

Day 4

Patience

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”* Romans 12:12

Discussion Paul has just encouraged the Church of Rome to conform their minds to Christ, use their gifts to build the Church, and love each other. Then Paul says, *“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”* Afflictions happen in life. They are not necessarily a sign that something is wrong with our faith. Certainly, the Bible is clear that following Christ has difficulties, sometimes even serious or life threatening ones. Afflictions are real, but the joy of our hope of Jesus’ return and faithfully, continually turning to God in prayer give us strength. When faced with afflictions we may be tempted to complain, run away from them, think we are too important to deal with them, stop loving or serving others because we are focused on ourselves, isolate ourselves, or speak and behave in ways that make someone else feel as bad as we do. Instead, we are to be patient in the midst of afflictions. We live out that patience by relying on our hope and prayer, and following Paul’s next directions, *“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath..If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”* (Romans 12:13-21). Patience, as Paul’s directions indicate, is not merely enduring silently, but involves a lot of initiative and action. When we experience afflictions we lean on our hope and prayer, and take the active initiative of demonstrating patience.

Application Consider what your immediate reaction when going through trials in this life. Exercising patience through prayer, overlooking an offense, or even simply waiting before giving an answer to a tough question can be difficult in a fast-paced world where everyone reacts instantly. Ask God to help you today to think before you react and to exercise patience in all that you do.

Prayer Father, thank You for my hope of Jesus’ return. Thank You that I can talk with You in prayer, that You want me to talk and listen to You. Thank You that You want to hear about my afflictions. Father, please help me to be patient in my afflictions, but not by simply enduring. Please help me to be patient while loving and building up the Church, responding to people as You do, and showing mercy to my neighbor. Thank You Father, for Your mercy and grace to me. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”*
James 1:19-20