

BFF431 Rebuilding God, Longsuffering

Scott Moore: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" Podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I'm well. How are you doing?

Scott: I'm good. We made it through the election, which, whatever side you're on, at least we know who won and we're moving on. We're not all dead.

Steve: You should be in politics with that cool, calm, objective reflection.

Scott: I know this will be retrospective when people hear it, but pray for Henry. He's having a procedure today and hope all goes well, and he starts digesting food better.

Steve: Amen. Well, we can start with that.

"Father, we're grateful that that little guy is alive and with us to this day. We're appreciative of Your work and all the ways that You've helped Scott and his kids and their family. And he's got 18 pounds on him now. I remember when we were talking about how many ounces he was, and here he is. He needs to have his digestive tract worked on."

"He needs Your divine touch, and we pray for that. And we pray for Your spirit to give wisdom to those that are working, but we pray for something from heaven that makes a difference. And You'll touch him and heal him and make him strong and put some pounds on that boy." In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. Thank you.

Steve: And Lord, help us in our podcast. Help us today as we discuss more about who You are and Your character. Help us, Spirit of God, to understand God. Take away what we commonly think or what we normally think or what we're prone to think and help us to think what we ought to think. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: We've discussed how God knows us. God loves us. God is kind. Today, God is patient. There are two words we're going to look at. The one is in the New Testament, and the other is in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, the Greek word is makrothumia, which is a combination of two words: Macro, which means long, and thumos, which means passion or temper.

It's hard to translate because we don't have words in our culture like long tempered. Think of it as the opposite of short-tempered. God is long-tempered. He is slow to anger.

The Old Testament word is arek or arek, which means, long or slow-to. We're going to look at lots of instances where those two words appear in the Old Testament and the New Testament, but I'm going to start with my testimony.

I want everything quickly. The other night, I installed some software on my computer for protection, some security stuff. It was coming up for renewal. I was going to take it up a notch and get the premier package. Then my computer got slow. I rebooted it. Finally, I dis-installed it. I took it off my computer. I rebooted it, and now I'm fast again.

That's me. I want things to work properly, or else I'm going to get a refund, which I did. But God is not that way. God is patient. In Exodus 34 Moses and God are meeting each other. Jehovah passed before him and proclaimed, "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, not short-tempered, long tempered, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

He is not in a hurry. He doesn't wring His hands. He is going to wait until everything is in place before He sends His Son back. He is slow to move. Something doesn't happen and surprise Him and force Him to make rash decisions. He is slow to anger.

I have this deep sensing in my spirit that God has things for us to do in our culture. It's not simply get saved and then twiddle our thumbs until Jesus comes back and finishes the work. I believe God is working the life of His bride. There are things that we need to do on our end, and He is not going to swerve from His purpose to see Jesus marry a pure bride.

He is going to beat the devil on his own ground. He's going to come back to this earth, where He placed Adam and Eve, and He's going to restore all things. He's going to restore marriage. He's going to restore family, and our relationship with Him. We're going to be back to the Garden of Eden, having communion with God in the cool of the day.

The church, as we've mentioned, is going to be unified, and He is not going back on these things that He said and which He has for. He's is patient. And powerful. This is my testimony. Now let's read a bunch of passages and see what we can discern. Numbers 14:18. "Jehovah is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but He will, by no means, clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers and the children to the third and the fourth generation."

This is God. This is who He is, and this is how He operates.

Nehemiah 9:17, "They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to the slavery in Egypt. But You are a God ready to forgive, gracious, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. You are patient, and You did not forsake them."

This is such a picture of God. There were so many times that Israel provoked Him to anger, and you'd think, OK. That's it. That put Him over the edge. Yet He did not forsake them. Even when they appointed their own leader, and were worshiping calves. And trying to go back to Egypt. He is long tempered.

Psalms 86:15, "You, O Lord, are God merciful and gracious, slow to anger." This attribute is found throughout the Bible.

Psalms 103. "Jehovah is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry, and filled with unending love. He will not constantly accuse us nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins. He does not deal harshly with us as we deserve."

I hope we can take this in, because in our mind, we know we deserve worse, but it's not who God is. On BibleHub, perhaps the Strong's lexicon, I read that patience was not an attribute to be emulated. This was a new thing. However in the Hebrew culture,

patience and long suffering were highly valued virtues often associated with wisdom and maturity. The concept of being slow to anger was seen as a divine attribute reflecting God's nature.

This is especially significant in a society where justice and retribution were often swift and severe. This verse in Proverbs 16:32 captures that. "Whoever is slow to anger or patient is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

It's that way in our world today too. We admire the big strong people, the people that can an agenda through, acquire wealth, build huge domineering corporations. God is different. "Whoever is patient and slow to anger is better than these mighty people because they know how to rule their own spirit."

There's another concept, and that is that God is patiently looking for repentance. In Joel 2:12–13, Jehovah says, "Turn to Me now while there is time. Give Me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead."

"Return to Jehovah your God for He is merciful and compassionate. He's patient. He's slow to get angry, filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish."

1 Peter 3:18–20, "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison because they formerly did not obey when God's patience waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight people, were brought safely through water."

