

Be Patient

"Be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2b

My charming, articulate and all-around lovely three year-old daughter still is not potty trained. We were making fantastic headway and had even switched over to big girl panties. Then she started going through three or four outfits a day.

Now, it can be a struggle just to get her on the toilet. Once parked there, she often asks for privacy, and I leave to stand just outside the always-propped-open door. The other day, as I was heading for my post, she called back to me: "Mom, let me know if you need me! And let me know when your patience is gone! I love you!"

Since then, she regularly inquires about my patience, and my husband's. When I call him on his way home from work, she fires questions into the phone: "Daddy, so, how's your drive? And how's your day? And how's your patience?"

How's your patience? A great question, really. This little girl, young as she is, certainly comprehends that Mom or Dad's patience-o-meter is critical to the whole family's wellbeing.

Patience running out? Uh oh. Dark clouds ahead. Patience gone? Winter storm warning!

"Be patient, bearing with one another in love." St. Paul's passionate appeal to the Ephesian Christians, and again to the Colossians (3:12-13), is as relevant to my intimate family relationships in 2017 as it was to the first century Christian church.

Be patient.

Be patient with the child who "refuses" to be potty trained. Be patient with the husband who arrives home exhausted from a trying day and harried commute. Be patient with the wife who forgot (again) to pay the medical bill propped up against an old banana on the kitchen table.

We continually bear with our family members and strive to put up with their foibles and faults not because they deserve patient treatment. We know they often don't. We practice constant "long-suffering" (see the King James Version of this verse) simply for the sake of God's perfect patience with us.

He bore with us in love when he came to live as one of us. His whole life on earth, his every interaction with others, and his submissive death on the cross displayed the long-suffering that accomplished our salvation. He paid for all our sins of impatience. Through faith in him, Jesus' lifestyle of humble, tireless patience is credited to us.

And even now when we stumble, his patience towards us never runs out. He is always with us, forgiving us, reassuring us, and enabling us to reflect his perfect patience to those around us, especially to those closest to us.

So, how's your patience, sisters?

Resting secure in God's boundless patience, we can say with confidence that, yes, we have the patience to meet the day's frustrations and challenges. Today and every day.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you know intimately the challenges that I face in showing patience toward the people you have put in my life. I have failed so often to bear with others in love. Forgive me. Thank you, dear Savior, for paying in full the price for these failures. Thank you for your life of perfect patience, lived in my place. Give me strength today to reflect your patience to others. Amen.

Written by Mollie Schairer