

# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear “Special Friend” of Christian Destiny,

October 2005

## THE IMPERATIVE OF PATIENCE

Everything does not run at the same speed. The airplane and the automobile, if starting out from the same place at the same time, are not likely to arrive at a given destination at the same moment. By the same token, it is unlikely that any two people in the world move at the same speed. Neither do they have the same ideas, the same convictions, the same outlook, the same principles, or the same way of doing things. As there are not two lives alike in the world, neither are there two identical people.

Nevertheless, it is necessary for people to work together. Diversity tends to produce disagreement, not only in the world but also in the ranks of believers. It is unlikely that we will find two believers of precisely the same frame of mind and degree of energy. In fact, we can be reasonably sure that if we find any two people doing something in harmony, they have probably been trained to work together and even to compensate for one another. Apart from this, perfectly coordinated activity—even among members of the Body of Christ—is rare. What can compensate for diversity? What bridge can span the gulf between people who do not share an identical vision of the world or the Lord? Patience. Here again we have an interesting Greek word (*hupomone*), which literally means “an abiding under” and is almost invariably translated into English as “patience.”

Each believer will one day find himself under some pressure, some problem, some weight, some frustrating circumstance that cannot be changed. No Christian in this imperfect world has not been confronted with apparently unsolvable problems. Work as we will, hope as we will, pray as we will, the limitation or liability will not go away. The retarded child does not improve. The chronic pain persists even after medication. The debt left from foolish economic decisions hangs like a persistent dark cloud. The wayward child continues to rebel. The rain that prevents the harvest continues to fall. The problems continue, and each solution seems to produce three new difficulties.

For the resourceful people, the accomplishees, these roadblocks are particularly frustrating. As they moved at cruising speed through the mine fields of life, there was always a plan. If it failed, there was an alternate plan. If that failed, youth, health, money, or creativity made other options possible. Never did altitude and ideas run out at the same time. Whatever the problem, they overcame it and moved on. There comes a time, however, when life turns out differently. In any circumstance, there are only a finite number of options and possibilities. When young, we mistakenly think of ourselves as packages of infinity for whom nothing is impossible. Eventually, however, we discover that the word *impossible* has real meaning. What then do we do?

This is the time when we learn to live under that burden that will not go away. As patience matures, we learn not merely to endure but to appreciate the value of facing the unsolvable problem. To come to this place is to see fulfilled in our lives the admonition “*Let patience have her perfect work*” (James 1:4). Until we reach that point, Scripture tells us again and again, “*You have need of patience.*” Of course, some will deny this need. They may have built a system of theology that says that every problem can be solved instantly by a spiritual formula. They hold that God stands ready at all times to work a miracle for them so that every difficulty of life is soon dispelled.

## SATAN'S LIES

This doctrine is one of Satan's lies, but it remains stubbornly with us despite the fact that it is contradicted both by the Bible and by the experience of those who live in a real world. Those who are most susceptible to the doctrine of instant deliverance often know little of the Word of God. They become easy prey for false teachers. Eventually, however, unsolved problems, and seemingly unanswered prayers lead them to doubt. When they inquire of their spiritual mentors as to this lack of response from God, they are told, "You just don't have enough faith!" Those who hold this view of God are candidates for ultimate despair. How much better to hope in the Lord and to let our prayers rest with Him. How much better to follow our greatest example, who said, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). How much better to labor in the cultivation of patience rather than presumption.

The doctrine of instant fulfillment is the enemy of hope. Hope, combined with patience, keeps the heart filled with joyous anticipation, *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it"* (Romans 8:24-25). Each of us needs to hear the words *"You have need of patience!"* For each of us, there will be many times in which we are unable to work out our problems "without remainder." In a sinful world, we will have instability and uncertainty. In the equation of life on earth, we cannot expect everything to come out balanced and even. Each day we will be called of God to exercise patience. How shall we do it? Is there a course of action we can follow to keep us sane in such a world? There certainly is!

To develop patience, we must remember that God's plan is better than ours. He knows, He understands, and He sees the end from the beginning. He is constantly working to produce for us a brighter design and a better destiny than any we can fashion in our constricted, little minds.

Have we not, in some measure, discovered this already? I can testify that virtually every one of my prayers has been or is in the process of being answered by two words from the Lord. Those words are *better* and *later*. "Better, but later." This is more than often the divine answer for me. I imagine that it is the same for most of us. Better—more wonderful than anything we have dreamed—is the divine intention for us. Isn't it true that most of our deepest apprehensions never come to pass? Isn't it true that most of our prayers have been answered (excluding those that are not still in the process) by a working of God more marvelous than anything we expected?

We can rejoice over the fact that so many of our foolish, immature, demanding requests are denied by the Lord. If each of our prayers were answered instantly and precisely according to our demands, most of us would be in a horrible situation. We may have moved into the wrong profession, married the wrong man or woman, committed ourselves to the wrong principles, or done a thousand other foolish things. Would not our condition now be worse than hopeless if God had not required us to be patient rather than grant us each wish the first time we gave the prayer wheel a spin? God was waiting to do something better for us. Biblical history yields many illustrations of prayers that were answered but that did not produce the results that the impatient prayer had in mind. Remember the admonition to be careful for what we pray, because God may answer our prayers.

