

Patience is a virtue! The reason we say this is because patience does not always come naturally or easily. It is a very good thing to have and yet it is not always easy to have it and display it to others.

We often think of patience (or being patient) as something benign, calm or serene, but the dictionary definitions imply that pain, trials, adversity and strain may also be involved. In the dictionary, "patience" has several meanings:

- 1) bearing pains or trials calmly and without complaining,
- 2) not being hasty or impetuous,
- 3) being steadfast despite opposition or adversity, and
- 4) showing forbearance under provocation or strain.

None of these definitions sound easy. They involve pain, opposition, adversity, forbearance or provocation. These words remind us why patience is a virtue ... because patience is only required and displayed under pressure. Anyone can be patient when there is nothing requiring patience!

I have often heard it said that the one things we should never pray for is patience. Why is this? I believe it is because patience can only be developed under those types of circumstances that would require it. This would seem to imply that patience can be developed.

Patience: Nature or Nurture

There is often a question asked about one's personality or character. It is the question of whether we are the way we are because of nature or nurture? What do you think? Is who we are more a product of our nature (the DNA we got from our parents) or nurture (the environment in which we have lived)?

Do you think that patience comes naturally (i.e. something you have as a child) or is patience something that we develop as we mature?

Patience ... lost.

We all lose our patience from time to time. If patience can in part be developed, then in order to develop it we have to know and be honest about what makes us lose our patience. What are some of the situations in which you lose your patience? Do these situations more often involve things or people?

A BIG Problem

There seems to be many things that can make us lose our patience. Does today's society as a whole encourage patience or impatience?

What about in your personal life? Do the situations and people around you encourage patience or impatience? How?

Simple Solutions!

The reality is we cannot control all the situations or people around us. However we can control our reactions to them. Whichever side you came down on in the nature verses nurture debate, I think we can all agree that we can, at least in part, control whether we are patient or impatient. To a large extent we can choose the situations we routinely get in. To some degree we can choose the people that we allow to have an impact on us. Almost always we can choose our reactions to people and situations. What are some ways we can choose to develop patience in our lives? Give some solid examples of situations or areas in which you have chosen to develop patience. How did you develop it? What steps or changes did you have to make?
