

1. Why do we need it?

- a. God’s love is patient, and our love is reflect His love.
 - i. Patience is the fruit of God’s Spirit (Gal 5)
 - ii. Being made in God’s image, it is the purpose of humanity to reflect, not just externally, but internally, the glory and characteristics of our Creator
- b. People will hurt us in this life, and love, which is patient, is the necessary Christ-like quality which restores and protects unity, mutuality, and the flourishing of life between parties
 - i. Anger from idolatry is a root that continually springs up to sin (Heb 12:14-15).
 - ii. We usually minimize how angry someone has made us, and this hidden root will twist us, make us hard and inflict a kind of low-grade fever of self-pity that goes on and on, leading us to slowly fade away to defilement of a sinful and hardened heart.
 - iii. A lack of patience hardens our hearts by fertilizing bitterness, which results in hardened hearts, broken relationships, and isolation either emotionally or physically
- c. Thus, the unity of oneness, that for which Christ came to produce through His death and resurrection and giving of His Spirit, depends upon the acts of patience expressed when there is wrong done to one another
 - i. This is why we are affirming and committing to one another next week: oneness (one loaf) and the superior way of love together
 - ii. We WILL fail each other, and it is our affirmation and commitment to Christ’s commands to confess our sins to one another (James 5:16), to love one another (John 15:12), and to forgive one another (Eph 4:32) which enables us to be vulnerable with one another
 - iii. When I KNOW that you are committed to me, when I fail to love you well, you can tell me knowing that I am truly for you, but have stumbled
 - iv. When I KNOW that you are committed to me, I can repent to you without fear, asking for forgiveness because I know that you are committed to love me by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. What is it?

- a. Biblical Expressions:
 - i. Eph 4:2, patience is bearing with each other in love
 - ii. Col 3:12, patience is "bearing up one another"
 1. closely linked with forgiveness, unity, and peace
 2. Also: patience is “walking in a manner worthy of the calling you received”
- b. Spiritual patience is the inner strength to bear up immediate injury without losing composure (meltdown) or dedication to the flourishing of the one who injured you
 - i. Mercury vs. other metals
 1. an emotional strength to be calm in the face of an unfavorable circumstance or provocation.
 2. Particularly, in the context of love, it deals with relational provocation.
 - ii. from μακροθυμος ~ "long + anger"
 1. that heart character which is slow to impassioned response, "slow to anger" (Ex 34:6/Ps 145:8) as description of God's character and particularly related to forgiveness (Num 14:18) and faithfulness
 - iii. In many languages, patience is expressed idiomatically:
 1. "to keep one's heart from jumping"

2. "to have one's heart seated"
- c. Opposite: irritability, exasperation, annoyance, crankiness, bitterness, quick-tempered
 - i. Proverbially "slow to anger" is compared to the following
 1. "short-tempered" or "short to spirited" (Pr 14:29) (adverse)
 2. "hot-tempered" or "stirred up in rage" (Pr 15:18) (adverse)
 3. "rules his spirit" (Pr 16:32) (Coordinate)
 4. "spares his words" (Pr 17:27) (Coordinate)
 5. "overlook an offense" (Pr 19:11) (Coordinate)
 - d. It is the ability to not let injury and sin against us control our affections or actions, make us lose our inner poise, or lead us to do what is unrighteous.
 - i. It is more than a repression of anger or a holding of one's tongue. It is having heart that doesn't even desire such aggressive response in the face of provocation, compassion leading correction
 - ii. It still seeks the flourishing of the one who has behaved like an enemy (worked against my flourishing)
 1. Loving your enemies begins with patience.

3. Parable of Patience: Matthew 18:21-35

- a. Patience is closely linked with forgiveness/making peace (1 Th 5:13-15)
 - i. Note how the pleas of each of the servants, when confronted with their sins, is "have patience with me"
 - ii. Thus, patience is, in fact, a type of mercy towards those who have wronged you – a willed waiting
- b. It is, in fact, little and immediate forgivenesses
 - i. Note how the King expressed "patience" by debt forgiveness, not waiting for remuneration or restitution
 - ii. This shows us that patience is equitable with forgiveness, yet it is more than a mere willpower to refuse to act, but a heart that is settled on the matter *in the moment*
 1. Note how the wicked servant "choked him"
 2. This is impatience: the emotional choking of a person expressed through bitterness, gossip, complaining, a critical and controlling spirit
 3. Impatience cuts the oxygen out of a weaker soul, because it gradually presses in on the one who fails with guilt, critique, shame, and the feeling that one can 'never do anything right'

4. Patience and Forgiveness: pay the emotional debt of the injury or provocation towards you

- a. Emotional Debts: The pain you feel from being injured.
 - i. It is felt, and it hurts. No matter what you believe about forgiveness or what worldview you are coming from, there is an emotional debt of pain that you feel when someone wrongs you. There is a harm.
 - ii. Patience is not the absence of the feeling of harm, but the inner strength to endure it without becoming agitated, irritable, bitter, or to "choke" the other person
- b. How might we "choke" the other person with impatience?
 - i. We can do it by demanding that they pay:
 1. Directly: insults, punishing with silence, seeking to control their behavior by using shame/guilt, etc.
 2. Indirectly: gossip, slander, tearing down their reputation to our friends, showing how poorly they treated you and how difficult your life is because of it

