

# LOVE IS PATIENT

## 40 Days of Love

### WEEK 7

We're going to talk this week about how you and I can experience what it means for love to be patient.

patient with circumstances.  
patience in our relationships,  
patience with people.

#### Memory Verse:

*A gentle response diffuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles the fire.*

**Proverbs 15:1**

## MONDAY

### Assess your anger

The Lord said to Moses,

*Because of what Phinehas has done, I am no longer angry with the people of Israel. He refused to tolerate the worship of any god but me, and that is why I did not destroy them in my anger.*

**Numbers 25:10-11 (TEV)**

It is clear from Phinehas's story that some anger is proper and justified. Phinehas was angry because of his zeal for the Lord. But how can we know when our anger is appropriate and when it should be restrained? Ask these questions when you become angry: (1) Why am I angry? (2) Whose rights are being violated (mine or another's)? (3) Is the truth (a principle of God) being violated? If only your rights are at stake, it may be wiser to keep angry feelings under control. But if the truth is at stake, anger is often justified, although violence and retaliation are usually the wrong way to express it (Phinehas's case was unique). If we are becoming more and more like God, we should be angered by sin.

*So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; [16] and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, "Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"*

**John 2:15-16 (TEV)**

*Remember this, my dear friends! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry. [20] Human anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose.*

**James 1:19-20 (TEV)**

Who are the top three people who receive your anger?

When was the last time you got angry in church?

How did you resolve angry issues with other believers?

**Worship (Magnification)** - The church exists to worship God. You were created to worship God and find meaning throughout your whole life. Your anger may keep you from worshipping God. Look back over that last month and see if you were able to worship God while remaining angry? What did you do to correct the problem?

## TUESDAY

### Assimilate your Christian Character

*Don't hang out with angry people. Don't keep company with hotheads. Bad temper is contagious. Don't get infected.*

**Proverbs 22:24-25**

According to this verse, how do your friends influence your spiritual maturity?

What relationships are you involved in that keep you from denying yourself and carrying your cross?

*Human anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose.*

**James 1:20 (TEV)**

*Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.*

**James 1:20 (NLT)**

*A person with good sense is patient, and it is to his credit that he overlooks an offense.*

**Proverbs 19:11 (GW)**

According to these verses, how does your anger affect God's purpose in your life?

How does spiritual maturity change your reaction to offenses?

**Discipleship (Maturity)** - Discipleship is the process of helping people become more and more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings and actions. Who do you need to thank this week for helping you become godly? Who are you presently helping to become godly? What habits do you need to develop to establish Christ-like character?

## WEDNESDAY

### Address the behavior you reveal to others

*If you cannot control your anger, you are as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack.*

**Proverbs 25:28 (TEV)**

When plans change because of others how do you normally react?

When family members upset you, do they confront your anger or let it pass?

How would your friends rate you on your anger management?

How would your family rate you on anger management?

*When God saw that they had put a stop to their evil ways, he had mercy on them and didn't carry out the destruction he had threatened.*

**Jonah 3:10 (NLT)**

*Jonah was very upset about this, and he became angry.*

**Jonah 4:1 (GW)**

Are you surprised when some unlikely person turns to God? Is it possible that your view is as narrow as Jonah's?

Does your behavior reveal to others you care?

**Evangelism (Mission)** - The church exists to communicate God's word. You are His ambassador. It is your responsibility wherever you go. Are you more like Jonah or Paul? Do you gladly follow God's plan for your life or resent interruptions to your plans?

## THURSDAY

### Accept differing opinions

*Accept Christians who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.*

#### **Romans 14:1 (NLT)**

Who is weak in faith and who is strong? We are all weak in some areas and strong in others. Our faith is strong in an area if we can survive contact with sinners without falling into their patterns. It is weak in an area if we must avoid certain activities, people, or places in order to protect our spiritual life. It is important to take a self-inventory in order to find out our strengths and weaknesses. Whenever in doubt, we should ask, "Can I do that without sinning? Can I influence others for good, rather than being influenced by them?"

In areas of strength, we should not fear being defiled by the world; rather we should go and serve God. In areas of weakness, we need to be cautious. If we have a strong faith but shelter it, we are not doing Christ's work in the world. If we have a weak faith but expose it, we are being extremely foolish.

This verse assumes there will be differences of opinion in the church (disputable matters). Paul says we are not to quarrel about issues that are matters of opinion. Differences should not be feared or avoided, but accepted and handled with love. Don't expect everyone, even in the best possible church, to agree on every subject. Through sharing ideas we can come to a fuller understanding of what the Bible teaches. Accept, listen to, and respect others. Differences of opinion need not cause division. They can be a source of learning and richness in our relationships.

What is weak faith? Paul is speaking about immature faith that has not yet developed the muscle it needs to stand against external pressures. For example, if a person who once worshiped idols were to become a Christian, he might understand perfectly well that Christ saved him through faith and that idols have no real power. Still, because of his past associations, he might be badly shaken if he knowingly ate meat that had been used in idol worship as part of a pagan ritual. If a person who once worshiped God on the required Jewish holy days were to become a Christian, he might well know that Christ saved him through faith, not through his keeping of the law. Still, when the feast days came, he might feel empty and unfaithful if he didn't dedicate those days to God.

Paul responds to both weak brothers in love. Both are acting according to their consciences, but their honest scruples do not need to be made into rules for the church. Certainly some issues are central to the faith and worth fighting for—but many are based on individual differences and should not be legislated. Our principle should be: In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in everything, love.

Is it hard for you to accept the opinion of a weaker believer?

When you differ from other believer's opinions does unity remain intact?

What do you need to do differently before church services begin to fellowship with more believers?

**Fellowship** - As Christians we are called to belong not just believe. We are to belong to God's family and be members of God's body. This is fellowship. This week you need to

join a small group because fellowship is practiced in small groups not corporate worship services.

## FRIDAY

### Apply Patience

*It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities.*

**Proverbs 16:32 (TEV)**

*If you are sensible, you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it.*

**Proverbs 19:11 (TEV)**

When are you most likely to not apply patience with others?

According to these verses, why should you apply patience to your ministry?

What is God's purpose of placing you in a ministry where you must practice patience?

**Service (Ministry)** - The church exists to minister to people. Ministry is demonstrating God's love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus. The church is to minister to all kinds of needs: emotional, relational, and physical. Ministry frequently requires group action. Effective group action requires patience, love, and self-control. You're needed in ministry to successfully meet the needs of all believers. Your service to Christ will one day be rewarded for fulfilling all the Christ's planned you to do. Until 'The Rapture' remain faithful in all things.