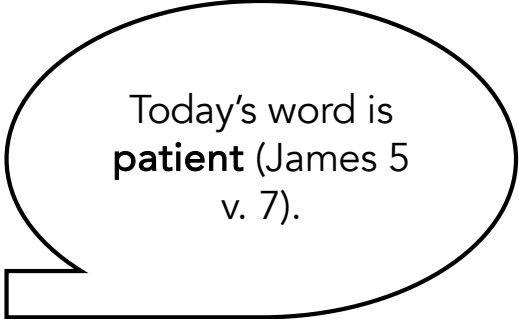


Wednesday 21st February

When unfair treatment comes our way, not only are you to think a certain way, but you are to act a certain way. Christians are to respond to suffering with **patience**.



Today's word is **patient** (James 5 v. 7).

Read: James 5:7-8

See how thinking right can lead to acting right? When your thoughts about God are as they should be, your actions can be what they should be too.

It's tough to be patient when we aren't thinking right. We tend to respond as if we are the only ones who care about how we are treated. Our first response is to take matters into our own hands.

If we are honest, we LOVE to take matters into our own hands. We want things made right. It's tough to be patient when you think you're the only one who cares about how you're being treated.

God tells us:

He is the avenger of justice who is fully aware and knows everything.

Jesus is coming again soon, and we need to look forward to that day.

When Jesus returns, He will bring reward for the righteous and judgement for the unrighteous. We need to remember that Jesus is coming back! The coming of the Lord is near!

Consider and Pray: What situations do you find difficult to be patient in? Pray for patience.

Thursday 22nd February

Read Romans 12:16-19. Consider how this changes the way you think about your response to others?

Thoughts: We are such impatient people, aren't we? We expect to get the things we want the second we want them! We want fast food to be faster. We want information right away and get annoyed when the WIFI is slow. We want next day or even same day delivery, even if it's shipping across the country. We want movies and TV shows to instantly stream the moment we want to watch them. We don't want to wait in lines at restaurants, at or the supermarket.

We are a culture of instant food, instant fun, and some people what 'Instagram'. As believers, sometimes we get impatient. We want God's judgement to come right now. We want justice immediately. But God's timing is different from ours.

Thankfully God is a lot more patient, and we must learn to wait on God's timing. James thinks we need an example. Consider the farmer in this quote. "These are my people. I come from the farmlands of middle England, a vast land of

farmers. Acres and acres of fields that grow corn, wheat, potatoes, carrots, ...and pumpkins. I understand James's example here when he describes the patience of the farmer. They wait for the rain. They wait for the sun. They wait for the Lord. There is nothing a farmer can do to make it rain. No dance, no songs, no magic beans to make their crops grow. We too must wait for the day when the Lord returns. We must be patient, recognizing that it is out of our control. Sometimes the farmers lose the crop because there is no rain, and sometimes there is too much rain. Farmers aren't in control. We aren't in control. God is in control! We must patiently wait for the Lord's return when He will bring justice."

Activity: Now, what do you think patience looks like in the daily life of a Christian? Does Romans 8:31-39 change the way you think about it?

James doesn't want us just sitting around waiting! That's not what being patient is about. We are to be patient, but also establish our hearts. James wants you to strengthen your heart...and I love this word. This is a word about commitment!

Firm up your heart / Strengthen it / Recommit your heart to Christ! And for those of you paying attention, you know that is the theme of this letter that James has written.

We talk like this because there are going to be times when you want to quit! God wants you to know that when things get tough... take time to pray ... to talk to Jesus when the tough times come.

Friday 23rd February

Read James 5: 9

Thoughts: James says we need to think right. We need to remember who God is and what He has promised to do. We need to put our hope in Him and recognise that He is coming back. Be fixed in our mind on God rather than this short life. God wants us to act right. He wants us to be patient when things get tough. But He also wants us to keep going. He wants us to keep doing good. He wants us to strengthen our hearts. He wants you to be even more committed to Him in our faith. He wants us to fix our hearts on holiness, doing what is right and resisting that which isn't.

The judge is standing at the door, verse 9 says. There is nothing in the Bible that needs to happen in order for Jesus to return. That means He is nearer today than yesterday. We are closer to Christ's return now...closer than we have ever been!

Read John 14:1-4, Jesus gave some comforting words to his disciples. Does the idea of Jesus' return encourage or discourage you? Why? Are you surprised that James couldn't get through something without mentioning words and the way you talk?

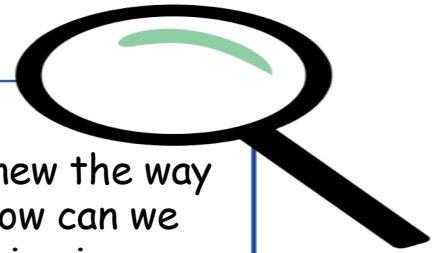
Not only is patience an issue of our heart, it's also an issue of our speech. We are warned not to grumble in verse 9. Especially towards one another. If you think about it, it's obvious that tough times promote complaining. When times are hard, it is sooooo easy to complain. It is so easy to grumble about everything going on. It's even easy to grumble about one another. It's easy to complain when your life seems really hard, Whwh and everyone else's life seems like sunshine and skittles. Don't grumble when suffering comes! Pray for strength of endurance.

Saturday 24th February

Let's end this week by digging a little deeper

Diggin' Deeper

In John 14, Jesus said that the disciples knew the way to where Jesus was going. Thomas asked, how can we know the way? Read verses 6-7 and summarize in your own words what Jesus is saying.



Put It into Practice!

It's easy to complain when we compare ourselves to others. As we grow in our commitment to Christ, we are to patiently wait on the Lord's timing and not grumble about the things happening in our lives. Why? Because God's will is perfect. What is something you can practically do today to be more patient as you trust in God's will for your life?

Pray: It's good to thank God for how He is working in your life. Spend time today praising Him for how He has been teaching you through His Word these last few weeks. Ask for forgiveness for the ways in which you haven't been thinking or acting right. Ask God to help you believe in Him if you aren't saved. If you are, let Him know how thankful you are!

