

Why impatience is not a virtue

Most of us have heard of the virtue of patience even though its implementation escapes many people until more mature years have had time to develop its benefits. The Scriptures tell us: *“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”* (James 1:4) *“let us with patience run the race (witness the Gospel) that is set before us”* (Hebrews 12:1). *“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”* (Rev. 14:12) Patience wins, impatience loses. This is not to say that we should *do nothing* in our Christian walk in this life. Rather it means that God's wisdom tells us to move forward at all times but do so with slow, steady, cautious, deliberate carefulness in a world that will chew us up and spit us out if we run into its jaws by haste of the flesh. Therefore the solid Christian knows that true patience is a blessing indeed.

On the flip side of this coin the Bible warns us about the ramifications of **impatience** in our lives. It can be correctly said that impatience is a carnal trait of those who are unable to control their desire for action. Americans of the recent generations appear to be highly susceptible to this emotional craving, wanting everything *now*, never waiting or weighing God's will to consider if *now* is always the correct choice, and never patiently waiting to hear all sides of an issue before deciding if something is true or not.

The Bible teaches us that there are three things that cause impatience (and none of them good). Impatience is so contrary to God's spirit that it is first seen as a **lust trait** of sodomite queers who were unable to wait to “have their way” with Lot and two messengers. (Gen. 19:4) Next we see that impatience is a fruit of **heated revenge** as Simeon and Levi slew the sons of Hamor the Hivite because those sons had defiled Dinah their sister (and a daughter of Jacob). This careless military/political action on the part of Simeon and Levi highly endangered the entire household of their father Jacob, with Jacob stating that it was “a trouble that could destroy him”. (Gen. 34:30) Impatience was also seen due to an **irritable rebellious attitude** against God's chosen servants. The children of Israel, coming out of Egypt, became impatient in the desert for water and thereby forced Moses into hasty action before God. The Almighty told Moses to speak to a rock for water, but Moses instead struck the rock twice with his rod. (Gen. 20:1-13)

Furthermore, the consequences of impatience are dramatic. Because of the impatient strivings of the people against God, and then Moses' hasty unthinking strikes to the rock, Moses was kept from the promised land. (Gen. 20:12) Yes, impatience will keep a person from God's promises. Moreover it was impatience that resulted in loss of the birthright for Esau. (Gen. 25:29-34) It was also impatience that caused one of the Bible's most despicable sins as the people grew tired of waiting for Moses to return from the Mount as Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. In their impatience the people demanded of Aaron that he make them a golden calf to worship which brought the fury of God to a point of nearly destroying them all. (Ex.32:1,4,9,10) As if all of these consequences of impatience aren't bad enough, we finally see the impulse of the impatient wife of Job who urged Job to renounce God. She could not comprehend God's long term reason for dealing with Job by testing Job with protracted hardships, so we thusly remember her famous quip to Job – *“curse God and die”* (Job 2:9) Job's response to his wife was that her impatience caused her to make foolish statements (v.10) – and so it does. There are times when things should be “done now” of which the Bible speaks clearly. But when clear and unambiguous answers are not forthcoming from God it is most always that He demands us to wait in patience for His plans to be fulfilled in His time schedule and to develop in divine fullness. *“Rest in Yahweh and wait patiently for Him”* (Psalm 37:7) *“And the Master direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”* (II Thess.3:5)