

DEFINITION

- patience is being angry for a long period of time without avenging yourself or punishing others
- a precise definition exists in the etymology of the Greek word: *makrothumeo* is composed of the adjective *makros* 'long (time)' and the verb *thumoo* 'to be angry'—literally patience is 'to be angry for a long period of time'
 - e.g., the slave in the Parable of the Unmerciful Slave recognizes the king has a right to be angry and asks him, not to stop being angry, but to stretch out his anger awhile longer to provide an opportunity to repay his debt (Matt 18:23–27)
 - when you ask someone to be patient with you, you're not asking them to quit being angry; you're asking them to continue being angry for a longer period of time without retaliating
 - patience does not require an absence of anger because anger is an emotion and not a sin (Eph 4:26)
- this word group is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew expression 'long or slow to anger' (*'orek appayim* or *'erek appayim*)
 - patience is righteous indignation waiting for repentance, restitution, or punishment (1 Pet 3:19–20)
 - patience implies you have been wronged in some way and are justifiably angry
 - the prophets (James 5:10) and the apostle Paul (2 Tim 3:10) had this kind of patience

GOD'S PATIENCE

- God is very patient with sinners (Rom 2:4; 9:22; 1 Pet 3:19–20; 2 Pet 3:8–9)
 - Jesus Christ has perfect patience (1 Tim 1:16; cf. 2 Pet 3:15)
- to be patient is to defer punishment to give unbelievers more time to repent
 - but patience doesn't wait forever; it sets a time for punishment
- e.g., God set a limit on how long he would wait for the antediluvian civilization to repent (comp. Gen 6:3 with 1 Pet 3:20)
- we also have a right to decide how long we're willing to wait before punishing those under our authority—especially children

PATIENCE IS A MENTAL ATTITUDE

- patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit—the fourth most important attitude produced by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22)
 - patience exists in the heart (Col 3:12)
 - put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Col 3:12; cf. 2 Cor 6:6):
patience is a choice, an act of the will: if it has been produced in your heart you can put it on and take it off like clothing

OUR PATIENCE

- be patient with all men (1 Thess 5:14)
- being patient is a part of walking worthy of your calling (Eph 4:2; Col 1:11)—walking and being patient everywhere you go
 - pastors need patience in reproof, rebuking, and exhorting their sheep (2 Tim 4:2)
 - love is patient (1 Cor 13:4):
love provides a reasonable length of time for repentance because it doesn't want anyone to suffer punishment
 - patience is pure grace—offenders deserve punishment, not patience
 - wait patiently for God to keep His promises (Heb 6:15)
 - be patient until the coming of the Lord (James 5:7–8)—
a farmer, despite setbacks, waits patiently and confidently for the harvest (James 5:7)