



Breath Prayer: (From Psalm 103: 4-5)

Inhale: You surround me with love

Exhale: and tender mercies.

Inhale: You fill my life

Exhale: with good things.

When we feel ourselves getting impatient, we need to regulate our emotions. Prayer is a great way to regulate our emotions. Breath prayers allow us to get the oxygen we need to our brains to make good decisions and it allows us to connect spiritually with our Creator.

Connect to God:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

Connect to Neighbor:

What good have you done for someone else this week?

Connect to Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

13 If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing. 3 If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, 5 it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, 6 it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. 7 Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

Just a few years ago, Gabrielle and I decided it was time to remove the training wheels from RJ's bike. So, we had a talk with RJ about how it was time for him to learn how to ride his bike without the training wheels. He seemed both excited and apprehensive. So, I removed the training wheels from his bike. We did a safety check of the bike to make sure it was road-ready, and that RJ's helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads were properly adjusted. The entire family took the short trip across the street to Lakepoint Elementary School. The parking lot was empty, and it was the perfect place for RJ to learn how to ride his bike without the aid of training wheels. I attempted to teach RJ how to ride his bike, but nothing I tried worked. I grew impatient and I raised my voice as if that would help him learn. I didn't say anything harmful, but my tone indicated that I was not pleased. After 30 minutes, we decided to go home and try again another day.

Gabrielle, my wife, reminded me that RJ was only six and that it was his first time. Not everybody figures it out the first time. She told me that I needed to be patient. I apologized to RJ. I told him that I loved him, but I know my

tone didn't sound loving. I **reassured** him that I believed that he could do it and that I would do everything in my power to help him. After a little reflection, I realized that it was the teacher, not the student who should have done a better job. So, I went to where people go to learn things that they have never done before, "YouTube." We watched the videos together and we learned together. So, the next day we returned to the same parking lot and tried one of the methods that we learned on YouTube, and it worked! The whole family cheered!

I became impatient because my expectations were not being met. I had wrongly assumed that RJ would catch on to my subpar instructions. I should have **regulated my emotions**, by taking a break and a deep breath. My wife helped me **reset** my expectations by helping me see that my expectations were not reasonable. I am sure I am not the only person who has had a parental failure. However, you might be a super parent. Do you ever get impatient with your spouse, people in traffic, co-workers, or your boss? What about your neighbors? How do we become more patient people? Well, we are not the only people to struggle in this area of our lives. The Corinthians struggled with this issue as well.

Connect to Context:

Although 1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most widely read scriptures at weddings, Paul writes this letter to the church. Of course, this text also applies to all our interpersonal relationships. Paul founded the church at Corinth around 50 CE. It may be helpful to view Paul as the father of the church and the church as a family. Paul spent 18 months preaching, equipping, and teaching at Corinth. 1 Corinthians is in response to a letter that Paul received from Chloe informing him that there are divisions in the church and those divisions caused disorder. The Corinthians are divided by apostles they belong to or follow. Some belonged to Paul,

some Apollos, and Cephas. Think in terms of high school rivalries if you grew up in a town big enough to have more than one high school. By the way, The Terry High School Bulldogs were always better than the Raymond Rangers, just facts folks!

Also, Corinthians were divided by class, a few were rich and many were poor. They were divided because some people believed they possessed spiritual gifts of greater value than others. You name it and they were divided over it. These factions and groups within the church were losing patience with each other. The Corinthians were on the verge of schism.

In chapter 13, Paul is telling the Corinthians that LOVE is what should be considered the greatest gift. Love does not divide or cause disorder. Love does not tear down. Love builds up. Love is what unifies the church. Paul is not writing about romantic or brotherly love. Paul is writing about agape love. "Agape love is self-giving love seen supremely in God's love for the world and as a mark of the Christian life". Paul is asking them to love each other the way God loves us. Patience is an expression of agape love.

My friends, as we grow in grace, it is helpful to remember that we are members of Christ's family. Some of us have training wheels, and some of us have enough experience to compete in the Tour De France. However, we live in the same house, and we are traveling the same road together. We need to be patient with each other, and be willing to listen to others who can help us reset our expectations and perspectives. Lastly, we need to remember the times when others held our hand and guided us along the way. Remember how reassuring it was to know that we were not alone. Now we need to share the love and cheer for one another.

Connect Heads:

Define the word "agape" in your own words. You can share a personal experience of agape .

What are three things we can do to help us become more patient?

When can being impatient be helpful?

When can being too patient be problematic?

Connect Heart:

Share a time when you lost your patience. Have you identified your triggers? Did anyone call you out for it?

Share a time when someone was patient with you. What did you learn about that person? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God?

Why do we sometimes find it so hard to be patient?

Connect Hands:

Did you cause harm in word or deed to someone this week? (self-examination). If so, confess your sin to God, then seek to reconcile with your brother or sister.

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

Ask a member of the group to pray for the concerns and give thanks for the celebrations.

Notes Sections

Prayer Concerns:

Celebrations:

Daily Reflection Questions

Where have I seen God at work in my life today?

What is one thing that I am thankful for?

What is one thing that broke my heart today?

What is one good thing did I do for someone else today?