

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Patience—Essential to Experiencing God’s Best

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 5:22-23 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 27:14; 32:8; 37:7; 40:1
Proverbs 3:5-6

► SUMMARY

There are people who have faithfully attended church for many years, been baptized, and heard a multitude of sermons, yet have not understood how to live the Christian life.

It’s not accomplished by self-effort but with complete reliance upon the Holy Spirit as He lives Christ’s life through us. One of the Spirit’s jobs is to provide the guidance we need throughout life. However, there are times when we must patiently wait until He reveals what He would have us do.

► SERMON POINTS

Patience doesn’t come naturally but is a gift from God bestowed on us as the fruit of His Spirit. It’s essential that we cooperate with the Spirit as He develops patience within us, because this necessary quality can save us from the inevitable regrets that come when we refuse to wait for His direction.

Consider what the following scriptures say about waiting for God:

- **Psalm 27:14** “Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.”
- **Psalm 37:7** “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret . . .”
- **Psalm 40:1** “I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry.”

Patience can be defined in several ways:

- Quiet, uncomplaining endurance under stress or annoyance.

- Being good-tempered.
- Having the will to wait.

Why do we need patience?

There are times when we must make decisions, but we don’t know what to do. If God gives us a check in our spirit, we should wait. But most of us are reluctant to delay the decision and want God to act on our timetable. However, we must remember that the Lord is omniscient and knows everything about us and our circumstances. If He wants us to wait, it’s because He knows what’s best.

The Lord is our greatest protector.

He created us to live for Him, serve Him, and reflect Him. Therefore, if what we desire doesn’t fit with His purpose or timing, we would be foolish to be impatient and insist on having it. When He says no, He is not rejecting us but protecting us.

To benefit from God’s loving protection, we should consult Him about everything. But if we insist on having our own way, we are asking for trouble. In contrast, when we are patient, we’re able to calmly tolerate the delays that God places in our lives.

Impatience results in the following mistakes:

- **Assumption.** If God delays in answering our requests, we assume we can go ahead with our plans, since He didn’t forbid it.
- **Misuse of Scripture.** At other times, we may try to manipulate God’s Word to get the answer we want. We’ll search through the Bible until we find a verse that seems to support our desires.

- **Manipulation.** We could also try to manipulate the circumstances in order to justify our own actions.

All these methods will only handicap our lives by sowing seeds of destruction. God has given us His Spirit of truth to guide us through all the complexities of life. However, when we don't listen to Him, we could make a mess of our lives. If God says to wait, it's because He loves us. All parents who love their children know that giving them everything they want immediately is not good for them.

What is required in order to live obediently and patiently?

- **Faith in God.** We must believe that He will always direct us because He has promised to do so.
- **A Spirit of Obedience.** To follow the Spirit's guidance, we must be willing to obey God and wait patiently.
- **Discernment of God's Timing.** The Holy Spirit guides us regarding the proper timing for our requests, and if it's not presently God's will for us, He also gives us the grace to wait.
- **Love for God.** Obedience to the Lord is proof of our love for Him because our hearts are bent toward Him, and we are willing to wait for as long as necessary. But when we are impatiently determined that a situation work out the way we desire, we are not demonstrating love for the Lord but for ourselves, others, or things. In contrast, God shows His love for us by withholding from us what we selfishly desire because it is not what's best.
- **Courage.** Sometimes it takes courage to obey God and patiently wait for Him to direct our path. We may start to feel desperate, as if we are coming to the edge of a cliff and are about to fall off, but almighty God is always there by our side.
- **Determination to Wait.** In Psalm 32:8, God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you." When we refuse to heed godly counsel and plunge ahead in impatience, the outcome will never be what we intend.

Waiting for as long as necessary until God in His wisdom tells us what to do is always a wiser approach.

Why is patience essential to experiencing God's best?

- It's essential to a life of obedience to God. We must listen, obey Him, and at times give up our own personal desires and opinions in order to wait for His direction.
- It's essential to building good relationships with other people. Patience is a quality that improves all our relationships because it graciously overlooks others' mistakes.
- It's essential because timing is very important. The Holy Spirit will give us clear direction but not always immediately. If we truly treasure God's wisdom, we will patiently wait for Him to reveal His will.
- It's essential for seeing God at work in the situation. When He finally brings it to a conclusion, we will be able to see how He worked it all out and will be so thankful that we waited.

We don't have to live in the doubt and uncertainty that come with relying on our own wisdom. God saved us for His purposes and will give us guidance if we ask for it. But we must be careful not to think He is late if He doesn't act when we think He should. God is always right on time; we're the ones whose timing is off. The wisest action is to patiently trust God, wait, and watch to see what He will do.

► RESPONSE

- Would your family or co-workers describe you as a patient person? How does your character, conduct, and conversation display either patience or impatience?
- What kinds of thoughts cause you to be impatient? In contrast, what truths about God could you dwell upon to build a foundation for patience and trust in Him?

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