

## **Lesson #4 – Patience and Kindness: A ministry of grace**

<sup>1</sup> *I waited patiently for the LORD to help me,  
and he turned to me and heard my cry.*

Psalm 40:1

*...And let us run with perseverance the race God has set before us.*

Heb. 12:1

<sup>19</sup> *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen,  
slow to speak and slow to become angry,*

James 1:19

### **Part I: Patience - The Art of Waiting**

#### ***In Part I of this Lesson we Consider***

- *The definition of patience*
- *Qualities of a patient ministry*
  1. *Tolerant of human failings*
  2. *Calm in the face of personal offenses*
  3. *Discrete in verbal expression*
  4. *Adopts a long term perspective*

#### **What is patience?**

#### ***Patience – the Art of Waiting***

- **Possessing a “long fuse”:** *The Greek word for patience is “Macromuthia”- Long burn*
- **Comparison: “Shock absorbers” - of a car**

**Definition:** *Patience is the art of waiting. Perseverance. The capacity to absorb negativity or setbacks without giving up. Following a process through to completion.*

#### ***Wait a minute!***

#### ***Being patient is not...***

- *Never getting angry*
- *Repressing anger .... which results in outbursts, depression or resentment.*
- *Tolerating injustice or abuse*

#### ***Being patient means hitting the “pause button” and waiting before ...***

- *Condemning someone*
- *Drawing conclusions*
- *Getting angry over a perceived slight*
- *Speaking*
- *Giving up*

Think of a situation in your ministry which tests your patience. What is it? Be specific.

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### ***Example of a Patient Ministry***

#### ***Cell Leader: Peter the Patient***

Peter's cell group started small, but grew quickly. After the initial enthusiasm wore off, however, he was left with three or four regular attendees. After months of these tiny gatherings, even these faithful few started wondering if the group would ever truly get off the ground. "Why keep coming?" they started wondering. "It's just not working." Some evenings Peter would be alone with Joe, his co-leader, but Peter kept thoroughly preparing his Bible study and worship songs every week as if he were ministering to a great throng. He made his calls to the group members and potential visitors every week, and separated every Tuesday to fast and pray. After all this, Joe also left the group, and fell into a sinful situation.

In spite of his natural discouragement, *Peter decided to keep on moving forward*. After another several months of small, but faithful gatherings, the group gradually began to grow. First two or three new people started visiting, and then an entire family joined the group. Around that time Joe reached out to Peter, embarrassed and ashamed, asking if perhaps he could visit again. The other members of the group still resented him for leaving the group, but Peter decided to give him another chance. He spent a year supporting Joe, meeting regularly, and going over the materials from Discipleship level #2 again with him (sanctification and inner healing). Little by little, Joe started feeling "like himself again" in the Lord, and Peter decided to give him some chances to participate in different aspects of the ministry.

Peter's patience and perseverance has been richly rewarded. Another year has passed and the group has grown to a regular attendance of about fifteen members on a weekly basis. Last month they launched a new group in a neighboring town – *with Joe as the leader!*

How do we observe patience in Peter's ministry?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Heart Check: *Does your ministry reflect patience?*

- Are you quick to say, “off with his head!” when someone gets in your way?
- When a brother or sister fails you in some way, are you willing to give them a second (or a third) chance?
- Do you find yourself beginning projects, losing interest, and moving on to the next thing before the first project is fully established?
- Do you get discouraged easily when things don’t enjoy quick success?
- Have you ever followed through on a long term project that takes years to develop?
- When someone annoys you, do you have a hard time biting your tongue?
- Do you easily let perceived offenses roll off your back?
- Do you often get frustrated with the incompetence of those around you?

***Time to learn how to wait!***

## Qualities of the Patient Minister

### 1. Tolerant of the failings and imperfections of others

- *Waits before drawing conclusions or judgments*
- *Gives a second (third, fourth...) chance to those who fail*
- *Does not easily “chop off heads”*

### 2. Generous when offended

- *Waits before getting angry*
- *Has a long fuse*
- *Gives the benefit of the doubt*
- *Has a thick skin – not overly sensitive*
- *Has a soft heart – compassionate, tender, and forgiving*

### 3. Discrete in speaking

- *Uses an internal “pause” button before speaking his thoughts.*

### 4. Adopts a long term perspective

- *Waits before calling it quits*
- *Does not become easily discouraged when facing setbacks*



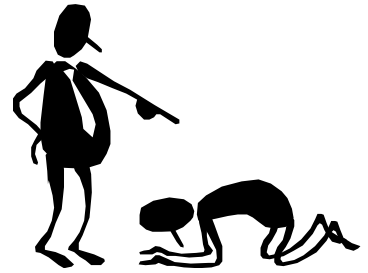
## 1. The Patient minister is tolerant of the failings and imperfections of others .... Waits before drawing conclusions and judgments

*The patient minister knows that God is patient with us!*

*Parable of the sterile fruit tree:*

<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

<sup>8</sup> “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-9



*The Lord is patient, allowing time for people to repent*

<sup>8</sup> But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:8-9

Do we really know that God is patient with us – that if it were not for His unfathomable patience we would already be in hell?

