

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Mark 4:26-32

Lesson #4

Patience

10/20/2019

Without faith
(patience) it is
impossible to
please God.



James 1:2-4,19

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces **patience**. But let **patience** have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." . . . "But everyone must be quick to hear, **slow** to speak and **slow** to anger;"

Hebrews 12:1-3

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and **the sin which so easily ensnares us**, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who **endured** such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls."

2

**False expectations are
a great challenge to faith.**

- Much of God's work is instant and dramatic in the Bible.
- Should we not expect the same? (conversion, deliverance, church growth, answer to prayer)

**This was a challenge for
the early church as well.**

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Expectation #1

**If the Gospel story is true it
should bring a consensus?**

- If Jesus was the Messiah all Israel would recognize him.
- But even the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus.
- Only a small remnant would believe.

The Parable of the soils

Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8



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Expectation #2

**If Jesus is the Messiah we
should expect dramatic, instant
positive change for his people?**

- Jesus's coming brought about a change for Israel **that was not seen as good**.
- Israel had done its waiting. Now it **expected tangible, instant, dramatic results**.

The Parable of the seed

Mark 4:26-32



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Parable of the Seed's Growth

Mark 4

"²⁶ And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; ²⁷ **and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows - how, he himself does not know.** ²⁸ The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

What should we expect?

The man's responsibility is to sow and reap.

Between the sowing and reaping there is

TIME & WAITING.

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Parable of the Seed's Size

Mark 4

"³⁰ And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though **it is smaller** than all the seeds that are upon the soil, ³² yet when it is sown, **it grows up and becomes larger** than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade."

What should we expect?

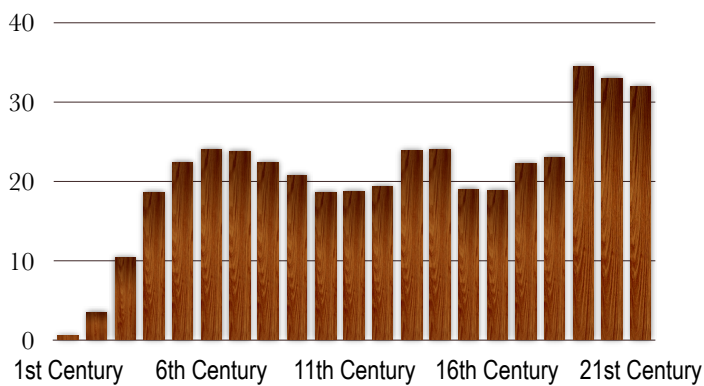
A small inauspicious seed becomes a large plant

OVER TIME.

NOTE: Matthew & Luke included another parable (Leaven in the bread) that makes a similar point.

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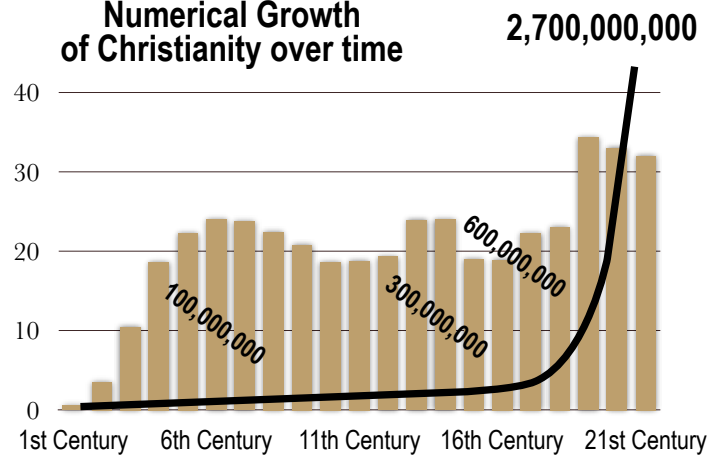
Growth of Christianity by Century as a % of world population