The prayer of Hezekiah is a good example of this principle at work. *"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord"* (2 Kings 20:1-2). Hezekiah earnestly besought the Lord to let him live. He told the Lord he had walked in truth before Him with a perfect heart and had done much that was good

in the sight of the Lord. After that, Hezekiah wept before God. As a result of this prayer, God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that his prayer was heard and his tears were seen. God healed Hezekiah and promised to restore his life for fifteen more years. Hezekiah even asked God for a sign that the prayer was answered. God caused the sundial to go backward ten degrees. What a sign of answered prayer!

But what were the results of this answered prayer? The result was that Hezekiah, in this extended period of his life, betrayed the will of God and allowed the representatives from the evil kingdom of Babylon to see all of the precious treasures in the house of the Lord. Because of this, Isaiah told him of the judgment of God that would come upon the house of Hezekiah, *“Behold, the days come, that all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, says the Lord”* (2 Kings 20:17). Isaiah also gave Hezekiah the dreadful news that Hezekiah’s own sons would become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (v.18). The invasion and capture of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon began the times of the Gentiles, a drastic watershed in history. This and many other evils came out of the extended life of King Hezekiah.

God may also elect to answer our prayers later than we expect. Scripture promises that *“all things work together for good to them that love God”* (Romans 8:28). That implies that God has a time process in mind. Later is often better. Many of the things for which we pray are probably bigger, more demanding, or more dangerous than we can handle at the time. To learn patience, remember that God has a better—and often later—plan. Patience also comes in remembering that we are not God. We are simply not in a position to pound the table before the throne of our Heavenly Father and demand that we hear from Him now—“or else!” Or else what? Nothing. Having presented our requests to God, we have no recourse but to see what God may do at whatever time He elects to do it. But there is a secret to patience worth noting. The secret is to do something else in the meantime. For those of us who are not omniscient, a plan is desirable, but an alternate plan is almost always necessary. With an alternative in mind, whatever is still usable when the first plan fails can be used in the second plan, which still may succeed.

Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the great military geniuses—perhaps the greatest in history. He won every battle he fought, except the last one. On forty occasions he was able to triumph over foes who were often superior in number and in power. One of his methods was that of the alternate plan. During battle, he had an alternative ready for each potential obstacle. As a result, he was able to keep his armies moving long enough to bypass an enemy’s strong point and attack at an unsuspecting, weaker sector.

## IMPATIENCE

Impatience may well be evidence of stupidity. To fret in the midst of a traffic jam or cry over spilled milk is a waste of time. When nothing can be done about a circumstance, only fools rage, snarl, and pound the walls, the wise will see delay as opportunity. Many a noble thought, great idea, or availing prayer has come from seemingly lost moments. The wise will learn not to waste them.

Impatience also comes when we believe that we haven’t gotten something we deserve or that others have been served first, paid more, or received a disproportionate amount of the credit. Impatient at such unfairness, we may rage and demand our rights. But we have no rights. You and I serve nothing whatsoever in life except death and hell. Anything better is more than we deserve. It is not justice that we need but mercy.

Patience is the process of fitting properly into God’s plans. Without patience, I will never fit into that plan and will never see the design of God fulfilled in my life. I must give a word of warning here. God is determined to produce patience in our lives, and He will use various means to bring that about. That may

well include a process called tribulation. As a part of His design, He may allow our problems to multiply until we are overwhelmed. Then we have no choice but to stand still and await the salvation of the Lord. *"Having done all, to stand"* (Eph. 6:13) is the final keystone in the arch of patience. The Lord called Himself *"the God of patience"* (Romans 15:5) and calls us to exercise patience. That patience will produce the persistence whereby we can run the race set before us until the end of time.

## THE PATIENCE OF JOB

Job did not know whether he would live or die. He knew only that God presided over his life and had not forgotten him. In all of his tribulations, Job did not sin by renouncing God or cursing Him with his lips. He left us with a statement demonstrating the result of patience: *"For I know that my redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"* (Job 19:25-26).

The New Testament calls us to patience. The call comes in many ways; the lesson of Job is only one of them. The patience produced during trials keeps us thinking straight, walking in faith, and avoiding the foolishness of our times. May we let patience have her perfect work.

What *"perfect work"* is produced as we abide under pressures, problems, difficulties, and circumstances we cannot change? Many a tired believer may insist, "There are no real rewards. I keep on persisting, but the path appears to be endless." There are those who would like to kick over the traces and escape the burdens that press upon them. We cannot deny that there are burdens in life. Each of us faces something different: the birth of a retarded child, the approach of financial failure, the cruelty of an unloving spouse, the criticism of an ungrateful boss. Some roads seem never to end or give way to an easier path. The much-touted solutions that apparently work for others do not work for us. When do we quit? When do we turn in our resignation to God and announce that we are no longer willing to live the Christian life? When do we throw in the towel and look for something less demanding? The answer is never. Why? Because our circumstances are appointed by God, and any other circumstances will take us out of His will and into deeper troubles than those we are in. Many a foolish husband or wife believes the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, only to get there and find a desert. They may wish a thousand times that they had not tried to direct their own course.

