

Speaking to the soul



Patience

Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. Hebrews 10:36

There is a wonderful prayer which runs: "O God, grant me the courage to change what I can, the patience to endure what I cannot change and the wisdom to know the difference." There are many things we are powerless to

change, and God wants to give us the patience to live with them. That's far more easily said than done because, as we all know, patience is extremely hard work. We would all like to see an instant removal of the problems and difficulties of life, and the news that we need to live with them is the last thing we want to hear. But the writer to the Hebrews knew they needed to learn the language of patience. We cannot be sure exactly what challenges they were facing, although we know that they faced recurring waves of persecution and were living in a society that was fundamentally opposed to their Christian values.

John Chrysostom, one of the great leaders of the early Church, said that patience was the queen of virtues. It is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit and is therefore closely related to all the others. Where you find patience you will find love, joy, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. They all live together because they are all the result of the Holy Spirit taking control of our lives. Without the Holy Spirit's inspiration and strength, we are on our own and patience is just sheer hard work. But when we live in partnership with the Spirit, he enables us to discover the wonderful gift of patience.

I suspect that you, like me, have learned most about patience from seeing people live it out. I think of people who've lived with disabilities, sick relatives, difficult employment situations and challenging domestic situations. There was often nothing they could do to change their situation; they just had to live with it. I thank God for their resilience, smiles and positive attitude. Only a miracle could bring about that kind of patience; we all need to pray for that miracle for ourselves.

QUESTION

Who has helped you to understand the blessing of patience?

PRAYER

Lord God, forgive my impatience and help me in the power of your Holy Spirit to find the wonderful gift of patience.

Amen

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