

## THE POWER of PATIENCE

BY GORDON BALS

**PATIENCE.** It is a character quality the scriptures indicate we should have (Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:22, Col 1:11) and yet it often seems in short supply. Have you ever wondered why this is true? Commonly, we answer this question by concluding that we are not resting in the Lord. And that is a good answer. In Scotty Smith's recent book *Objects of His Affection* he says the most often repeated question in the scriptures is, "How long oh Lord?" He says God's most often repeated answer is, "Do not be afraid." Our patience is significantly impacted when we really believe God is for us no matter what we may be experiencing in the present moment. Belief in His goodness impacts our ability to be patient.

However, only looking at patience from the perspective of how it will help us to relax will prevent us from growing into it as much as possible. Often, we fail to see the impact of our patience or impatience on others. As we grow into being more patient it is a gift to those we are in relationship with. Patience is the ability to see unformed character in a person and the desire to help them form it. Patience is an active word. We offer it on behalf of someone and not just so our life is more peaceful. In Luke 17:1-10 Jesus is instructing his disciples on how to help others deal with sin. Essentially, he says, "The presence of sin is important so that I want you to deal with it in your midst. Therefore, don't contribute to others to falling into sin, talk with a friend if he is caught in sin he doesn't see, and if he is trying to overcome it endure with him (forgive him seventy times seven) as a way to help him triumph over evil."

Our patience is part of helping those we love become free from sin. Unfortunately, one thing that tends to engender our impatience is the shortcomings of those we love. That might be our friend's ten-

dency to be late, or our spouse's frequent use of humor to run away from pain, or our child's inability to focus. Whatever the case, we fail to offer patience where those we love need it most.

What becomes important as we grow more and more impatient is to stop judging others "according to the flesh" (2 Corinthians 5:16). Paul uses that phrase as he encourages the Corinthian believers to see the life of Christ in each other. In *The Message* Eugene Peterson translates that verse, "Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it!" If you are able to see the work of the spirit in the lives of those you love you can be part of waiting actively for more of Christ to be formed in them.

We have seen this with our middle daughter Abbie. She has tons of courage and passion. At first we were very afraid of it and wanted to manage or kill it. Initially, I was calling a great deal of what Abbie expressed as rebellion or defiance. As we prayed for her, disciplined her and loved her we began to see two things. We saw our sin ñ our tendency to be afraid and react with control and as we sorrowed over our sin we began to see that at times Abbie was courageously exposing patterns that were wrong in us and our family. As a young child trying to communicate with two bigger people she was not doing that perfectly. But our patience to endure with her provided better soil for Abbie to grow into her courage. Several weeks ago I watched her patiently stand up for her little sister after a little boy took Elise's toy at our community pool. She offered her courage well on behalf of her sister with a determination that was clothed in tenderness. It aroused gratefulness in me that Lord has helped us to be more patient with Abbie and He has used that to shape her courage. Patience is not just for us. It is a gift to others. As we are able to see the impact of our patience (or lack of it) on others it helps us to grow into more of it.

**T**he truth is that praise does more for us than it does for God. The basic dynamic of praise is not that God gives us something and we say, "Thanks," out of surfeited hearts. Instead through praise we discover how much we have in fact already been given. Through the language of faithful worship, we come to see the world as it really is: the work of God's hand, the object of God's endlessly patient love. What is more, through praise we come to a new perception of our own situation. We do not have to strive continually to secure a place for ourselves. That place has been provided. There is a basic givenness of reality on which we can rely: "all [God's] doing is with faithfulness" (Ps 33:4). In resting upon that reliability, in accepting the remarkable givenness of our place in this world, we find our happiness. Thus, we recognize ourselves as a people blessed by the very fact of being in covenant relationship with this God (Ps 33:12).

*Ellen F Davis in Getting Involved with God:  
Rediscovering the Old Testament*

## BOOK TALK



### Home is Always the Place you Just Left:

A Memoir of Restless Longing and Persistent Grace ► by Betty Smartt Carter

**IN BETTY'S WORDS**, her newest book is "God's story of His grace towards her." Her words, as she describes how the Gospel has grabbed her through different periods in her life, are enjoyable and encouraging. The book is a wonderful mixture of truth, irony, paradox, laughter, theology and hope. Betty has a unique ability to weave the stories of her life into vignettes that help you to see God at work in her life and to remember how God has worked in yours. Even though you will find yourself learning and questioning as you read the book it will not feel like work because Betty's storytelling helps to carry you along and enjoy the process. If you are looking for an enjoyable read that will stimulate good growth consider grabbing a copy of Home is Always the Place You Just Left.

## It has been a **GOOD SUMMER** FOR DAYMARK

Julie and Gordon have continued to carry their normal counseling loads, learning and growing as they care for those God leads to Daymark. Gordon preached a couple times this summer and did a class at Red Mountain Church in Birmingham. He got the first leg of his dissertation done and needs to get back on it in the fall. He will also be teaching a class this fall at Southeastern Bible College called Theory and Practice of Helping Relationships. It can be audited if any of you are interested.

As many of you have already noticed our quarterly newsletter has changed. We altered the format of the newsletter this quarter and did not send one out last quarter to save on expenses. During the first four months of this year we were ending each month in a deficit. That prompted us to refrain from sending a newsletter in the spring and instead we sent a letter just to those who have counseled with Daymark to make them aware of our financial status. In response to the letter, we received an increase in giving and have made our budget each month since. We appreciate the gifts from those who were able to respond.

As we have watched different trends develop in those who give to Daymark we have one concern. It seems that many people who cannot give a large gift or make a monthly commitment may feel like spontaneous giving here and there would not be that beneficial to Daymark. However, that type of giving could be our most important source of financial support. We want those of you who would like to support Daymark financially to give to the ministry freely, whenever you want to and for however much you feel like you can. For those who are led to give larger gifts or monthly commitments we are obviously grateful. However, each type of giving is part of the foundation that supports Daymark as a ministry. As a way to increase the base of our giving the Board is going to consider doing some type of fundraiser in the next year. Please pray for direction in this area and for Daymark in general that we would honor the Lord through our ministry.