** Jesus told them **"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."** So they waited. They may not have even known what it would look like when it came, but they waited, knowing that they would know when the time came. They were in fear for their lives, but they stayed and they prayed and they waited, for 10 days, and then it came and they were clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit and the **world was changed because they were patient.**

God Himself, is an ever present example of patience. He did not destroy the human race when we brought sin into the world. He was patient with man while Noah built the ark, He was patient with the Israelites as they would fall away and then return, over and over again.

God is still patient with sinful man today. He is holding back His hand of judgement because He is patiently giving everyone the opportunity to repent and be saved.

God is patient.

