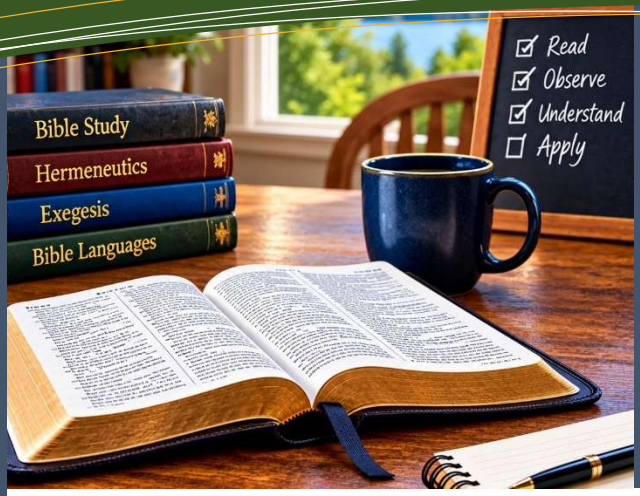
ISSUE
01
OCTOBER
2026

QUARTERLY
STUDY
OF THE
SCRIPTURES

The Scripture Student

Helping People Become Better Readers And Students Of The Scriptures



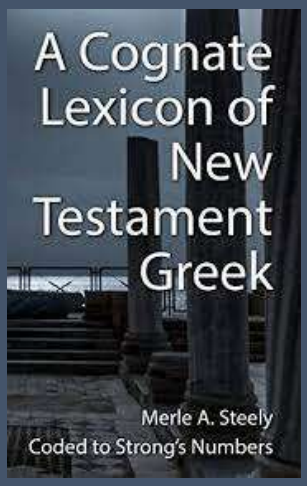
In This Issue

Studying the New Testament with Patience: Digging Deeper

Bible Study Tools

Developing a Mind to Work (when it comes to Bible Study)

Bible Study Tools



This book by Merle A. Steeley is an excellent Bible Study Tool for the student who has some familiarity with the Koiné Greek language.

This cognate lexicon is designed to provide a complete vocabulary of New Testament Greek. Instead of being arranged alphabetically by the Greek alphabet such a in standard Greek-English lexicons, it is arranged alphabetically by the root of the various word families included in the New Testament.

We give this book a strong recommendation.

Studying the New Testament with Patience: Digging Deeper

Considering the title of this article, you might think it is about developing the ability to persevere when studying the Scriptures. After all, it can take considerable time and effort to arrive at a proper understanding of God's Word. And while that is certainly true, it is not what this article is about.

Intrigued? Good! Pull up a chair, and let's explore what this article is actually about.

Patience – What Is That?

Did you know that there are two distinct Greek words in the New Testament that many English translations render as *patience*? But since these words are distinct, why do translators use the same English word for both? While we would have to interview the translators to understand all the reasons behind their choices, one explanation may be that the English word *patience* is quite flexible in its meanings.

A summary of the online Merriam-Webster dictionary's definitions of *patience* would include the following:

- The ability to accept obstacles or delays in a calm and self-possessed manner.
- The ability to remain calm or exercise restraint under provocation or strain.
- The ability to persevere over an extended period despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity.
- The ability to avoid hasty or impulsive behavior, demonstrating deliberation and restraint.
- The ability or willingness to bear difficulties or hardships.

(See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patience and patient)

This brings us to an important principle that I want you to consider. When studying the New Testament, you will inevitably encounter words whose meanings you want to understand more fully. When that happens, it is important to devote the majority of your attention to understanding the original Greek word or words underlying the English translation—not the other way around.

Remember, God inspired men to write the New Testament in Greek – not English or any other language.

In other words, rather than simply asking, "What does *patience* mean?" we should be asking, "What does ὑπομονή (hupomone) mean?" or "What does μακροθυμία (makrothumia) mean?" These are the two primary Greek words in the New Testament that are frequently translated as *patience* in many English translations.

Developing A Mind to Work

What does it take to develop a mind to work when it comes to studying the Scriptures?

