



CHRISTIAN LIFE RESOURCES
— FOR LIFE • FOR FAMILY —

IMPATIENCE: THE "SAFE SIN" THAT ISN'T

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*“If not for impatience,
I would have no patience
at all!”*

As I review a career in sermon and article writing, I often use impatience because it is a “safe sin.” Nearly everyone admits to impatience. It is so ubiquitous that few seem ashamed, and therein lies the rub.

Why do we excuse impatience in ourselves and others when Scripture treats it as a serious hindrance to spiritual growth? When was the last time you heard someone genuinely repent of impatience rather than joke about it?

Everything around us fertilizes the seeds of impatience. We order fast food, demand same-day delivery, and watch movies on demand. While it creates nearly instant gratification, I contend that impatience reflects deeper spiritual issues about control, faith, and trust in God’s timing.

The results of impatience continue to be catastrophic socially and spiritually.

UNDERSTANDING IMPATIENCE

im·pa·tience

the inability to wait calmly, restlessness, or acting quickly without due consideration.

Someone once said, “Patience is a virtue, but not when opportunity passes you by.” In a world that offers so much, impatience has evolved into a virtue. To the worldly, impatience yields results. To the godly, we tend to defend impatience out of zeal to spread the Gospel and do the Lord’s work. But God doesn’t see it that way.

The Bible equates impatience with unrighteous anger (Psalm 37:7-8; Proverbs 14:29; James 1:19-20), a trait commonly associated with the proud (Ecclesiastes 7:8), and at the core of poor decision-making (Proverbs 21:5).



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How Do We
Get the “Out of
Step” in Step?



Impatience is not to be confused with desire. Scripture encourages us to desire honor (Hebrews 13:18), the ability to do greater things for others (1 Corinthians 12:27-31), and even death for the reunion it brings believers with Christ (Philippians 1:23).

Impatience, however, is the unbridled selfish desire to usurp God’s instruction to be mindful of others ahead of ourselves (Philippians 2:3-5). Impatience challenges us to cut in line at the Costco gas pump, rush to Walmart on Black Friday to get that limitedly available big-screen TV before someone else does, and honk at slow drivers

who are inconsiderate of our schedules.

If you are inclined to dismiss these examples as petty, ask yourself, “How do any of these actions place the interests of others ahead of our own?”

Three things are at work here:

1. Identity
2. Priorities
3. Introspection

IDENTITY

Our “identity” is understanding who we really are. If you are reading this article, you are presumably a Christian. That means you believe

Jesus Christ died for your sins. You consider yourself a follower of Jesus (Acts 11:26). As a follower, you are considered a “child of God” (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26).

This new lineage happens through faith (Romans 8:14-17). We consider faith to be a supernatural change that occurs in your life, giving you the ability to believe the unbelievable, to trust what you do not see, and to have hope when everyone around you feels hopeless (John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Hebrews 11:1).

Faith causes you to see life differently. A world that is naturally opposed to God (Genesis 8:21; Romans 8:7; 1 John 2:15-17) lives for itself. Every activity in a godless culture focuses on the here and now, seeking to make the most of life. That is why others must suffer if they interfere with the plans some have of making it in this world.

Because our identity is rooted in Christ and, therefore, we are God’s children, we find that our identity is established for us. Our purpose and reason for existing is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31). That reality changes everything.

PRIORITIES

God created us to glorify Him, and He placed us into social circumstances to do that. Socialization is the antithesis of loneliness, and it was deemed a good thing (Genesis 2:18; Psalm 133:1; John 13:34-35).

We call the social or communal glorification of God worship, and it is praised as a good thing (Psalm 34:3; Psalm 122:1; Colossians 3:16). The glorification of God is also expressed through communal service (Romans 12:1-5; Ephesians 4:11-13).

Our concern for others is to be a reflection of God’s concern for us, as expressed by Christ (John 15:12; 1 Peter

2:21). The Apostle Paul clearly stated this:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:3-5)

Serving others is an act of glorifying God. Impatience, therefore, not only reflects a lack of concern for the well-being of others ahead of ourselves, but also a failure to carry out our prime directive to glorify God in all things. We have muscled out God's priorities for our own.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) describes confused priorities as disordered love:

Virtue is nothing other than perfect love of God. For the measure of love is to love nothing except God or to



LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST

"Lord, Give Me Patience"

There's a fine line between the impatience that propels us forward and the kind that erodes trust and relationships. We tackle this balance head-on, discussing scenarios where patience might be likened to righteous anger, and the maturity required to discern the difference. Lean in as we dissect the often overlooked but transformative power of patience.



buzzsprout.com/1792019/episodes/14720227-lord-give-me-patience

love God in all things. Thus, every sin is a disorder of the natural order, a disordered love.¹

It is not that we are to neglect love for others or even for ourselves, but there is a priority that is to be evident as the accurate expression of our faith.

I cite just two examples pertinent to our work at Christian Life Resources:

The Pursuit of Pleasure:

Whether this is pursuing sexual gratification in ways contrary to God's directive, or obsessing over status and material gains in this world, our pursuit of pleasure has a way of bumping us to the front of every line, seeking what we want with minimal concern for others and essentially no concern for God's opinion on the matter.

Pursuit of Death: In our desire to get ahead in this

world, we develop grudges and hatred, which is comparable to murder (1 John 3:15). And sometimes, we see other lives as disposable, such as an unplanned pregnancy or the infirm and aging. Our impatience pushes our opinion, desires, and plans ahead of God's and ahead of other people.

