

Patience

Scripture Reading — Ephesians 4:2-3

Love is patient ...
—1 Corinthians 13:4—

A thousand things try our patience. You buy something that requires assembly, and the instructions are in French. A huge project is due, but your coworker is chatting in the break room. You spend days potty-training your four-year-old with no results. And then your neighbor informs you that her child mastered the task at age 2!

Specifically, love is patient with people. It's one thing to be patient with computers or fishing rods or an old Buick; it's another thing to be patient with your bigmouthed nephew or your crabby neighbor. Sometimes we become impatient with patience. We think of patience as the virtue of the elderly, the infirm, or those too weak to have other options.

But Christian love is patient because it is realistic. The Bible affirms what we already know; there's something wrong with all of us. Sometimes people call that depravity. As darling as your three-year-old daughter can be, you don't need a theologian to tell you she's got an "evil twin" inside her as well. We all suffer from a curvature of the soul. All of us live with people who are imperfect. The world is filled with failures, and we soon discover that people will fail us. All of us fall short of being what we want to be.

We need God's grace to be patient with others. And we can be patient, because God is patient with us.

Prayer

Patient Father, thank you for sticking with us, even when we fail you. Give us your strength to love in your patient way. Amen.

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