Source: World Christian Encyclopedia

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Numerical Growth of Christianity over time



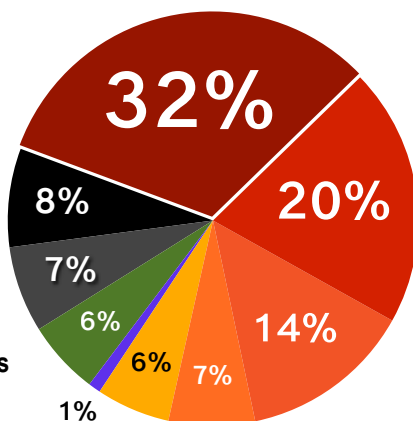
Source: World Christian Encyclopedia

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Christianity has grown from being a forbidden religion to the largest religious body in the world.

World religions

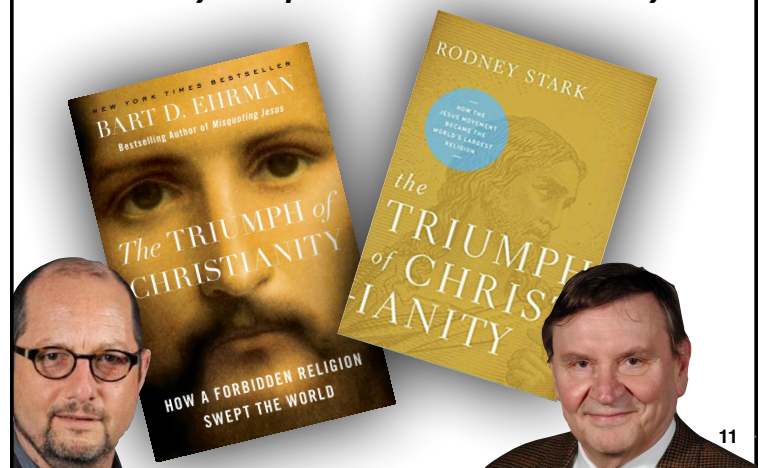
- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Chinese religions
- Judaism
- Others
- Nonreligious theists
- Agnostic-atheist



Pew Research 2014

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Most ancient empires were formed from military conquest but not Christianity.



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1 Corinthians 1

“²⁶ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but **God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,** ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised, **God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,** ²⁹ that no man should boast before God. ³⁰ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ that, just as it is written, “*Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.*””

**Christianity is a mystery miracle
that can not be fully explained by natural means.**

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Matthew 4

“² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” ⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*’””

The temptation to reduce life to the tending of physical needs and appetites is the root of the lusts of the flesh.

Jesus makes it clear that his life is found in an allegiance to God’s Word even when it means personal physical sacrifice. “WAIT”

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Matthew 4

“⁵ Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘*He will give His angels charge concerning You*’, and ‘*On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.*’” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘*You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.*’”

Expecting God to support our vision and plan is the root of the pride of life.

Jesus confesses that he will never presume upon his Father’s will. (Matt.7:21, 10:19-20, 12:50, 26:39, Jn.15:10) “WAIT”

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Matthew 4

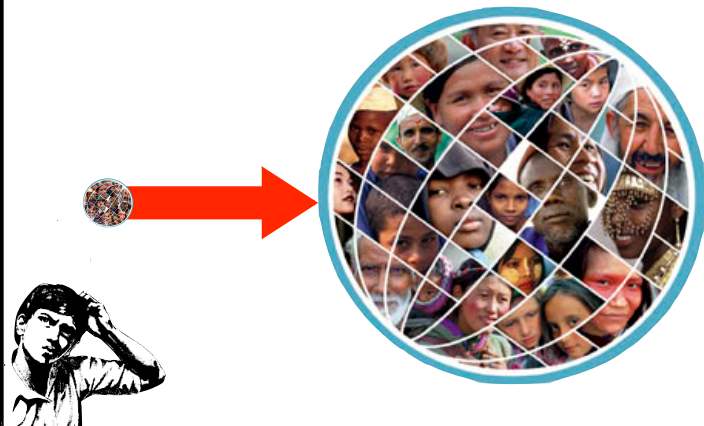
“⁸ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘*You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.*’”

The temptation to see things superficially and to allow good ends to justify carnal means is the root of the lust of the eye.