3. Hidden: Pride, "I'm not going to make you pay, it's beneath me. I'll be the godly one in this relationship."
- ii. But making someone else pay actually changes us into the very evil that hurt us to begin with.
 1. It pervades our hearts and grows forth into a spirit of fear, self-pity, anger, and it controls us.
 2. You *feel* better by "choking" them, but you are changed, twisted, hardened in the process by enthroning yourself in your own heart.
 3. None of us want to be considered a violent choker, but impatience has the same root!
- c. What does love look like when patient in provocation?
 - i. Spiritual patience doesn't like conflict, but it doesn't avoid it. It doesn't do vengeance, but it doesn't avoid telling the truth.
 1. Patience is usually silence
 - a. Most of the time patience, i.e. little forgivenesses, sees that debts are not worth bringing up – it just pays them silently and completely
 - b. Examples:
 - i. When your 5-year old picks your prize flowers because she wants to give them to you
 1. intent is virtuous – don't be impatient, just be appreciative b/c the glory of the ignorant act is superior in quality to the glory of the flower
 - ii. When your spouse promised to do the dishes in the evening, but failed to do so because he/she was exhausted
 1. Silently forgive and do the dishes yourself – love is patient
 2. Constant criticism is not patience, but often a form of trying to prove to the other her moral debt imbalance through exasperated sighs, eye rolling, murmuring, etc.
 3. You can strain a relationship by constant criticism
 - a. One criticism for every 20 praises
 2. Yet, sometimes it is telling the truth in a way that is not coercive or demanding, but is revealing and redemptive
 - a. Revealing in that it will acknowledge the harm, but is open to hearing from the harmer
 - b. Redemptive in that it is not demanding, explicitly or implicitly, restitution or "making it right"
 - c. It's speaking of truth is completely *for the flourishing of the one who harmed you*

5. How do we get it?

- a. "Felt compassion" - the word used only of Jesus Himself in the book of Matthew (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34)
 - i. The evil servant went out and acted like a king without the compassion which the King had showed him.
 - ii. We all do that, we're servants who act like kings, demanding allegiance and performance commensurate to our self-sovereign expectations.
 - iii. But, compassion is found in the acknowledge that I AM BROKEN AND NEEDY, and have needed *great compassion* from the One far superior to me
 1. The wicked servant owed the King the equivalent of millions of dollars, while the other servant only owed him the equivalent of thousands.

2. Note how the wicked servant asked for patience from the king “and I will pay you back *everything*”
 - a. He assumed, in his plea, that his repayment would be total
 3. Yet the other servant didn’t assume such an arrogant stance, but was requesting greater compassion “and I will pay you.”
 - a. The wicked servant needed much more compassion, yet didn’t ask for it – this self-serving heart was willing to strangle rather than soften
- b. We need to behold the King whose compassion was so great that he became a servant to those who harmed him.
- i. 1 John 3:2, we will be changed to be like Him as we see Him as He is
 - ii. Look at how Jesus paid your enormous debt, how Jesus showed you patience and pity.
 - iii. Ask Him to reveal to your heart the immensity of your sin, until you feel its pressing weight and are moved to repentance.
 - iv. Then ask Him to reveal to your heart the greatness of His love, His forgiveness, His patience, until you worship deeply from a heart of complete and radical gratitude. Because until you see the King who became a servant for you, you will not grow in patience.
- c. Patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- i. In other words, God is growing it within you *by glorifying Jesus* (John 15:12)
 - ii. Go to Him to change you, repenting of your propensity to anger, defensiveness, and vengeance (insults, controlling/demanding, coercion, manipulation with guilt/shame, etc) as you behold the One crucified for you *because God is patient towards you*.
 - iii. Ask Him to reveal the greatness of His forgiveness of your heart’s sins so that you can forgive others of their much lesser sins against you.
- d. Patience only grows in the fertile soil of the presence of God**
- i. "As God's chosen people, dearly loved, clothe yourselves with patience" (Col 3:12)
 1. You are chosen, so you can confidently enter into His presence to hear what He has to say about your heart.
 2. You are deeply loved, so you do not need to fear what He says about your need for change, your need to repent, the depth of your brokenness and wickedness, for He gave His Son for you...He is for you in the catharsis
 3. Then, you can clothe yourself with the patience like the Father to whom you belong
 - ii. When you behold Him, you rest in the provision that you have all the respect, honor, and dignity that you need, so you can swallow this emotional debt.
 1. When you want to slam them with a good wry insult, but you hold your tongue, you are paying down their debt against you *because you don't need to be paid back* (the King has wiped your debt clean).
 2. You are paying a debt down in the moment, and it has costs, but those costs are nothing compared to the cost the King incurred to clear you.
 - iii. As you consume the debt b/c Christ is sufficient your anger actually dissipates.
 1. Patience knows that it has everything that it needs because God has shown such love toward us that we don’t need to coerce others’ righteousness
 2. The debt goes down *and you are free*, it hasn't twisted you, hardened you, or grown into full-blown sin which defiles many.
 3. You have built unity and oneness, the way things are supposed to be, by loving patiently, restraining vengeance by the heart of love