

Traits of a GB Relationship: Patience and Kindness

My series on the traits of a God Buddy relationship sets the foundation for your friendship with another man. As you move deeper with your GB though, you will need to apply the next trait: **Patience and Kindness**, especially after applying the difficult trait of Confrontation, Confession, and Accountability.

When everything is going fine with your God Buddy, patience and kindness are easy. The true test comes when your GB lets you down or there is difficulty in your friendship. Remember, one of the goals of a God Buddy relationship is to “sharpen” each other (see Proverbs 27:17, which I will write about in more depth soon). The sharpening that comes from the use of these traits helps you become more like Jesus.

Jesus: Our Role Model for Patience and Kindness

When we examine the life of Jesus Christ, it's obvious He was patient with those around Him. He continued to instruct the twelve disciples even when they didn't understand Him. He kept men like Peter close to Himself even though He knew Peter would deny Him three times. Jesus's patience was tested when the disciples fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane after He instructed them not to do so. Jesus was kind when the disciples argued over who should sit next to Him at the table.



Galatians 5:22-23

Patience and Kindness are considered two of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), along with love, joy, peace, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Our Creator is also patient with all of mankind. At any point, God has the right to judge and destroy any of us for our sins, yet he does not. God is patient despite our continual sins and our half-hearted attempts to become more like His Son, Jesus.

Some even suggest that our ability to show patience and kindness actually reveals the real condition of our heart and the actual state of our faith journey.

So we know that becoming more patient and kind is not easy.

Learning Patience is Hard

Most people consider patience as a passive waiting or gentle tolerance. However, most of the Greek words translated as "patience" in the New Testament are actually active and robust words that mean "endurance."

The Bible calls us to “run the race” of life patiently and to persevere through the difficulties (Hebrews 12:1-11). For example, one does not run a 10k race or 26-mile marathon by passively waiting on the slow-pokes or by tolerating cheaters. We persevere.

The book of James also encourages us to consider it pure joy whenever we face trials that test our faith because it produces perseverance. Perseverance helps us become mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:3-4).

Generally, our human reaction to the need for patience in our relationships ranges from annoyance to impatience to downright anger. They say “Patience is a virtue” and the catalyst for personal growth. Yet, our need to control, our hurried lifestyles, our lack of mindfulness, and our desire for quick outcomes, challenges our patience in our friendships.

Developing patience and perseverance helps you endure trials in your GB relationship.

Kindness is Not the Same as Being Nice

We seem to use “nice” and “kind” interchangeably when describing the way people demonstrate consideration for others. However, according to dictionary.com, “Nice” is defined as “pleasing; agreeable; delightful” while “kind” is defined as “having, showing, or proceeding from benevolence.” The distinguishing factor is in the motivation of a person or act. We tend to use “nice” to describe “things” whereas we use “kind” for the way they treat each other.

For example, imagine that you have to challenge your God Buddy about something you see in him. While the news is almost guaranteed to displease him, you know the information will help them become a better man in the long run. In such a situation, breaking the news to your friend can be considered a kind action, but not necessarily a nice one.

In the New Testament, the Greek root for kindness means uprightness and describes the ability “to act for the welfare of those testing our patience”. As I wrote in this post previously, God Buddies always respond with unconditional love and forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32). but it doesn't mean accepting sinfulness.

Kindness Changes People

The old phrase “Killing them with kindness” speaks to the power a thoughtful gesture or an act of concern can have on a cold heart. Ultimately “God's kindness leads toward repentance” (Romans 2:4) but you also play a small yet important role as a GB by showing kindness since it helps softens hearts and changes bad behavior.



In his blog “Kindness Changes Everything”, Stephen Witmer gives this definition of biblical kindness:

“It’s a supernaturally generous orientation of our hearts toward other people, even when they don’t deserve it and don’t love us in return.”

– Stephen Witmer

Witmer also notes that part of kindness, contrary to what we may think, is speaking the truth even when it is hard. He cites Psalm 141:5: *“Let a righteous man strike me – it is a kindness; let him rebuke me – it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it.”*

This type of kindness is quite difficult and very unnatural as well. Nice means you avoid the rebuke all together. Kindness means loving those who disappoint us enough to firmly challenge them with gentleness.

Biblical Support

The Bible gives us instruction and stories about patience and kindness:

- *Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. –Proverbs 14:29 (NIV)*
- *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. –Ephesians 4:2 (NIV)*
- *Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. –Proverbs 16:32 (NIV)*
- *A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel. –Proverbs 15:18*
- *To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. –Romans 2:7*
- *With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, –Ephesians 4:2*
- *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant. –1 Corinthians 13:4*

Two Bible stories also teach us about kindness: **The Golden Rule** (Luke 6:27-31) and **The Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:29-37).

GBs should Always be Patience and Kind

Of course, God calls us to show patience and kindness to everyone we encounter.

However, in our God Buddy relationship, patience means recognizing that not every fault deserves a confrontation. It

also means you don't react too quickly with anger or bitterness but waiting for the proper time to discuss it with them in private.

Kindness means not overlooking our GB's sins (again, that is being "nice") being gentle with your rebuke and requirement of confession and accountability.

There is a Tim McGraw song I like called Always Be Humble and Kind that I want to use to encourage you and your God Buddy to "Always be Patient and Kind". Surely the world needs more of those traits these days!

One way to show kindness is to apply the next trait: Prayer and Encouragement, which is the topic of my next post.

As always, your comments below are welcome!