INTROSPECTION

That brings us to the third, and perhaps the most difficult of the three points: being introspective about our impatience. In other words, we need to ask ourselves what is going on when we are impatient.

The Apostle Paul instructed:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Introspection is valuable when we have doubts, but I

¹ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003), Book XIX, Chapter 14, p. 872.



have found it to be especially valuable when we are convinced our goals are praiseworthy. We are told:

*All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.
(Proverbs 16:2)*

Because of our own evil inclinations, it is difficult to be objective. Scripture reminds us that our hearts can be deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), our righteous acts can be worthless (Isaiah 64:6), and noble efforts are not always God-pleasing (Hebrews 11:6). We need to look at our

motives, and that can be painful. So, when challenged with being impatient, consider these questions:

1. What approval, control, or image of myself am I prioritizing over patience and love right now?

Impatience often masks a demand that things need to go our way, revealing idols such as reputation or superiority.

2. What uncomfortable truth about my expectations or limitations am I avoiding at this moment?

Impatience arises when reality clashes with self-narratives of competence or entitlement.

3. How am I justifying my impatience differently than I would with someone else?

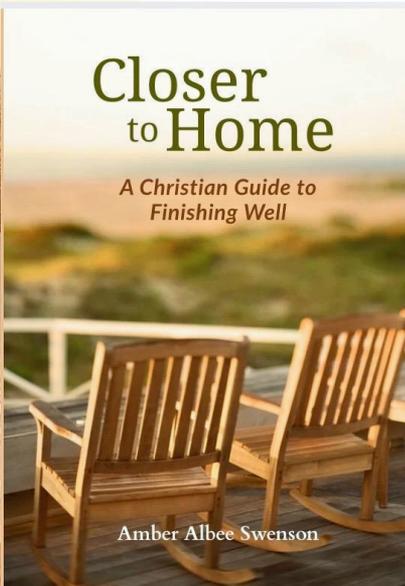
Rationalization disguises impatience as “righteous urgency” while condemning it in others. Defensive reactions here signal self-protection over humility.

4. What repeating relational pattern or idol fuels this impatience toward this person or situation?

Anger can reveal blind spots and patterns (e.g., superiority or unmet needs).

5. Am I hoping God is looking the other way, seeking validation for my actions, or genuinely seeking God’s transformation?

FINISHING WELL—GUIDED BY FAITH



Amber Albee Swenson’s *Closer to Home* invites every generation to grow in grace. Aging is a journey best traveled with God, and this book offers spiritual insight and practical steps for believers.

"I recommend this book to people ages 50 and beyond. Adults need to think about caring for their bodies to make aging easier and downsizing early rather than collecting more and more stuff."

Impatience thrives when disordered love puts God's will behind our own.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

"Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

My experience is that this has always been more comforting than doable. It requires inaction instead of action, contentment instead of eagerness, and obviously, stillness when I wanted to get going. For me, impatience, while directed at others, is really directed at God. In my arrogance, He is not doing things the way I think they should be done, and, in a typically human fashion, I take it out on others, which is why impatience feels so close to anger.

James summarizes it well:

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (James 5:7-8)

Patience in a busy world can be a lot like watching grass grow. But then, maybe that is the virtue. 



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3 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE RESOURCES

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LET THE CHILDREN COME: SEEING LIFE THROUGH YOUNG EYES

By Rachel Greiner, Director, CLR Bridge Ministries

When parents brought their little ones to Jesus, the disciples tried to send them away—but Jesus said, “*Let the little children come to me... do not hinder them*” (Matthew 19:14). He wanted children close to His Word and His heart, not sidelined. In that same spirit, Christian Life Resources has recently shared pro-life talks with students at three Lutheran schools, helping them see that every person is someone God created and loves.

With younger grades, simple tools made big truths accessible. Using a familiar story like *Horton Hears a Who* helped students grasp that even small, unseen neighbors matter; from there, they saw how God forms each child in the womb and knows them by name. With middle and high school students, the conversations went deeper. Personal stories—like that of a dear friend who carried heavy regret after an abortion and found comfort in an after-abortion Bible study—showed that abortion harms real people and that Christ’s forgiveness is big enough even for this. After one middle school presentation, students lined up to share personal concerns and ask questions.



From the earliest weeks, God is already forming a unique child in the womb.

These life talks are not limited to one community; they follow where God opens doors through your support. Because of your prayers and gifts, Christian Life Resources has been able to travel offering biblically grounded presentations throughout the United States. Several students I have been speaking with are thrilled to learn they could begin now, in age-appropriate ways, alongside their parents and school/church. Moments like these show that when children and teens are welcomed to Jesus and His teaching on life, the Holy Spirit uses even a short visit to plant courage, compassion, and a desire to serve.



**To learn more or invite a Life Talk
to your school or church, visit
[ChristianLifeResources.com](https://www.ChristianLifeResources.com).**

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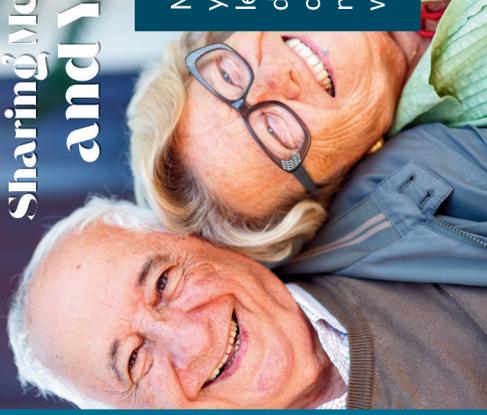
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