Note down a specific way that God has been patient with you.

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**We are usually quick to declare, “Off with his head!”**

*The case of Paul and John Mark*

<sup>37</sup> Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, <sup>38</sup> but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. <sup>39</sup> They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. Acts 15:37-40

A young man named Mark had failed Paul and Barnabas during one of their missionary journeys. When Barnabas wanted to give the kid another chance, Paul preferred not take the chance, so Barnabas and Paul parted company. Thank God Barnabas chose not to declare, “off with his head,” because this young man ended up becoming a great man of God -- who wrote the “gospel of Mark!”

Think of a situation in the recent past in which you had opportunity to give a second chance to someone who had failed in

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## 2. The patient minister doesn't overreact when offended in some way

*Waits before getting angry*

### A long fuse: .... *slow to become angry*

<sup>19</sup> *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, James 1:19*

- How long is your fuse?
- Do you give a second chance to the person who annoys you?



### A thick skin: ... *not overly sensitive to personal offenses*

- How do you respond to annoyances when others “step on your toes?”
- What do you do when someone “looks at you funny?”

### A soft heart: ... *forgives easily*

*“A Fool. Shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult” Prov. 12:16*

Mention a recent annoyance that you needed to forgive in some sort of ministry situation.

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## 3. The Patient Minister is discrete in his or her speech

*Think before speaking!*

*... but the one who has understanding holds their tongue. Proverbs 11:12b*

Spanish - “... *el hombre prudente calla.*”

*Ask the Lord to install an “editor” – a delay switch – between our minds and mouths!*

<sup>3</sup> *Set a guard over my mouth, LORD;  
keep watch over the door of my lips. Psalm 141:3*



***Before speaking, sift it through the “Three Filters”***

Review: What are the “three filters” (From lesson #9, Level III)? These are three questions we can ask ourselves before verbalizing a thought.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. The Patient Minister assumes a long term perspective –  
*He waits before giving up!***

***Some processes take time and cannot be rushed!***

- *Pregnancy*
- *Growth of an Oak tree*
- *Discipleship of a new believer*
- *Change of life-long patterns*
- *Earning trust with others*

***Every ministry will experience cycles – “ups and downs”***

- People will leave your cell group
- Kids will “act out” in Sunday School
- People will complain – even about us!
- A song will be out of tune, even after focused rehearsal



Mention a “dip” or setback which you have experienced in ministry, tempting you to quit.

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***What do you do when you experience a “dip?” Do you call it quits?***

***The Perseverance of Job***

*<sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. James 5:10-11*

How can Job’s story encourage and inspire us to have patience and persevere?

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***Ministerial work requires patience***

*<sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2*

Do you sometimes feel like giving up on your ministry? Why? In your personal experience, what specific things make you feel like quitting?

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**Review Questions**

Define “patience.” 

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Patience is not...

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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Mention some distinguishing characteristics of the patient minister

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean to have a “thick skin and a soft heart?”

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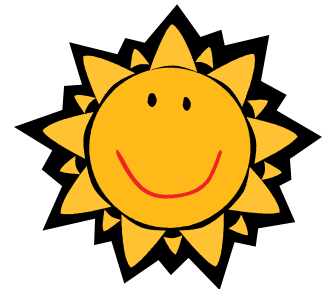
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## Part II: Kindness – *the power of a positive person*

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32*

*In this lesson we consider...*

- *How kindness can brighten a ministry?*
- *The kind ministry vs. the toxic ministry*
- *How to cultivate kindness in the daily process of ministry*



**God is kind!**

*But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Luke 6:35*

<sup>45</sup> *that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:45*

<sup>4</sup> *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Romans 2:4*

Based on the verses above, list some ways God expresses His kindness for humanity every day.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



***Definition of Kindness:*** Transmit positive concern for others. A sweet, gentle and benevolent disposition towards others. “Positive vibes.”