In 2 Peter, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering to you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

God is eager to see us repent, and He's patient. He was patient in the days of Noah. Even after those people drowned, He sent Christ in the spirit to preach to them in prison. It's amazing stuff.

Paul uses an expression that I didn't find anywhere else. "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life."

Not only in Paul, the whole nation of Israel should have been wiped out so many times. It's hard to count them. But He chose Paul because he was the foremost of sinners according to Paul's writings, and He displayed His perfect patience. I have a few more. But what do you think so far?

Scott: Well, I was going to say the 2 Peter verse, you stole my thunder.

Steve: Sorry.

Scott: That's all right. That's a good one.

Steve: I should send you my notes ahead of time.

Scott: No. That's a good one. I like that He's not slow in keeping his promises as some understand slowness. But He is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Man, that gives me peace.

Steve: Amen.

Scott: However, you may get to this, so I'll wait. There is a however coming.

Steve: Go ahead.

Scott: There's a however coming.

Steve: Steal my thunder. Go ahead. This would be good.

Scott: If you look at the Matthew 25 in the parable of the 10 virgins, time's going to run out. If we're not ready, we're not going to be in.

Steve: Yes. You're right. That's the other side of it. There is a time, but He displays a lot of patience waiting for us.

Romans 9, talking about Israel says, "Has the potter know right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy?"

Romans 2, "Do you suppose, oh, man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hardened, impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."

That was a good segue, Scott, because that is the point. There is a day of wrath coming. There is an end. And we are not to presume. We don't want to be presumptuous on the richness of His kindness and forbearance and patience.

We don't want to say there's always time. For there's going to be a point when there isn't time. So we don't want to presume on that, and we want to draw near to God while we have the opportunity.

1 Corinthians 13:4, "Love is patient, love is kind." We know that God is love, so therefore God is patient. We know that God is kind. We can put Jesus in there instead of the word love and say, Jesus is patient. Jesus is kind. This is who God is. He's really kind. His very being is He's loving.

When I finally started drawing near to God, I was surprised and blessed as I sensed God's kindness. He's God. And as we get to know Him, we discover that He's wonderful, and we're going to spend all eternity plumbing the depths of His kindness and His goodness and His love.

Scott: It's a real blessing to observe people who have been walking with God for a long time, and you can see this attribute in them. There's not a lot of these people around, but you see some of them where they're really patient in a godlike way.

I specifically remember one man in my life that I know I was pushing him to the brink when he was about to get mad about something. And he still managed to hold it together and be patient with me as a young passionate Christian.

It's really a wonderful thing to see because, you know, you read those verses, and it's so opposite of what our world is. Long suffering is not something our world does. Seeing someone who actually can demonstrate that is remarkable.

Steve: I didn't read those verses because they talk more about us as believers. I was trying to focus on the ones about God, but it is definitely a fruit of the spirit. Patience, long suffering. Those are things that God has to build into us because I agree with you. I don't think any of us are naturally long sufferers.

Scott: Not me. That's for sure.

Steve: But I think we're probably closer than when we started. That's the encouraging thing. There's progress being made. And, you know, you quoted it, and I quoted it, but I'm going to read it maybe in a different translation just to give us, "You must not forget this one thing, dear friends. A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day."

"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise as some people think. No. He's being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief."

I like that blend of truth. It reveals God's nature that He is being patient for our sake. He doesn't want anybody to be destroyed, but there is going to come a time. The day of the Lord will come. So let's not presume, but let's embrace His patience.

Scott: Amen.

Steve: This is really good. I just like reading these passages over and over. There's a bunch that I left out because I felt like I was just being redundant. But that expression is found even by the dear prophet Jonah.

He prayed to Jehovah and said, "Oh, Jehovah, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious God and merciful and slow to anger and abounding a steadfast love and relenting from disaster."

I knew You were going to pull something like this. That's why I didn't want to come in the first place because You're too nice. I want to wipe out these people, and You just want to love them and bring them to repentance. Isn't that perfect?

Scott: Yes.

Steve: That's the difference between us and God. And Jonah captures it.

Steve: Nahum says, "Jehovah is slow to anger, great in power." What a combination. He's patient, and He's magnificent. And Jehovah will, by no means, clear the guilty, and He doesn't. And He sends Jesus to take our guilt. His way is in the whirlwind and storm and the clouds of the dust of His feet. What a picture of God, patient and yet great in power and just.

These are characteristics of our God. This is Who He is and we're on His team. And if He wasn't patient and slow to anger, none of us would be here.

"Thank You God for being long tempered, long suffering. Thank You for not being quick to anger, but You're slow to anger. Thank You for Your patience that is meant to bring us to repentance. And I pray today that You will bring every one of the peoples, the eight billion peoples on this planet, bring them to repentance."

"We know that the world is going to be shaken and shaken awfully. But I pray that in the shaking, we'll repent and we'll turn to You, and a great harvest will come from it. Help us to not, those of us that know you, to not take you for granted."

"Help us to not presume upon Your patience. Give us a healthy blend of understanding that You're kind and patient, but You're also, You have a day and You also have lines. Help us to not get close. Bless us today to that end." In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott: Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for me, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.