

# Stuck in an Elevator

## Message 3: Patience

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**Stuck in an Elevator???** - "Elevators force us to be close to people that we may have never chosen to be around otherwise."

**The connection??** The church, like an elevator, forces us to be around people we may have never chosen to be around!!

- **SECRET NEWS FLASH:** Sometimes Christians don't get along!!! AND, sometimes Christians can be judgmental!! - Living with the family and community of God can be difficult at times!!
- If you are part of the family of God, you are '*STUCK in an Elevator*'

**Series Big Idea:** God wants His People to Enjoy Healthy Biblical Community.

**Col. 3:12-13** <sup>12</sup>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (a good formula for living together in harmony!) <sup>13</sup>Bear with each other (endure) and *forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another*. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

**In order to see healthy community become a reality, several things need to take place. So far we've talked about Love & Forgiveness...**

**Message Big Idea:** The Health of a Community Grows with the Patience of its Members.

- **Patience in Events or Situations**
- **Patience with People**

**(ILL)** Two men were riding a bicycle built for two when they came to a big steep hill. It took a great deal of struggle for the men to complete what proved to be a very stiff climb. When they got to the top the man in front turned to the other and said, "Boy, that sure was a hard climb." The fellow in back replied, "Yes, and if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way we probably would have gone backwards."

**When do we need the most Patience w/ People???**

Answer: in their shortcomings, failings, annoyances...

**1 Cor. 13:4-8** <sup>4</sup>"Love is patient..." – it's the first one!!! (Grk) '*makrothumeo*'

- 1) to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart
  - a) to persevere patiently and bravely in *enduring misfortunes* and troubles
  - b) to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others
    - 1) to be mild and slow in avenging
    - 2) to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish

**Patience Defined:** (these are amazing definitions!!)

- The quality of being patient, as the bearing of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaint, loss of temper, irritation, or the like.
- The ability or willingness to suppress restlessness or annoyance when confronted with delay: ie. to have patience with a slow learner.
- (SMK) Extending grace where grace isn't easy to extend.

### Now I am just going to tell you how it is here - *Plain vanilla from God's Word...*

**Proverbs 14:29** “A patient man (a man who is slow to anger) has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly (foolishness).”

(KJV) [He that is] slow to wrath [is] of great understanding: but [he that is] hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

**Proverbs 19:11** “A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.”

(KJV) The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and [it is] his glory to *pass over* a transgression.

**ALL things in Balance!! Patience w/o Boundaries is Foolishness...** but we're not talking about Boundaries tonight, we're talking about Patience!

**The First Step - Decide to be more Patient w/ People.** It all starts with a decision. Once this decision is made, there are some things you can do to reinforce this decision when faced with an “*opportunity*” to grow in patience.

### Five Reminders that Encourage Patience with *One Another*

Much of this Tonight is wrapped up in the oft forgotten Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This Rule can be re-written in several variations, all of which stay true to the original: (This is somewhat similar to what Jenn spoke about 2 wks ago w/ forgiveness...)

- “Offer unto others that which you expect from them.”
- “View others through the same lens through which you prefer to be viewed.”
  - Our same desire for fairness, justice, mercy, and grace in our own lives must be extended to others!!

#### 1. Remember That We Are **ALL** Still WIPs – Works In Progress

**1 Timothy 1:16** “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”

- Our reason to be patient with others is the same reason why we need to forgive others!!! Paul said in Eph. 4:32 “Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” SO, if we are the recipients of His unlimited patience, we must strive to show that same kind of patience to others!!!
- If you are still ‘*on the wheel,*’ then let your brother/sister spend some time there too!

## 2. Don't Forget Your Past (but don't live in it either!!).

(ILL) Imagine how patient Paul must have been!?? Remember his past?? Persecutor...

- **Acts 9:13-14** – Ananias says to Jesus “Are you sure Saul’s the one you want??” vs. 17 Ananias - “**Brother Saul...**”
- Remember the ‘unlimited patience’ comment he made to Timothy??

## 3. Remember to See Others the Way God Sees Them.

- **Important Note:** You may have no idea what life circumstances may be motivating this person to think, act or react the way they are... But God sees the Big Picture, and we must keep that in mind, that there is a much bigger picture...
- So stop judging them as if the jury is already out!!! As if they are a ‘Finished Product’ that will never change or improve
  - When we lack Patience...

- We sign them off as if they will never change...
- We circumvent what God might be doing, b/c we rush to judgment!! When you pass judgment in your impatience, you leave no room for God’s wrath (Rom. 12:19)
- We may inhibit their growth – by way of snide comments...

(ILL) Those who are ‘Punctually Challenged’ – reminding them every time of their struggle doesn’t encourage growth!!

- How would it go for you if others treated you that way!!!

## 4. Remind Yourself of Your Own Present Shortcomings.

**Ecclesiastes 7:8** “The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.”

- Pride says you have no faults of your own; patience remembers that you also are imperfect.
- Again, perhaps this is why Paul had such patience with other believers, b/c he knew he was imperfect, calling himself “Chief of sinners”

## 5. Pray

- If this is one of the most difficult character traits for us to develop, then we need God’s help!!!

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** “<sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. <sup>15</sup> Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

<sup>16</sup> Be joyful always; <sup>17</sup> *pray continually*; <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

When we are Impatient with One Another, do you know who picks up on this hypocrisy first... unbelievers. They can see right through us. When they look at the church and see a group of people that are unwilling to embrace one another, yet are reaching into the community to embrace them... there must be a degree of doubt concerning authenticity.

### SO, How or Why will increased Patience help to improve our Community??

- More Peace – as we are patient with each other, the Spirit of God will slowly change us, and the ‘other person’  
**Galatians 5:22** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”
- More Unity, More Joy
- Better Relationships – b/c impatience leads to conflict and strained relationships

### Conclusion:

#### **(ILL)**

At the end of their first date, a young man takes the girl back to her home. Emboldened by the night, he decides to try for that important first kiss. With an air of confidence, he leans with his hand against the wall and, smiling, he says to her, "Darling, how 'bout a good night kiss?" Embarrassed, she replies, "Oh, I couldn't do that. My parents will see us!"

"Oh come on! Who's gonna see us at this hour?"

"No, please. I would just die of embarrassment if someone saw us."

"Oh come on, there's nobody around, they're all sleeping!"

"No way. It's just too risky!"

"Oh please, please, I like you so much!!"

"No. I like you too, but I just can't!"

"Oh yes you can. Please?"

"NO, no. I just can't."

"Pleeeeeease?..."

Out of the blue, the porch light goes on, and the girl's sister shows up in her pajamas, hair disheveled. In a sleepy voice the sister says: "Dad says to go ahead and give him a kiss. Or I can do it. Or if need be, he'll come down himself and do it. But for crying out loud, tell him to take his hand off the intercom button!"