

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” – Galatians 6:9-10*

I’m not a good driver. No, I don’t speed, and I’m not dangerous. I don’t swerve around or change lanes without my signal. I’m actually pretty conscientious behind the wheel according to my car insurance’s new app. But I’m not a “good” driver. When I am in my car, my gut reaction is to be selfish. I get pushy behind slow drivers. I get angry with selfish drivers (yes, I am fully aware of this irony, thank you very much). And while I’m very safe, I’m not always “good”. I’m working on it, but I can safely say I am an Impatient Driver.

You know what helps me most when I realize I’m getting impatient and want to change? Thinking of bible characters, actually. When I am going to miss that green light because “this guy” is driving 5 miles UNDER the speed limit, I stop and think of Joshua and Caleb, having to wait for 40 years to see the Promised Land because of their dim-witted neighbors. I think of Simeon having to wait literally a lifetime to see the Messiah he was promised to see. And I think of Abraham, promised that he would be the father of nations and multitudes, only to wait 25 years to see his first legitimate son.

There is a very good reason Paul included Patience as one of the Fruit of the Spirit. Patience is all about spiritual health. But impatience is an incredibly potent poison of the spirit. It doesn’t hit us quick and hard like anger or lust. It takes its time and sneaks up on us. What begins as joyful service slowly slides toward weary obedience, and then continues on to disgruntled duty, and then finally ends in angry defiance. When we don’t see quick results, or a very bright light at the end of a very short tunnel, we find impatience waiting for us with his friends anger and bitterness.

We are at this stage today here in COVIDland. People are starting to dismiss both their government’s guidelines and their common sense. What was heroic sacrifice staying indoors to care for our vulnerable population but a month ago has become righteous defiance of government control today. I’ve seen more groups meeting, visiting, and even playing basketball (yes, full contact) in the last week than in the last 2 months before it. And do you know the cause? Impatience. We are impatient with the guidelines, and impatient with our leaders. We are impatient with those making the vaccine and impatient with each other.

I’ve been saying a lot recently that doing good is easy, but *continuing* to do good is really, really hard. Whether it is caring for an ailing loved one, putting up with our family’s quirks, or dealing with an aging body and mind, life always requires patience, and that means not just doing good, but *continuing* to do good. We just have to think of those who have gone before us with patience, and then turn and look forward with hope to the harvest Paul promises, a harvest of Fruit of the Spirit.

Questions to ponder:

Which bible story comes to mind when you think of someone who had patience? How might you remember them this week when impatience threatens?

What is an area of life when you find yourself regularly getting impatient? Family? Work? Church? Self? How might you encourage yourself to be more patient in that area this week?

What specific harvest might you reap if you continue to do good? How can that encourage you right now?