

The Marks of the Mature Christian (Part Four)

Examining Paul's Pastoral Prayer in Colossians 1:9-14

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Colossians 1:9-14 "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Review of Part One - Three

Distinguishing Mark #1 A Full Life...that is filled with the life-changing knowledge and wisdom to follow God's perfect will for our lives.

Distinguishing Mark #2. An Exemplary Life...that walks and talks so much like Jesus that others want to imitate us.

Distinguishing Mark #3. A Pleasing Life...that delights God by doing anything He calls us to do when He calls us to do it.

Distinguishing Mark #4. A Fruitful Life...that never stops working and serving the King of Kings.

Distinguishing Mark #5 A Growing Life...that increases daily in the knowledge of God.

Distinguishing Mark #6 A Powerful Life...that demonstrates God's strength and not our own.

Now in Part Four

Distinguishing Mark #7 A Steadfast Life...that endures life's circumstances without giving up.

- Col. 1:11 "...for the attaining of all steadfastness (endurance)..."
- 2 Tim 3:1 "...in the last days difficult (Greek: chalepos = perilous/dangerous/fierce/violent) times will come.
steadfastness = Greek: hupomone = endurance/patience in difficult circumstance
- Hupomone speaks of the ability to stay under something without buckling from the weight of it. It doesn't avoid painful circumstances; it learns through them. It never gives up. It is the mark of the truly mature believer.
- Heb. 12:1 "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance (i.e. hupomone) the race that is set before us,"
- 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not despairing, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed..."
- Luke 21:19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives."
- 2 Cor. 1:6 "patient enduring" = hupomone hupomone = enduring endurance, steadfast steadfastness Heb. 10:36 says it well
- Hebrews 10:36 "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."

Enduring Principle #1. We learn steadfastness from God

- Rom. 15:5 "...God who gives perseverance..."
- 2 Thess. 3:5 "May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness (hupomone) of Christ."

The Son of God is the ultimate example of endurance!

- Heb. 12:2 "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross..."

Enduring Principle #2. We learn steadfastness in the midst of our own trials.

- 2 Cor. 6:4 "...in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses..."
- Rom. 5:3-4 "...we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance (hupomone); and perseverance (hupomone), proven character; and proven character, hope..."
- James 1:3-4 "...knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (hupomone). And let endurance (hupomone) have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Enduring Principle #3. We learn steadfastness from others.

- Heb. 12:1 "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance (hupomone) the race that is set before us..."
- Job 1:21 "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." — Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him."
- James 5:11 "Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance (hupomone) of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."
- 2 Cor. 1:6 "But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring (hupomone hupomone) of the same sufferings which we also suffer".

Endurance is highly contagious! So is whining!

Enduring Principle #4. Steadfastness is hindered by sin

- Heb. 12:1 "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance (hupomone) the race that is set before us."
- 2 Pet. 1:6 "...and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance (hupomone), and in your perseverance (hupomone), godliness..."

Materialism...the love of money...stifles endurance.

- 1 Tim. 6:6-11 "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance (Greek: hupomone) and gentleness."

Distinguishing Mark #8 A Patient Life...that refuses to let people's shortcomings get in the way of our Christ-likeness.

- Col. 1:11 "...for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience..."
- patience: Greek: makrothumia/long-suffering/slow to anger/not quick-tempered
hupomone = steadfastness in circumstance; makrothumia = patience with people
- Prov. 14:29 "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly"

Operational Definition #1. True patience is a heart issue.

- Ecc. 7:8-9 "Patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit. Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools."

Operational Definition #2. True patience is looking beyond other people's shortcomings.

- Prov. 19:11 "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression."

Operational Definition #3. True patience is refusing to take revenge.

- Matt. 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers..."
- Matt. 5:38 "You have heard that it was said 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.; But I say to you, 'do not resist him who is evil, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.'"
- Matt. 5:40 "If anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt let him have your coat also"
- Matt. 5:41 "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two."
- Matt. 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Principles for Learning Patience Toward Others

Principle #1. God's Word commands us to be patient with others.

- 1 Thess. 5:14 "...be patient with all men."
- 2 Tim. 4:2 "...reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

Principle #2. God's power makes it possible for us to be patient with others.

- Col. 1:11 "...strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience..."
"I have the power to be patient!"

Principle #3. God's patience motivates us to be patient with others.

- 2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you . . ."
- 1 Tim. 1:16 "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

Principle #4. Christ's return motivates us to be patient with others.

- James 5:8 "You too be patient . . . for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Principle #5. We have examples that motivates us to be patient with others.

- cf. Hebrews 6:12

Principle #6 The love of God motivates us to be patient with others.

- Col. 3:12 "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Greek: makrothumia)..."
- Gal. 5:22 "...the fruit of the Spirit is . . . patience . . ."

Concluding Challenge:

- 2 Tim. 3:10 "But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience (makrothumia), love, perseverance (hupomone)"