



Links Players

Being Patient

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2

Recently, I had the pleasure of traveling with my son and his team to a golf tournament in which they were competing. Before the tournament started, he reviewed the course scorecard and talked to the team about the level of difficulty on the various holes.

He noted that the back nine ended with Par 5's on four of the last five holes. He cautioned them not to be overly aggressive on the front nine and to take scoring opportunities only if they were there: "You need to be patient, don't force things, because you will have opportunities with the Par 5's at the end."

His golfers tend to be fearless and aggressive, often going for the flag even when risky, so his advice was not necessarily the words they wanted to hear. However, there was wisdom in his guidance, which also applies to us. Being patient can lead to better course management and lower scores.

Examples demonstrating the virtues of patience are found throughout the Bible. Abraham and Sarah were promised a son, and although they had a slight detour, they waited 25 years for Isaac's birth. Noah patiently worked for several decades to build an ark. Moses endured 40 years of constant grumbling from the Israelites as they traveled through the wilderness.

God blessed all of these people because they patiently endured their challenges. That's a good reminder for us as we encounter problems and frustrations in our daily lives. Romans 5:3-4 offers good advice about responding when those situations occur: "We also have joy with our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce patience. And patience produces character, and character produces hope."

In his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren compares the slow process of fruit ripening to our spiritual journey, as we develop the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). He comments, "The development of Christlike character cannot be rushed...God is never in a hurry, but he is always on time." It's another reminder for patience and remembering that God works on his timing, not ours.

It's interesting to note that when Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit, the very first word he uses is love. How do you define love? In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul's famous chapter on love, he gives us a wonderful description of love's many qualities. After the first three verses describing the emptiness of life without love, verse 13:4 begins his definition of love, with the words: "Love is patient..."

The Apostle Peter reminds us, "The Lord...is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Just as God is patient with us, we need to be patient with God, with others, and even with ourselves.

Patience is not only good advice for navigating the golf course, but also for demonstrating our trust in God and living a life that is pleasing to Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, our world today moves at a fast pace, and it's easy for us to get caught up in wanting everything done now. Grant us patience and help us to model that trait as we interact with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

John Bown

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