



# Family Values

## Virtue Realities

### Patience

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For openers, I need to confess that I don't do patience well. As a matter of fact, when I am in a check-out line at a department store and the clerk is busy with another customer, without fail the salesperson will turn to me and say: "I will be right with you." Even though I am not saying anything, on some level I seem to communicate my impatience. In most cases I am not even aware of being in a hurry.

Patience is the ability to let things unfold without taking control. It also involves steadfastness and endurance. The writer to the Hebrews in 12:1,2 states: *Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus . . . who . . . endured the cross.*" Jesus is the model for our own patient endurance since he was obedient unto death. He responded to the impatience of others with compassion and reserve. Note His response to Mary, his mother, when at the wedding at Cana she informs him that there is no more wine: *"My hour has not yet come."* In other words, "Be patient!"

Of all his disciples, Peter was probably the most impetuous and impatient. He blurted words out without thinking, jumped into the Sea of Galilee and began sinking and promised his unqualified support only to deny his allegiance three times claiming: *"I do not know the man."* Yet Jesus patiently endured Peter's impulsiveness, occasionally calling him to account. When one of the disciples cut off the ear of the high priest's slave after a group came to seize him, Jesus puts the ear back and heals the slave, insisting: *"No more of this!"* He opts to follow God's plan, even though he earlier had asked the Father to *"remove this cup from me."*

Patience is actually a prerequisite for tolerance. When mixed with self-righteousness, lack of tolerance leads to rage whether on the highway, in the workplace, in the supermarket or at home between husband and wife. As a matter of fact, patience is not encouraged

within our society. We are in such a hurry much of the time that we frequently fail to show consideration for others and sacrifice our patience to get ahead or to cover up our own feelings of insecurity. Patience, on the other hand, allows us to simultaneously care and remain focused.

The following are some suggestions for putting patience into practice:

1. **Pray for patience.** Given our "harried" life styles, patience is needed to provide us a sense of balance. Patience is one of the gifts of the Spirit.
2. **Think before you act.** Do not feel compelled to make a decision or a commitment on the spot. Give yourself time. Thinking through a situation may reduce regrets and prevent mistakes.
3. **Wait to get what you want.** Give yourself time to realize your dreams. Aspire for what's right over what's expedient.
4. **Teach your children patience.** Help them to understand the importance of delaying self-gratification for the long-term benefit. We don't need everything right now, even though advertisers insist otherwise.
5. **Set goals and stick to them.** Persevere in what you set out to do. Do not let yourself get sidetracked.
6. **Let go and let God.** Recognize what is in your control and what is beyond your control. Keep your sense of humor when you fail to tell the difference.

Affirmation: Today I will stop and smell the flowers.

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