***Kindness is...***

- What we demonstrate in traffic!
- How we represent Christ as his ambassador
- Respect for all – without prejudice
- Extending courtesy to others, even those which test our patience
- Showing genuine interest and concern for others
- Being diplomatic – expressing opinions and criticisms in a merciful and balanced way

***Heart Check: Do you minister with the kindness of the Holy Spirit?***

- Do people seek out your company as a positive, pleasant person?
- Do you “call ‘em like you see ‘em,” expressing yourself in tactless, cutting and even cruel ways at times?
- Do you have a hard time letting another vehicle into traffic ahead of you?
- Do you take time to listen to others, or do you interrupt?
- When you have opportunity to deal with a potentially conflictive person, do you know how to “win them over” by earning their trust, and diffusing their negativity?
- ...Or do you tend to “light the fuse” of such potentially negative people?
- Do you look down on someone who smells bad because of living on the streets?
- When you meet a person with significant wealth or social influence, do you tend to treat them better than a “normal” person?
- Do you think of gestures of concern for others every now and then? (gifts, a call, a card?)
- Do you make an effort to remember names?
- Do you genuinely express concern for the families of others?
- Do you find ways to pass along negative information about some people, subtly undermining the esteem others might have for them?
- Do you genuinely express concern for your partners in ministry beyond their specifically ministry-related roles?
- When you are annoyed, does it show?
- Do you invest concentrated attention and energy into listening to others?

***Mmmmmmm, kindness sweetens life!***



## Qualities of a kind minister

1. ***Respect, Respect, Respect, Respect*** – the key to kindness
2. *The kind minister ameliorates (smoothes out) the natural frictions in ministry relationships*
3. *The kind minister represents the kingdom in a winsome way (ambassador of the kingdom)*

### 1. The kind minister respects others

For you, what does it mean to show respect?

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#### *Elements of Respect*

- *Value* each person as being made in the image and likeness of God
- *No favoritism* (or preferential treatment) based on race, gender, or social status
- *Honor* each person as if he or she were Jesus himself in disguise
- *Validate* the feelings and needs of each person
- *Remember the price* with which each individual has been purchased for God – that each person is “worth” the blood of Jesus
- *Courtesy*
- *Take into account the opinions, feelings and rights of others*
- *Listen to others*, recognizing the value of their perspective

#### **Read Mark 10:46-52** – *The Case of Bartimaeus – Respect for the blind beggar on the street!*

Ironically, the name “Bartimaeus” means “son of honor.” How do we observe him being disrespected in this account?

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How does Jesus demonstrate respect for him?

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Mention some “types” of people that could possibly be marginalized and not treated with respect in our church, in your opinion?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## **2. The kind minister ameliorates the daily frictions of interpersonal relationships in ministry**

*Kindness is like the oil that helps a motor function without excessive friction and over-heating*

Conflicts, annoyances and differences of opinion come with the territory in any ministry!  
Where people are involved, there will be conflict.

Mention a common type of conflict in your ministry. \_\_\_\_\_.

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*Some ministries are “malignant” and “toxic” like a cancerous tumor* – their negativity is contagious.

Think of a “negative” person you know. Without mentioning the name, describe them. What, specifically, causes the negativity in their relationships?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_.

*The kind minister transmits positive energy to others.*

Kindness exerts a positive influence, which radiates with benevolence and good intentions. Think of a “positive” person you know. Describe him or her. Specifically how do they transmit this “good vibe” to others?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. The kind minister is a winsome ambassador of the Kingdom of God

*They represent the gospel in the world with a winning, gracious manner and spirit*

<sup>5</sup> *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.* Philippians 4:5

*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* Colossians 4:6

Considering our role as “ambassadors,” why would it be particularly important for ushers, parking attendants, and hospitality workers to demonstrate kindness?

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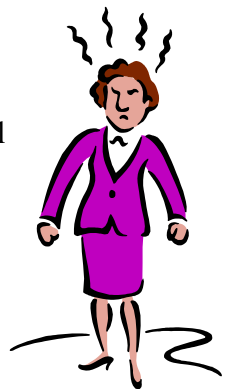
#### ***Example of a kind usher -- Kenny the Kind***

Kenny serves as an usher in his church. The Lord has moved in significant ways and the congregation has quickly outgrown its facility. The parking is tight, the seats fill up quickly, and women often need to wait in line to use the bathroom. Like a large family that is forced to share cramped space and a single bathroom, the situation is ripe for frustration and annoyances.

*Thank God for Kenny.* His attentive courtesy and natural humor have a way of disarming even the prickliest “customers.” When Sister Amargalina huffed into the sanctuary, fuming over being asked to move her car and go upstairs to the balcony to squeeze into a seat, Kenny knew just how to calm her frustration. With genuine friendliness and a warm smile, he asked her forgiveness for all the inconveniences and treated her like a queen – like an honored guest. He greeted her by name and asked about her new grand-child, making her feel recognized and valued as a special human being, and not merely another face in the crowd.

