



Dgroup Discussion Guide for October 15, 2017
Radical Love: Be Patient, God is at Work

Scripture: Jonah 4:1-4

But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.

The Lord said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?"

BE PATIENT

Many of us struggle with patience. Nowadays, we want everything fast and instant – fast food, instant coffee, express lane, high-speed internet, speed dating and even our spiritual maturity. Oftentimes, we do not want to wait and we like to take shortcuts. But shortcuts can be costly.

Our problem is that we think that there is a shortcut to spiritual maturity. We are all in the process of becoming more and more Christ-like but the process will take time for us to grow and mature just like the growth process of a butterfly, a flower or a Chinese bamboo. Therefore, throughout the process we must be patient.

To be patient is to allow time for people to grow and not get easily irritated. It means not giving up on our relationships and allowing people to be transformed based on God's timing and not on our own. To practice radical love is to be willing to wait because love is patient and kind (**1 Corinthians 13:4**). Patient and kindness are connected, they go together. Once we learn to be patient, we also learn to be kind. God speaks to us about this through the story of Jonah.

Jonah chapter 4 is about God's patience. When Jonah finally obeyed God to preach the Word of God to the Ninevites, they repented. But Jonah was displeased and angry when they did (**Jonah 4:1**). Apparently, Jonah did not want the Ninevites to be saved. This was the reason why from the beginning Jonah did not want to obey God because he knew God would be merciful and save them if they repented. Here we see God is gracious and forgiving to Jonah, but Jonah did not want God to do the same to the Ninevites.

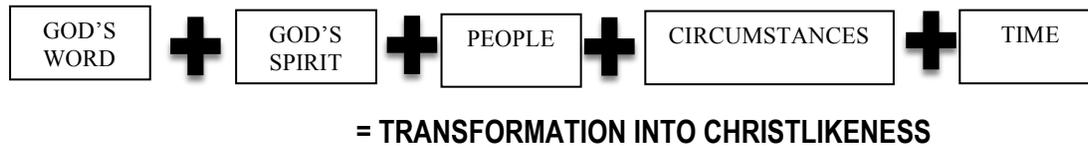
Jesus teaches us to treat others the same way we want them to treat us, and to be good only to those who are good to us but even to those who treat us badly. The radical love of Jesus calls us to pray for our enemies and even to love them (**Luke 6:27-28; 31-33**).

Oftentimes, we get impatient with difficult people and tough circumstances in our lives that we want to change them. But God wants to change us first because He wants us to grow in Him. We do not know how long, but one thing is for sure: God is always at work in our life.

GOD IS AT WORK

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6 the word “perfect” in this verse does not mean sinless, it means completion and maturity. All of us are in the process of becoming more and more like Jesus. God is at work in us and in due time, He will perfect His work. The only decision we need to make is whether we cooperate with god or go against what He is doing in our life.

God uses His Word, the Holy Spirit, challenging people and circumstances over a long period of time in order to transform us into Christlikeness.



It is always the love of God that transforms our hearts. God accepts us as we are, but because He loves us, He will not allow us to remain as we are.

God showed Jonah that He was not finished with him yet. Despite Jonah's stubbornness, god was kind to him (**Jonah 4:4**). He appointed a plant to give shade to Jonah when he was lamenting over God's grace to the Ninevites. He also appointed a worm to eat the plant and appointed the scourging east wind and the sun to beat down on Jonah (**Jonah 4:7-9**). God was showing Jonah how He can use anything to lead people toward spiritual maturity.

In the same way, the kindness of God leads us to repentance and the transformation of our hearts (**Romans 2:4**). God will not give up on us, but He will also not give in. He will not say yes if He knows it will not be good for us. This is because God's desire is always to transform our hearts. He is always at work whether we see it or not. Our response should always be to cooperate and be patient to see God's work unfold.

DO you see God's hands at work in your life? You may have been praying to God for something. Even though you don't know when He will solve the problem, one thing is certain: that He knows what is best for you. Just be patient, God is at work.

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

1. Are you as patient and kind with family and/ or dgroup members as God is with you?
2. Are you or anyone in your family or dgroup using Philippians 1:6 as an excuse not to mature in your Christian walk?
3. Is there anyone with whom you are not willing to share the gospel with? Why?

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.