Jesus confesses that both the means and the ends belong to God. “WAIT”

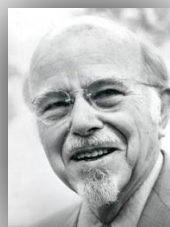
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What causes Christian communities to numerically grow?



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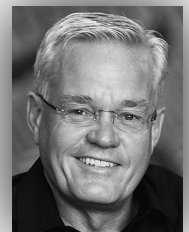
Three men who have challenged the church



Donald McGavran
“Build homogeneous cultural groups.”



Bill Bright
“God has a wonderful plan for your life.”



Bill Hybels
“Demand excellence.”

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What causes church's to numerically grow?



18

"The Seeker Church movement is much better at making mega churches than making Christian disciples because when you win folks with cultural idols it is hard to convince them that they must give them up to follow Jesus."

Oz Guinness



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Basic Lessons for us

1. Be a faithful disciple of Christ not the culture. **God's ways are not "our" ways.**
2. Bear God's image & a Cross in this life **to a banquet in the next.**
3. Be patient through trials. **Repent of impatience and a lack of gratitude.**

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Love is a gracious response to life's challenges.

Love is
patient
kind

a response to

WAIT!

not jealous
does not brag
is not arrogant
is not unbecoming
not self seeking
is not provoked
holds no grudges
does not rejoice
rejoices in the truth
bears all things
believes & hopes all things
endures all things

trials
insults
success of others
success of self
power & authority
freedom
competition
confrontation
injustice
failure of others
gossip & slander
losses
discouragement
delayed hopes

1 Cor. 13:4-7

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Things we must do

1. Take responsibility for what you are called to do as a disciple.
 - ✓ Remember the kingdom of God is not **a bunch of independent franchises.**
 - ✓ Sowing means faithfully exposing the seed (show and tell) to the soil **not shaping the response.**
 - ✓ Know your role - do it well and **encourage others to do the same.**

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Know yourself

The unexamined life is hard to change.

Accept yourself

Grace & Peace pave the way to fruitfulness.

Get over yourself

Unfinished business will shape your agenda.

Give yourself

Grace & Peace pave the way to fruitfulness.

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“We take a new convert and immediately make a worker out of him. God would first have us teach him how to worship so that his work would have God in it.”

A.W. Tozer



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Things we must do

2. Don't take responsibility for what is exclusively God's work.



Tower of Babel

“They are after My job again?”

God

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How do we discern when to WAIT and when to WORK?

- ✓ It is not **WHAT** we do but from what “**internal posture**” we do it.
 - Mary and Martha - Luke 10:38-42.

Luke 10

“⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, **you are worried and bothered about so many things;** ⁴² **but only a few things are necessary, really only one,** for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

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How do we discern when to WAIT and when to WORK?

- ✓ It is not **WHAT** we do but from what “**internal posture**” we do it.
 - Mary and Martha - Luke 10:38-42.
- ✓ Our **response** to unexpected disappointments will reveal our posture.
 - **Anger** often indicates we don't have the right posture.
 - **Anxiety** often indicates we don't have the right posture.
 - **Peace** in the midst of a storm is a sign that we have the right posture.

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Things we must do

2. Don't take responsibility for what is exclusively God's work.

- ✓ Repent of the impulse **to control too much.**
- ✓ If you are not a part of the problem or the solution, **be careful before getting involved.**
- ✓ Pray for wisdom to know when **to let it go.**

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Philippians 4:11

“... I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”

Life isn't about
waiting for the
storm to pass...
it's learning to
Dance
in the Rain

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