Kenny’s winsome manner and sincere concern for others quickly inspire trust and set people at ease. When he needs to ask someone to change seats or pick up their purse, he expresses himself with such tact and diplomacy that people seem to forget their annoyance and happily accommodate, as if doing a personal favor for Kenny. When he serves the Lord’s Supper he silently pronounces a blessing over each person, taking time to make eye contact and express a non-verbal greeting. He sees each person as special and valuable, worth the shed blood of Christ that is commemorated in this holy moment.

One rainy afternoon after service Kenny noticed a visitor coming back into the building with her two small children, wearing an expression of visible anxiety. As it turns out, her car would not start, and she did not know what to do. Even though his “shift” had officially ended, he knew that his uniform still identified him as an usher, and thus took the liberty of approaching this woman, introducing himself as an usher, and ascertaining her problem. Kenny is all thumbs when it comes to mechanical work, but he took the time to find a brother in the church who had jumper cables and could help her out. He stayed with the woman and her kids until everything was resolved. He did not get home until five that afternoon, but the next Sunday this woman returned to the church. Years later she still remembers the expression of courtesy and care which she had received from Kenny.



Kenny knows that he serves as the “face” of the congregation; the first impression of the church that visitors receive as they enter the sanctuary. It is impossible to quantify the fruit of his kind ministry. He helps to establish an atmosphere of grace, helping many to feel at home and look forward to coming back.

*Mention some specific ways we observe kindness in Kenny’s ministry.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Cultivating Kindness - Exercises**

***Exercise #1: Empathy – Putting yourself in the shoes of another***

***Exercise #2: Details – Small gestures of care***

***Exercise #3: Attentive Listening***

**Exercise #1: *Empathy = Putting yourself in the shoes of another***

1. *It is not necessary to have personally experienced the pain of another person. So often we interrupt someone who is sharing a personal struggle, with the words, “I know exactly what you’re going through...” We then launch into our own story, which may or may not be relevant to the person who has tried to open themselves up to share. Empathy focuses on the other person, not one’s self.*
2. *Requires genuine concern for the other person*
3. *Requires a desire to understand their experience as they explain it*
4. *One must forget him or herself*
5. *Requires imagination: How does this person feel?*

Mention the name of someone you know who demonstrates empathy.\_\_\_\_\_.



**Exercise:** Take nine minutes to think about three people with whom you have contact on a regular basis. Get comfortable and use your imagination. (3 minutes per person)

**Questions to consider and imagine...**

- *I wonder what's happening in this person's life today?*
- *I wonder how they are feeling?*
- *What might they be enjoying or worrying about?*
- *What might be some challenges they are facing?*
- *What might help them feel happier today?*

**Person #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

What might they be experiencing today?

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**Person #2** \_\_\_\_\_

What might they be experiencing today?

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**Person #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

What might they be experiencing today?

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## Exercise #2: Details – Small acts of kindness

Plan to do five small acts of kindness in your daily life – perhaps at church, school, work, at home or even on the street. For example...

- Give up your seat on the train
- Buy coffee for a co-worker
- Remember a birthday
- Do a chore at home you do not usually do
- Send a “thank you” note
- Forward along a joke to your spouse to brighten her day...etc.



*Note some of your own below.*

Gesture #1 \_\_\_\_\_.

Gesture #2 \_\_\_\_\_.

Gesture #3 \_\_\_\_\_.

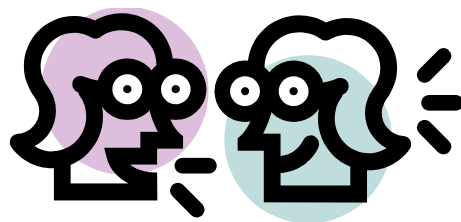
Gesture #4 \_\_\_\_\_.

Gesture #5 \_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise #3 - Listen

*How to (really) listen?*

- Concentrate, tuning out distractions
- Shut off the cell phone or the TV
- Make eye contact
- Don't interrupt. Let the other person share.
- Don't talk about yourself excessively.
- Be interested in the other person and what they have to share.
- Ask questions that help the person continue developing their personal sharing



## Listening Lab - Exercise in Class:

*Divide the class into pairs. Each one shares about an important goal they have for their future in relation to their family, profession or ministry. Take turns. Five minutes each.*

Your partner \_\_\_\_\_

What did they share? List 5 specific pieces of information that the person shared.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

***Evaluation of your partner.*** Using a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best), evaluate the listening skills of your partner.

Eye contact? \_\_\_\_\_

Body language that transmits attention and respect. \_\_\_\_\_

Feedback. Did they interact in ways that helped you feel free to continue sharing? \_\_\_\_\_

Did they let you speak without interrupting? \_\_\_\_\_

Did they make you feel that they were interested in what you were saying? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you end up feeling a desire to continue sharing with this person? \_\_\_\_\_

## Review

Define "kindness." \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List some qualities of the kind minister

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_