Explore:
Cultivating Patience



At a Glance:

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37:7). Explore the topics of patience and barrenness by reading and discussing the importance of patience and the state of being either physically or mentally barren. Students will then choose a personal goal and break it down into manageable steps that can to keep their goal in mind while they feel far from achieving it.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- *Cultivating Patience* reading page
- *Cultivating Patience Chart*
- pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Read Cultivating Patience with students.
2. Complete the Cultivating Patience activity.

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Cultivating Patience

Think of a time when you have felt frustrated by situations such as the following:

- Waiting in a long slow line for something you urgently need?
- Hearing a series of messages on the phone when you want to talk to a live person?
- Being interrupted again and again as you try to say something important?
- Other examples?

Can you compare the level of frustration you have experienced to the frustration Jacob must have felt when he found out that he had to work an extra seven years to marry Rachel.

- It is easy to weigh which is worse, but why do even minor issues sometimes cause huge frustration and an unpleasant mood?

Imagine Rachel's frustration when her sister Leah kept having children, but she was barren and apparently could not have even one child.

- Almost everyone has experienced a time when he or she felt "barren". Think of a time when something was hard or impossible for you, but easy for a brother, sister or a friend. Or a time that others lives seemed happy and your own life seemed empty of happiness.

On the level of natural conception and birth being barren means that the physical substances or qualities that are needed to form a new body are not ready or simply do not exist. Without an egg, sperm and a nurturing womb it is impossible for a baby to be formed. Looking at this on a higher level, we may experience times when we do not have the mental substances and qualities we need to be a fruitful or productive person, e.g. we may experience writers block if we lack the facts to write a paper; we may fail an exam because we do not know the facts needed to pass; we may "fail" in helping a friend because we don't know how to be truly helpful.

Whether we are facing writer's block, waiting for the independence of adulthood, or waiting for a baby to be born, cultivating patience will help us wait. People commonly wait

- nine months for a child to develop and be born.
- for years to complete college, find a job and live independently.
- through a period of ill health before dying.

Doing what we can in the present enables us to transform wait times into a time of positive preparation for what lies ahead.

- Expectant parents gather clothing, blankets, a bed, etc. to care for their baby.
- Developing habits of personal responsibility prepares a person to live independently.
- Asking the Lord's help to turn our reactions from frustration, impatience, resentment and anger that things are not what we wish they were helps the Lord to bless us with patience.
- Consciously working not to express impatience in word and deed or even to dwell on the impatient thoughts and reactions is our part in receiving patience.
- Working to think from a longer-term perspective and making deeper goals our priority can help see us through difficult times.

Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord! (Psalm 27:14)

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Cultivating Patience Chart

1. Think of a personal goal or choose a goal from the following list.

Become financially independent	Play a musical instrument	Be on a college sports team
Learn to play chess	Be in charge of your own life	Become a happy person
Make a difference in the world	Eat healthily	Become fit
Choose a college major	Choose a profession	Cultivate a new social group

2. Break this large goal down into smaller parts that you can work on one at a time.
3. Write the steps down in the chart below.
4. Consider habits you want to develop that can help you, e.g. patience, prayer, strength and stamina to do what you need to.
5. If there is time, consider additional goals.

Goal	Groundwork	Develop skills	Further skills	End Goal
Become a writer	Read a variety of books, articles and short stories. Become familiar with literary styles. Choose a genre of writing to develop.	Take a writing course. Increase my vocabulary. Practice writing short pieces. Revise work I have done.	Write longer pieces. Learn how to edit. Find someone to read and edit my work. Re-work and improve my writing.	Write a book. -Choose a theme -Characters -Plot -Put it all together

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