



We Can Benefit from God's Patience

Romans 2:1-12

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:4—KJV).

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4—NASB).

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4—NRSV).

When Paul wrote his Letter to the Romans, he proved that everyone has sinned against God. When John wrote one of his letters, he defined sin: "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). I think everyone who has read the Bible must admit that they have disobeyed at least one of God's revealed laws during their lifetime. Even worse, sometimes we have practiced lawlessness by doing what we have wanted to do irrespective of what God's laws demand. Imagine what our world would be like if no local, state, or national governments enforced their laws; or, if they enforced some laws, but not others; or if privileged people never received just punishment for their lawlessness, but those who broke minor laws received extreme punishments immediately? God does not govern our world with partiality or show favoritism toward some, for God enforces all His laws equally and justly. In God's kingdom, there is equal justice for all, whether Jew or Gentile. So, why does it seem to us that God does not equally enforce all His laws? In this life, God does not immediately punish us every time we break one of His laws because God intends His patience and kindness to lead us to repentance. The Bible says we deserve death for breaking God's laws, and the fact that we still live indicates God is giving us yet another opportunity to turn around and follow Him. Happily, God sent Jesus to die as a sacrifice; therefore, we can place our faith in Jesus and receive eternal life.

Thinking Further

1. What are some consequences for us when we pass judgment on someone else?
2. On what does God base His just judgments?
3. What are some of the riches God bestows on all people in this life? What is the purpose of God when giving people these riches?
4. How can people store up God's wrath for themselves in the future?
5. What did Paul say people should seek? How should they seek it? What will they receive?