

## *Patience & Suffering*

LESSON BY HAYLEY ROSS (FOR LADS TO LEADERS/LEADERETTES)

Have you ever felt like giving up? Like you couldn't take life anymore? And, just couldn't wait for the Lord to come? Well, after hard days.... sometimes. Do you ever catch yourself looking up into the sky and saying, "Lord, please come! I am ready for you to take me from this world."

I know that think about these things from time to time. I know I can't wait for the Lord's coming. I think about hearing the trumpets. I think about being able to fly. And, I think about seeing Jesus face to face.... and how he will take me back to heaven. Where there is no sadness, no crying, and no pain. But, then I realize..... he may not be coming right now. In fact, he may not be coming today, or this week, or this year. So, in the meantime we have to figure out how to endure.

I know we might wonder how he would change the world if he were here. How every time we would experience an indescribable happiness inside of us. But, we must be patient. And, we need to realize that Christ lives in us now! He provides us with the power of his Holy Spirit. And, he surrounds us with other Christians that wear His name and have His Spirit too.

So, instead of boasting about the future, I want to challenge you to consider following a few simple steps to help you become more patient while you wait for Jesus to come.

The first thing we should do is pray. Just pray about it. Take the thoughts of the Lord's presence and use that to motivate you. Let it draw you to your knees. Let that thought of Jesus being with you and His promises become your hope.

**James 5:7** says, *"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain."*

This is a great example. Have you ever planted a garden? Have you ever worked on a farm? Like Solomon says everything has its own time and season. James challenges us to just wait for the Lord. Don't rush in. Don't panic. Don't worry. Just trust in the Lord. Wait patiently for him to help you.

The second thing we need to do is to think about what is bothering us. Why are we impatient in the first place? What gets us all frustrated? What causes our worry? More than likely is nonsense anyway. We worry about so many things that we cannot control. That is one of our greatest struggles.... Sometimes we lack control. We also lack understanding. So we need to pray for wisdom and realize that God has our back. He is in control And, He is good all the time. And, all the time, He is good.

The third thing we need to consider is that we lack proper planning and communication when problems arise. This things cause us to have unrealistic expectations.

**James 5:8-9** says, *"You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!"*

Like a neighbor or a friend, knocking at the door.... God is trying to get our attention. But, we are too worried about what might happen and we ignore Him. James says the Judge is standing at the door. He is knocking. He is waiting. He is the one growing impatient with us. Because we get in a hurry and we forget our purpose. Our goal in this world is not to focus on daily problems, or think about how to fix all the mistakes we've made. Our goal should be to talk to God about those struggles.....trust in Him to deliver us.... and then get back to doing what He has called us to do.

Let me give you an illustration..... When you are in your car and you are late for your job, school, or something else.... what are you thinking about? Are you praising God for your good health? Are you thankful that God is watching over you? Or are you frustrated that you are late?

The problem is our thinking! We have unrealistic expectations. Instead of praying that we arrive safely. We are praying that we on time. Something is wrong with that. You don't have to be late. You could have gotten up earlier. You could have managed your time better. Why blame God? And why get impatient with other drivers, when really YOU are to blame! Don't honk the horn out of impatience. Just wait.

Why do you think the horn was put on cars in the first place? Not just to warn someone that they are too close or might hit your car. But they are also used for impatient people. Or so it seems. Maybe the makers of the car horn thought to themselves, "Let's give the driver something to do when they frustrated, so they don't run over old ladies that don't know how to use a turning signal while changing lanes."

Have you ever been to New York? Or to another large city? What do you see? Cars. Lots and lots of cars. What do you hear? Horns. Why? Because there are hundreds of impatient people. If you find yourself in this situation....Take a deep breath and relax. Realize that some things are beyond your control. Remember that old Alabama song? I'm in a hurry to get things done. Oh, I rush and rush until life's no fun..... That's where we are! And, that is why James wrote his letter.

We stop having fun when worry, doubt, and frustration enters the picture. This leads to my final point..... know your place and know God's place.

**James 5:10-12** says, "*My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.*"

We must be patient while we wait for Jesus. We need to realize that we are human. But God cannot be chained. His power is limitless. And, we have access to this power when we pray and follow His will. He will NEVER leave us. He will NEVER forsake us. If He is for us, who can be against us. Let's just keep working until Jesus comes and learn a little patience.