

**Soul Shaper**  
**September 17, 2006**  
**"M-Patience"**

**Group Shaper**

Side Bar: "I am extraordinarily patient provided I get my own way in the end." –*Margaret Thatcher*

Read James 5:7-12

1. What animal do you associate with patience? Why?
2. Do you think that patience comes naturally, i.e., you have it as a child, or is it something that is learned as you get older and more mature?
3. We all lose our patience from time to time. What are some situations in which you get frustrated and lose your patience? Do these situations more often involve things or people?
4. Does today's society and way of living encourage us to be patient?
5. What about when we are suffering. What role does patience play then?
6. As a fruit of the Spirit, what is the origin of this character trait in us?
7. How does growing patience or lack thereof affect others in our life space?

**Day One**

Side Bar: James, the brother of Jesus, wrote to Jewish Christians who had been scattered throughout the Mediterranean region. They were being hunted, hurt, and/ or killed for their beliefs.

Read James 5: 7-8

1. When God wants patience from us, what are we more likely to give?
2. In a time of fast food restaurants, microwave dinners, and self-service grocery checkout lanes, how does our culture respond to "patience"?
3. Why is it so hard for us to be patient and wait for God?
4. Have you ever met a farmer, like those mentioned in the passage? While they're waiting, do they just sit and wait for God to provide, or does their patience look like something else?
5. As we grow in community, what will a growing patience look like?
6. Why is patience what we need most and want the least?

## **Day Two**

Read James 5:7-12, Genesis 3:3-11

1. When we place blame upon another, of what are we personally relieved?
2. What is the relationship between blame and personal responsibility? If we are free to place blame, how does the lifted burden of responsibility affect us?
3. How could the absence of responsibility change our actions? Look back at Adam and Eve. What do you notice about the conversations in these verses?
4. As we think about the act of placing blame, what affect does that have on others living in our life space? What affect does it have on our relationship with God?

## **Day Three**

Read James 5:7-12

1. Use today as time for reflection. What role are patience, blame, and judgment playing in your life? How have these three things James mentions, affected your week so far? What changes could you make to alter the course of your week in regard to these three issues? Make a point of taking some time in prayer each day for the rest of this week asking God to help you walk through your life space freeing you from playing the blame game, replacing judgment with discernment and bring a patience to your thoughts and actions that reflects his love to those around you.

## **Day Four**

Read James 5:9 & Matthew 7:1-2

1. Think of the last reality T.V. show you watched. What does watching others being winnowed out and eliminated feed in us?
2. What role does judgment play in reality T.V.?
3. What is James saying about judgment in the verses listed above?
4. God gives different individuals the gift of discernment, but nowhere does he dole out the gift of judgment. Why?
5. Look at the verses from Matthew. Could you stand up to the scrutiny you see portrayed on the reality T.V. shows you referenced above? What about the judgments you may find yourself making about the participants. How would you fare if you turned those judgments back on yourself?
6. Can you find any source of protection in the verses from Matthew? What is it?

## **Day Five**

Read James 5: 12

1. According to James, of what do simple yes/no answers free us?
2. Think back over the last week, or maybe over the last day. Were there times when limiting yourself to a simple yes/no answer would have meant that your answer would have been very different than what it appeared to be? How so?
3. How does our culture view omissions and half truths? Are they seen as lies? Take a few moments to reason through your response.
4. As we interact with our culture, how can we protect ourselves from all of the messages that truth is relative?