

Alpha Counseling Service

April

20730 Bond Rd/Suite 108
Poulsbo WA 98370/360.779.3624
Email go to Website: alphapoulsbo.org

2015

Dear Friends,

If you are a regular reader of my musings you know my theme this year is about the attitudes we display all day every day. This month I am focusing on one of the most important attitudes, in my opinion, which is not popular in Christian circles.

PATIENCE.

The dictionary defines it clearly as:

1. the quality of being **patient**, as the **bearing** of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, **without complaint, loss of temper, irritation, or the like.**
2. an **ability or willingness** to suppress restlessness or annoyance when confronted with delay: to have patience with a slow learner.
3. quiet, steady perseverance; even-tempered care; diligence: to work with patience.

I am always surprised to hear Christians 'brag' about not being patience. I don't think they know they are bragging but they are often indifferent, proud, or unwilling to own their being short tempered. Now do not misunderstand me. I have not arrived at the qualities listed above but, I am not pleased when showing impatience. This morning I was rather 'short' with Debi, who thankfully confronted me, and I apologized. My impatience usually is expressed in harsh verbal tones even though the words used can be neutral in nature.

What saddens me is the misguided advice given by some Christians when they encourage people to not pray for patience because it brings 'tribulation or trouble'.

James 1:2-3 *ESV* **Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.**

The Greek for steadfastness is-cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, consistence:-enduring, patience, patient continuance.

Here is my view of this error in teaching people to not pray for patience. Yes, learning patience does require the suffering of trouble but having gone through the necessary struggles brings you to a new quietness where many of the old issues that 'pushed you over the edge' no longer bother you. Minor examples can be slow checkout lines, traffic, or possibly the person who doesn't understand your explanation of some technical point at work or home. Patience allows you to no longer pound the steering wheel or use that unpleasant tone. The alternative is that without patience these things never stop bothering you and instead of suffering until you acquire some patience you just keep being miserable at every problem and slowdown.

You just keep suffering!

I have prayed for patience and for me it was seven years before I noticed a lasting difference in what causes me to get irritated. Although I have never perfected patience I am more sensitive to the times I react badly and am more eager to make amends.

Can we really claim to be a victorious Christian and have no patience? Ephesians 4:1-2 ***I therefore,...urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility, and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.***

Colossians 1:10-11 ***...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.***

Colossians 3:12 ***Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.***

*Thank you for praying for Alpha, Debi, and me.
God Bless,*

Richard