

STUDY THIRTEEN – FAITH & PATIENCE: THE POWER TWINS!

Introduction

Almost everywhere you find faith mentioned in the Bible, you'll also find patience. Faith and patience are power twins. Together, they produce every time, and as you continue to work through this study on faith, I want you to understand how these two powerful forces go together.

Patience is a working power. When someone's faith has a tendency to waver, it is patience that comes to faith's aid to make it stand. The power of patience is necessary to undergird faith. Hebrews 6:12 says, *“that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* And James 1:2-4 says, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”*

Patience without faith has no power to call into reality the things desired. Since faith is the substance of things we hope for, patience without faith has no substance. On the other hand, faith without patience will, many times, fail to stand firm on the written WORD that gives “title deed” to things not seen (Hebrews 11).

Jesus told Peter He had prayed that Peter's faith fail not. Without the power of patience at work, sense knowledge – the things we see – can overwhelm our faith that is based on what The WORD of God says. *Patience, then, undergirds our faith and gives it endurance to persevere until the answer comes.*

Faith is a powerful force. It always works. It's not that our faith is weak and needs strength, but without the power of patience, we stop its force from working in our lives because of our negative words and actions. It's our faith, and we can either put it into action or stop it from working.

Traditionally, we think of patience as just “knuckling under” and being satisfied with whatever comes our way. That's not at all what patience is. It is a real force that has to be developed. Titus 2:2 says that we are to be sound, or developed, in patience.

Faith also has to be developed. The same scripture says we are to be sound in faith. Patience and faith work together the way faith and love work together. Each force plays a unique role in Christian lives.

Common Traditions and Mistakes

It is dangerous to confuse the roles of these two forces, substituting one for the other. For instance, Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the substance of things hoped for. Hope without faith has no substance. People say, “We are hoping and praying.” This sounds good but has no substance. In this case, hope is being confused with faith. Without the substance of faith, that kind of praying will not produce results. You can see that in a critical situation; this would be dangerous. We need to have our thinking straightened out according to the Bible, so we can use these forces properly and produce God's perfect will in our lives.

One of the most common traditions and mistakes in this area of believing is that trials and tribulations develop faith. Trials and tribulations do not develop faith. Romans 10:17 says, *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by The WORD of God.”* Trials and tribulations develop *patience*. We have already learned from James 1 that this is true. The Apostle Paul says the same thing in Romans 5:3.

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Faith is developed as we act on The WORD of God. Hebrews 12:2 states that Jesus is the author and finisher, or developer, of our faith. It doesn't say Satan is the developer of our faith.

It is vitally important we realize the difference between the developing of faith and the developing of patience. Faith should be developed on The WORD of God before the trial or testing comes. Jesus says in Luke 6:47-48 that a man who acts on His words is like someone who builds his house on a rock. When the floods beat on that house, the house does not fall. Notice, the man has to dig deep. This is where his faith is developed. His *patience* is developed during the storm, but he knows his house will stand because it's built on the rock. His faith is developed before the trial comes. Patience is developed in the trial or tribulation and undergirds, or keeps that door open, for faith to work.

Patience and Temptations

The definition of *patience* is "being constant" or "being the same way at all times." James 1 says we are to be single-minded. We must always respond, or react, in every circumstance of life the same way – with The WORD of God. Regardless of what may be thrown at us, we must become so WORD-of-God-minded that we don't act in fear or doubt, but always on what The WORD of our God says. The WORD says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Jesus has always and will always respond to The WORD rather than to circumstances, reason or fear. This is the way we should be.

Being sound in patience is to answer every doubt and fear with the firm assurance and confession that God's WORD is true, no matter what we feel, hear or see. Regardless of what storms may come our way, the Father's WORD cannot fail. In that kind of atmosphere, faith is free to move and overcome whatever Satan has put in our way.

To properly develop the power of patience, we must know what the Bible says about testing and trials. Take a moment to open your Bible and read James 1:12-21. The Greek word translated *temptations* in these scriptures is the same word for "trials" and "testing." It is vitally important that we know, from verse 13, that God is not tested by evil, and He doesn't tempt or test men with evil. We are warned never to say that we are tested by God.

Verse 14 explains what a test or trial is. It's anything that applies pressure on the lusts or desires of the flesh. *Any pressure that draws us away from God's WORD is the beginning of a test.* If we then act on that lust, sin is the result. Still, we have a way of escape, because The WORD says we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ. He is faithful to forgive us our sins when we confess them (1 John 1:9). When Satan applies pressure on our bodies to make them sick, we don't have to succumb to that pressure. When he presents us with financial ruin, we don't have to yield to the temptation to turn to the world and borrow. Most of the time, this only makes matters worse. Thank God, we can turn to God's WORD in Philippians 4:19 and use our faith. Then, regardless of circumstances, we exercise the power of patience and continue to stand fast in the liberty to which we have been called (Galatians 5:1).

First Corinthians 10:13 says, *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."* This scripture reveals three more important things about trials:

1. Testing and temptations are common to man. No one is ever tested or tried with things that are not common to mankind. Satan does not have the right to call upon his experience as a heavenly being to apply things that are outside the realm of humanity as tests or trials.
2. God is faithful. You will never face anything you cannot overcome.

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3. God always provides the way of escape.

Satan’s weapons are no match for the weapons God has provided for us. Thank God, the weapons of our warfare are not canal but powerful *through* God to the pulling down of strongholds. Satan is limited to the things that are common to mankind, but we are not. We have access to the full armour of God Himself. Our patience rests solidly on the full assurance that, no matter what comes next, Jesus has provided more than enough victory to put us over.

No matter what trial you are facing – sickness, financial ruin, broken relationships and whatever the devil can throw at you – you must exercise your faith in God’s WORD. Then, let patience have its perfect work. The force of faith will be at work, undergirded by the power of patience. Your faith will connect with the Father the very moment you take His WORD as the evidence of your breakthrough. Now, confess with your mouth that what you are believing for is yours, and by your actions show that it’s yours. Patience will begin to work from the moment you believe you receive, and it will be allowed to work until the victory is completely yours. The voice of patience says, “I know God’s WORD is true. I will not be moved by what I see or feel. I will only be moved by The WORD of God. I patiently rest on the truth of God’s mighty WORD!”

How are faith and patience developed?

What is the definition of patience? How does this definition differ from your past understanding of it?

What three things can you learn about temptation from 1 Corinthians 10:13? Does this change the way you perceive the temptations you now face? If so, how?

What other lessons have you taken from this study?
