

CREW Bible Study

Message – NOW & LATER Week 4

- **BOTTOM LINE:** Patient people know there's more to the story.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that practicing patience toward others can lead to better relationships.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. – Proverbs 19:11*

MESSAGE

Do you remember time-outs in preschool? What did you do that called for you to go to time out? Hitting or biting – time out! Throwing your toys – time out! Purposely doing what you were told NOT to do – time out! What else? Was there a particular time out chair you had to sit in or a corner you went to? Do you remember how you felt in time out? Did it help you calm down? Or did it make you mad because you were restricted from doing something you wanted to do?

The intent with a time out is to give a little time to “think about what you did.” Does that phrase sound familiar? Well, the ironic thing is, time outs might actually help us just as much or even MORE as we get older than they did when we were in preschool. Because taking time to calm down until we can think more clearly and act more thoughtfully helps us have better relationships. It helps us become more patient. And patience has the potential to forever change the way we handle conflict with the people around us. It's what we're talking about today as we jump back into our series, “Now & Later.”

Each week in this series, we've been looking at passages in the book of Proverbs. This book was mostly written by King Solomon who was known for being incredibly wise. Proverbs is full of really good words of wisdom and great advice on how to make life better. So given this, it's really no surprise that King Solomon would have something to say about being patient.

Listen to this from Proverbs chapter 19 verse 11:

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

Most of us think of patience as waiting on an Amazon order to show up at your front door or waiting in the super long drive-thru line now at Chick-fil-A. But patience isn't just about waiting on something. It's also something we need to have with people. And that can be really challenging. Because having patience with people requires developing the skill of slowing yourself down before you respond when somebody disappoints you or hurts you. It's like a reverse “time-out.”

Instead of a time out *after* you do something, take the time out first to plan the best way to respond.

King Solomon connects this idea of a slowed down response to wisdom. He says "it is to one's glory to overlook an offense." Now, it doesn't mean that you ignore your hurt feelings or allow yourself to be bullied or pushed around. And it doesn't mean that if someone really did something awful to you, you shouldn't be mad about it and say something. It just means that you know how to take a minute, to take a deep breath, and pause instead of going straight into attack mode.

When people do things that bother you or hurt you, it's not always because they're out to get you. Sometimes people have things going on that you and I could never imagine. And they lash out at you simply because you are the best target at the time. Patient people know there's more to the story. They learn to ask themselves this important question:

What is the most generous story I can believe about this person right now?

Think about that. Think about how their story might include things like stress or fear, or feeling insecure, sick, or even lonely. Hurting people hurt people. Nobody does hurtful things for no reason. There is most likely something in their life history that has led them to this moment. Consider what it might be.

Now, Solomon says it is to our "glory" to overlook an offense. It's to your glory to consider the other person's circumstances. What does that mean? Well, the word "glory" is associated with high regard, magnificence and beauty. When you overlook someone's offense – thinking of the most generous story about them that you can - two things are true:

1. You LOOK your best. You look mature and respectful.
2. You actually ARE your best. You're a stronger, wiser, more confident, better version of yourself.

But the opposite can also be true. When you lash out right away, you can easily come across as immature and disrespectful. Clearly not the best version of yourself, and probably something you will regret.

What is the most generous story I can believe about this person right now?

Know there's more to the story. Take a time out to consider the backstory, then be generous with your response. And repeat as often as necessary.

Patience will bring you glory now *and* later.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Did you ever have to go to time-out when you were in preschool? What for? Share what you remember about your experiences.
2. What's one thing that people do that annoys you or drives you crazy?
3. At what point does something change from being annoying to being hurtful?
4. When you are hurt or frustrated by someone, what would you say is your go-to response? What would your friends or family say is your go-to response?
5. Talk about a time when you really needed someone to show you patience and believe "the most generous story about you." What happened?
6. Read Proverbs 19:11. How can overlooking what someone did to you actually be good for YOU in that moment?
7. Overlooking an offense doesn't mean letting yourself be bullied or continually pushed around. It's important to protect yourself and seek help when needed. Have you experienced a time when someone continually and purposefully hurt you? What happened? Where did you go for help?
8. Who in your life tests your patience the most? What's one way you can remind yourself that the wiser, better version of yourself is when you are patient?