

PATIENCE

Heavenly Virtues: **Patience** | Connection Group Discussion Guide | Week 5

Connect (5 to 10 minutes)

Come together to build relationships through fellowship and sharing about this week's worship.

- Take a few minutes to share your thoughts about worship this week.
 - What aspects of worship did or did not connect with you?
 - What story or illustration made an impact on you?
- Share about something you've waited in line for that was worth the wait (or that wasn't worth the wait at all).

Context (30 to 40 minutes)

Dig deeper into the videos and scripture for this week through questions and discussion.

- Before watching the video: How would you define patience? Why do you think it is a virtue?

Watch the first half of the video for this session on your DVD or online.

- How do you respond to the definition of patience as the choice to endure suffering?
 - When have you lived out this kind of patience? What was that experience like?
 - Where are some places you see Jesus living out this kind of patience, besides on the cross?
 - Share some other scripture passages that teach you about patience. What do you learn from them?

NOTES

Read Ephesians 4:22-27

- How do you respond to the idea that you can be angry without sinning?
 - Give an example of this type of anger that you've experienced in your life.
 - How is this type of anger different from wrath, as Allison described it?
- What situations in your life cause you to struggle with wrath the most?
 - Do you see any patterns in the times that you struggle with wrath? Why?
 - How can you begin to avoid these temptations or resist them more?

Read Job 21:1-9 and 27-34

Job has lost everything important to him: his family, his achievements, his legacy. During some of his speeches in this book, Job focuses on his own predicaments. In this passage, however, he seems to be casting judgment on the ways God interacts with humanity.

- Where do you hear wrath in this speech from Job?
 - How is wrath different than mourning? Why do you think grief is not also a vice?
- Share about a time when you have been angry or frustrated with God.
 - How did you handle this? How was your relationship with God impacted?
 - If this is a current situation, how can this group support you during this time?

Watch the second half of the video for this session on your DVD or online.

- How do you respond to the idea that passivity is a vice?
 - How do you think passivity is different than the patience God calls us to?
 - Share about a time in your life when you demonstrated too much patience. How were you or others impacted by this?
 - How did you act against God’s will during this time?

NOTES

Read Exodus 32:1-4

Aaron had been left with the job to lead. Instead, he allowed the fears and desires of the people to direct their actions.

- Where do you see passivity in Aaron’s actions?
 - What would the virtue of patience have looked like in this story instead?
 - Share about a leader that acted in the same way as Aaron. What were the end results of his/her actions?
- When you fall off the path into the vice of passivity or wrath, do you feel like you cannot recover? Do you find your way back to the path of virtue easily? Why?
 - How do you see God bringing the people back to the path of virtue in this story?
 - What do you think recovery from passivity requires? What do you think recovery from wrath requires?

Call (10 minutes)

We believe that God not only shows us who God is but invites us to participate in God’s ministry by answering unique calls in our own lives. Join together in discovering how we can actively respond to scripture and God’s presence.

- Which of these two vices do you currently struggle with the most? Why?
 - How are you experiencing God’s forgiveness for this sin?
 - What is one thing you can do to avoid this temptation this week?
- We believe in our ability to live as virtuous people when we do the simple work of practicing virtues in our everyday lives. If you are participating in the “call to action” shared in our weekly worship services for this series, share with the group which action(s) you chose and why. (Please refer to the Call to Action handout for weekly calls to action.)

Closing (5 minutes)

God calls us into community by sharing our joys and concerns together in prayer and supporting one another in our walks with Christ. As we share testimony and stories of our lives, let us listen to where God is working within our community and how we can build each other up in Christian love.

- Share joys and concerns with one another.
- Close in prayer, either by inviting a group member to pray or by using the prayer provided below.

Closing Prayer

Patient and loving God, we are so thankful that You give us the example of purposeful patience in the life of Christ. We confess that often times we lose our patience with others and turn to wrath instead. Or, we choose the path of passivity: we pretend we are being patient when we are actually avoiding the problem. Help us to see how You call us to holy anger and sacred patience in our lives, God. Give us the strength to endure suffering and to act when and how we should. Amen.