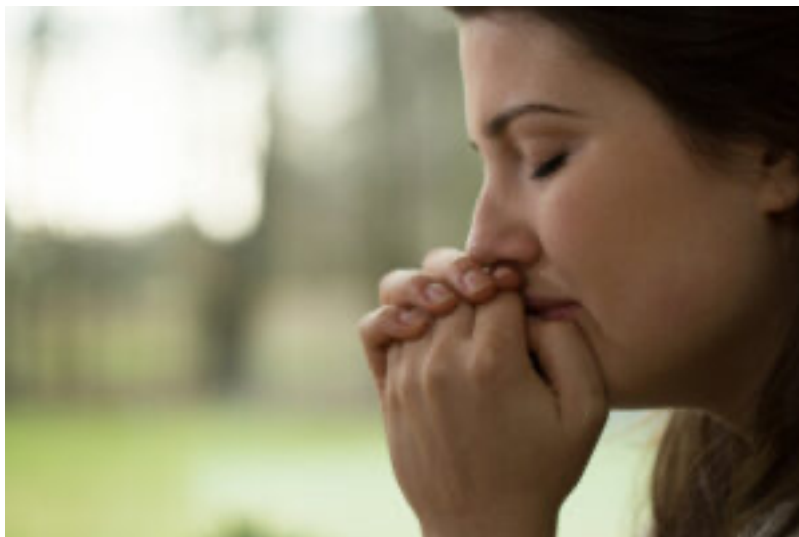


## LEAD-ARE YOU PATIENT?

Loving others is a significant part of what it means to be an apostle of God's Kingdom (Leviticus 19:9-18, Mark 12:28-34, John 13:34, 1 Peter 4:7-10), so we must try to follow our Father's guidance and instructions for how to strengthen the bonds of love that tie us together as people. The *Fruits of the Spirit*, as revealed by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), are the things that good relationships are founded on and when demonstrated in our lives, show to others what it means to be carrying the Spirit of God within us. Through Yeshua's perfect example of how to truly love God and our neighbor (John 13:13-16, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 John 2:6), it is clear to see that it is only through humility and the willingness to put others first that we can achieve that unity (Ephesians 4:2-3). But this, and most other *fruits*, depends on our patience.

The main Hebrew word used for patience is סְבִלְנוּת, 'savlanut,' the root of which is סָבַל, 'sevel,' literally meaning 'to suffer' or 'bear hardship.' The idea of patience as a virtue is to bear something unpleasant or painful without increasing the suffering. Still, as many will attest, this can be difficult when dealing with contentions or difficulties between us and others. Although retaliating and expressing frustration or anger provides us with an instant feeling of relief, the damage it can cause to the relationship is too significant for that relief to be justified. If the example of the Messiah is to be followed thoroughly, we should be willing to suffer patiently to the point of death. Still, by putting others' needs ahead of our own, we allow more space for God to work in the situation.



When we stop, remain silent, and express patience in times of strife, we can learn so much more than when we are just reacting through our flawed instincts, and the more that we take understanding from the situations that require patience, the wiser we become in dealing with things later, the more effective we become in resolving conflicts and ultimately the stronger an expression of righteousness we demonstrate to the people

around us. In an argument, the resolution is much more difficult if there is no space for someone to express themselves. Even if the thing being described is not necessarily 'that big of a deal, it is

a sign of something greater going on beneath the surface that needs addressing and without the patience being given to that person to allow them to fully express themselves if we keep jumping in over them with our opinions, we may never learn what it is that is truly bothering that person and so never find out what needs to be resolved, restored or repaired. As an old expression goes, “the more silent we become, the more we can hear,” and this applies especially when we should be listening to the voice of God for guidance. Patience is a source of wisdom and spiritual growth and will help us more effectively lead people to God (Proverbs 16:32-33, Ecclesiastes 7:8-9).

Further to being an essential element in dealing with conflict, though, patience as an expression of love is a truly vital force and not only helps bring resolution to problematic or challenging situations (Proverbs 15:18) but can help strengthen our relationships and increase the love between us (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Ephesians 4:1-4). Patience can help elevate those in a dark or vulnerable place, who need patience more than opinions or expressions of frustration (Colossians 3:12, 1 Timothy 1:12-16). By showing patience in a challenging situation, we help postpone judgment and ultimately express the word of YHWH in the kinds of moments in which His light shines brightest between us (2 Timothy 4:2). Patience allows us to focus on our pathway to deliverance, rather than the things that obstruct our way and become more assertive in spirit and faith so that, through increasing the positive relationships we have in our lives, we can point more people towards God, planting seeds into the lives of others and laying solid foundations for the Kingdom.

Ultimately, suppose we wish to carry the name of God to others and share the Gospel of Messiah. In that case, we must show godly and Christ-like characteristics, and expressing patience is one of God's most prominent characteristics (Numbers 14:18, Isaiah 48:9, Nehemiah 9:28-30, Psalm 86:15, 103:8, 145:8, Joel 2:13, Romans 15:5, etc.). This characteristic was emphasized in the teachings of Yeshua as something that would bring the power of healing to the world unlike any other, going so far as to say that even our enemies must be recipients of such patience, breaking down the barriers between Jew and Gentile and revealing that the Kingdom of God is for all who would seek to shine His glorious light into a darkened world (Matthew 5:38-48, Luke 6:27-42), which was then further emphasized by His apostles in their mission to carry this *Good News* to the world (Romans 12:17-19, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Peter 3:8).

In practical terms, patience can be a complex character to develop. Still, there are ways we can modify our behavior so that we can express it better and more clearly in the situations that require it for any positive resolution. After all, God does not simply give us patience when we act. Still, the opportunities to express patience, so we must think consciously about how we can work in such a situation before we find ourselves in it. We must teach ourselves to be able to wait, even for little things, like allowing someone to go ahead of you in a queue or not cutting corners for the sake of time, so that we can practice having patience in all matters, making it easier to apply it when it is needed. This will help us show love and respect for the other person and give us the strength to remain silent to allow them to fully express themselves, especially when it is something that is frustrating us or triggering negative reactive emotions within us; then we will hear the other person's perspective completely before rendering a judgment so that our responses are not based on incomplete information; we should ALWAYS assume that we are missing information. It is crucial in these moments that we allow space for the other person, even

allowing them to be broken for the time being, because it is not always our place to fix something and forcing it may end up causing more damage. Taking a step back from trying to resolve everything now is about being able to accept our present circumstances and give them over into the Hands of God, who knows much better than we ever could what is true and what is needed in any given moment.

Only when we accept God's will in our lives and relinquish our need for control will we find our lives falling into the rhythm of the Kingdom and being elevated, but this requires us to consciously surrender ourselves in humility and elevate others, just as Yeshua Messiah did on the cross. Patience is a powerful force and a characteristic that will bring almost supernatural healing to moments of contention, strife, and pain. Still, it requires us to be walking in the Ways of God and genuinely seeking after His Heart so that, combined with the other *Fruits of the Spirit*, we can be the lamps that light the way to glory for the ones still trapped in a dark and unforgiving world. Living in such a way will focus our work in preparing for the Kingdom and allow us to be sources of God's love now for those who need compassion and patience more than judgment and contention, just as we did before we were lifted, healed, and given eternal life by the loving hand of our Father in Heaven through the work of Messiah. If we claim to love God and our Master Yeshua, then we ought to walk as He walked, and that starts with humility, patience, compassion, and love for those who need it the most.

Shalom,

Jim Staley