

Self-Controlled Patience

(Psalm 4)

Yearly Theme: *“Patience is...”*

Series Title: *“Character Traits of Patience”*

May 1st, 2022

Something to think about:

Self-Control is a difficult thing for most people because most people struggle with one thing or another that is damaging to them in some way. It may be the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, food, or other physical substances that are a person’s vice. Or maybe it’s emotional vice-like anger, rage, resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness, and the like. Regardless of the weakness, self-control doesn’t come easy because it’s not a naturally occurring commodity in this broken and fallen world in which we live. Rather, self-control is a product of a life rooted in Christ and submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit. Thus, self-control, like patience, is a fruit of the Spirit produced by a child of GOD. It’s from this basis that we turn to the Old Testament book of Psalms this morning. Let’s take a look:

Turn in your Bible to: *Psalm 4:1-8*

According to Biblical scholar, Ralph Thompson, “Psalm 4 is believed by most scholars to have been written by David a little later than Psalm 3, near the close of his flight from Absalom.”¹

Absalom was one of David’s sons from one of his many wives. Absalom became estranged from David after a family tragedy involving Absalom’s sister Tamar and their half-brother Amnon. Amnon in a moment of weakness and sexual lust raped Tamar, causing her not only personal shame and trauma but also embarrassment and shame within the family and community. This made Absalom so mad that in his hatred toward Amnon, he had him murdered. After Amnon’s murder, Absalom fled from David for a few years, only returning once David had cooled down. Not wanting to see his son, David would not allow Absalom in his presence for nearly 2 years after he returned to Jerusalem. In time, Absalom became so angered toward his father that he gained the trust of the people by playing on their emotions and thus turning them away from King David. In a moment of rebellion, Absalom formed a coup against David and the Kingdom and took the throne sending his father and countless allies fleeing from Jerusalem for their lives. It was in the wilderness, yet again, fleeing from his son Absalom that David pens Psalms 3 and 4. In contrast to his father David, Absalom allowed anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness to control him, thus leading to his own destruction in the end.

Here’s the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: *“Don’t sin by letting anger control you.”*

David exemplifies certain characteristics that are important to note here as he calls out in a voice of reason to his son Absalom. Let’s take a closer look:

- He calls out to GOD.

Psalm 4:1 (NLT), Answer me when I call to you, O God who declares me innocent. Free me from my troubles. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

- He asserts his authority given by GOD.

Psalm 4:3 (NLT), You can be sure of this: The LORD set apart the godly for himself. The LORD will answer when I call to him.

- He warns about the sin of anger’s control.

Psalm 4:4-5 (NLT), ⁴ Don’t sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent. ⁵ Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the LORD.

- He declares a clear conscience defined by peace because of GOD’s protection.

Psalm 4:6-8 (NLT), ⁶ Many people say, “Who will show us better times?” Let your face smile on us, LORD. ⁷ You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine. ⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

Something to take home:

So, whatever happened to David’s son Absalom? We don’t have to look far to find out. If we read further in the story, we find that there was a battle, where Absalom and his army came against David and his army in the wilderness. The following is what ensued:

2 Samuel 18:9-17 (NLT), ⁹ During the battle, Absalom happened to come upon some of David’s men. He tried to escape on his mule, but as he rode beneath the thick branches of a great tree, his hair got caught in the tree. His mule kept going and left him dangling in the air. ¹⁰ One of David’s men saw what had happened and told Joab, “I saw Absalom dangling from a great tree.”

¹¹ “What?” Joab demanded. “You saw him there and didn’t kill him? I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver and a hero’s belt!”

¹² “I would not kill the king’s son for even a thousand pieces of silver,” the man replied to Joab. “We all heard the king say to you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘For my sake, please spare young Absalom.’ ¹³ And if I had betrayed the king by killing his son—and the king would certainly find out who did it—you yourself would be the first to abandon me.”

¹⁴ “Enough of this nonsense,” Joab said. Then he took three daggers and plunged them into Absalom’s heart as he dangled, still alive, in the great tree. ¹⁵ Ten of Joab’s young armor bearers then surrounded Absalom and killed him.

¹⁶ Then Joab blew the ram’s horn, and his men returned from chasing the army of Israel. ¹⁷ They threw Absalom’s body into a deep pit in the forest and piled a great heap of stones over it. And all Israel fled to their homes.

Absalom let anger control him and, thus, let anger destroy him. Like a deadly cobra around your heart, have you allowed anger to control you? Are you a slave to anger? Has it caused your heart to become hardened and cold? If so, it’s time to change. Don’t let anger control you any longer. The poisonous root of anger will destroy you in the end. **Key Point:** *“Don’t sin by letting anger control you.”*

¹ W. Ralph Thompson, “The Book of Psalms, 1–72,” in *Job-Song of Solomon*, vol. 2, The Wesleyan Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 191.