We find a remarkable promise in 2 Timothy 2:12: *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."* This is God's promise to those who live faithfully for Him. We must note that the word suffer here is nearly the same as the one Peter uses for *patience*. The word Peter used means "an abiding under." This word is from the same root and means "to remain under." It means "sustained"—despite circumstances. We are told that the exercise of patience—called "suffering" in this passage—produces the result that *"we shall also reign with Him."* That is one of the most remarkable promises in the New Testament. It means that the need for patience will one day end and be succeeded by the greatest rewards imaginable. If we do not run away from the problems of life, we will eventually be moved from those problems to a position of leadership in the eternal kingdom.

From the writings of Dave Breese

Thank you for standing with us in the ministry of Christian Destiny.  
Triple T. Ministries in Evansville, Indiana, is sending out hundreds of Dave's books and booklets. We are excited about working closely with them in their significant work for Christ. How grateful we are for the opportunities He is willing to give.

Most Sincerely, Carol Breese

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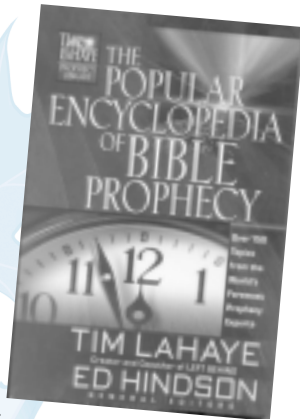
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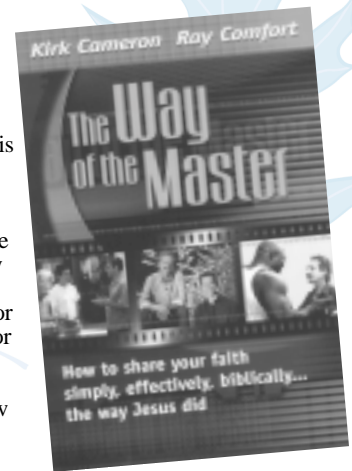
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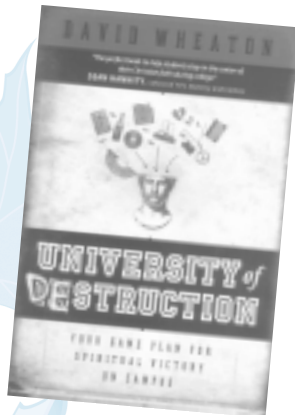
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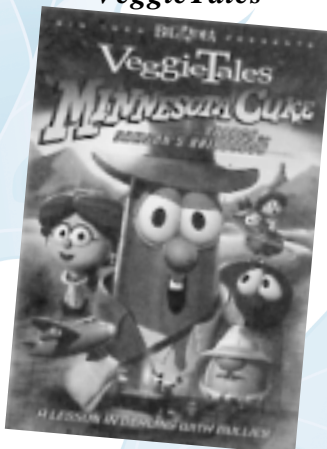
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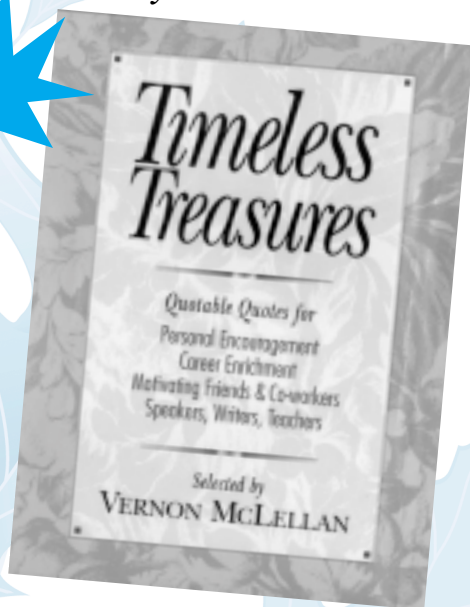
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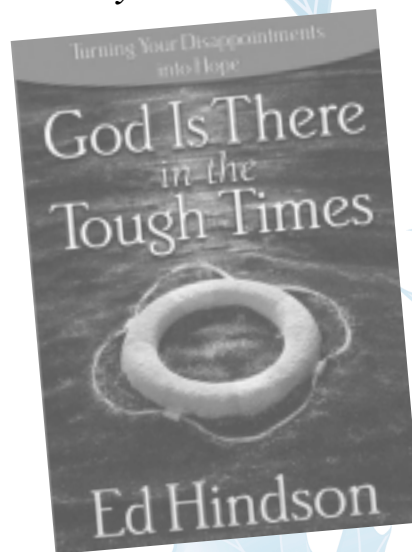


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