Love God enough to give Him your very best.

Love Him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mark 12:30-31). Give Him everything you've got...and this includes the area of studying the Scriptures.

Love His Word

The psalmist said, "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day (Ps. 119:97).

Develop Study Skills & Increase in THIS Knowledge

Just as a craftsman must develop the skills necessary for his trade, God's Bible student must develop the skills to interpret Scripture responsibly.

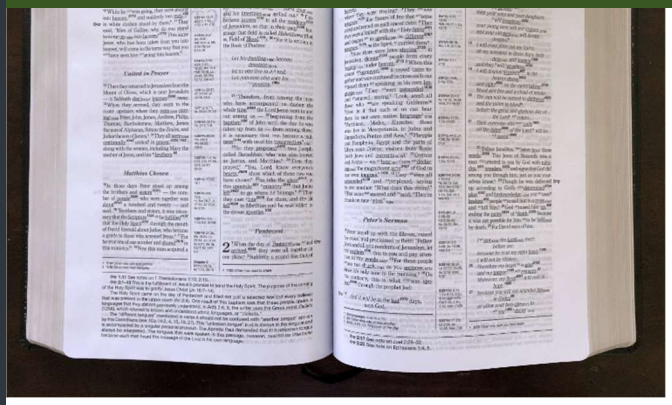
Realize it is a Long-Term Commitment

Don't let the challenges discourage you. It's one lesson at a time…for a lifetime.

Keep Your Objective Before You

The ultimate objective is to know God and His will, live according to it, and be found pleasing to Him as a loving servant.

See full article at **TheScriptureStudent.com.**



II Timothy 2:15

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

You see, a translator's responsibility is to accurately communicate what the inspired writers wrote, and they wrote in Greek. To do this, translators must consider several factors, including how to select a word in the target language that most accurately conveys the meaning of the original Greek word. This is not often an easy task.

Sometimes, a translator will choose a flexible English word such as *patience* because it seems to be the best option within a particular context. However, as we have seen from the dictionary definitions, *patience* can communicate several different ideas. Consequently, simply examining the English word's definition may not give us a clear understanding of what God intended to communicate through the original Greek word. **We must dig deeper.**

At other times, there may be no direct equivalent for a Greek word in the target language. In such cases, the translator must do the best possible job of selecting a word that comes closest to the original meaning.

Consider, for example, the Greek word πραΰτης (prautes), found in James 1:21, James 3:13, and 1 Peter 3:15, or its alternate spelling, πραότης (praotes), found in 1 Corinthians 4:21, 2 Corinthians 10:1, Galatians 5:23, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12, 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:25, and Titus 3:2. This word has been translated using terms such as meekness, humility, gentleness, and courtesy, among others. Yet none of these English terms, taken individually, fully captures the meaning of the Greek word.

And that is only the beginning of the challenge. Translators often also consider how the word was used in first-century secular literature, how it is used throughout the New Testament, and what the immediate and grammatical contexts require in each passage where it occurs.

Translators certainly have a difficult task. For that reason, perhaps we should extend some grace when considering the various translations available to us. Nevertheless, if we truly want to understand God's Word, **we must be willing to dig deeper.**

There are also occasions when a translator seeks to communicate an entire thought or concept rather than adhere more closely to a word-for-word rendering. This approach is commonly known as functional equivalence or dynamic equivalence. In such cases, the translator may communicate the intended idea without directly translating the underlying Greek word into a corresponding word in the target language. Once again, **we must dig deeper.**

With that in mind, let's take a closer look at the two Greek words so often translated as *patience*. As we do, I hope you will see how this English word provides an excellent illustration of why **we must dig deeper** if we genuinely want to understand God's Word.

Patience? – Part One

The first word is ὑπομονή (hupomone). It is a compound word combining a preposition meaning *under* with a word meaning *remain or abide*. When combined, the idea is *remaining under*, which represents its semantic center.

The picture here is not one of passively waiting for something to happen. Rather, it is the idea of remaining under pressure without giving up.

Consider this illustration. Two people are carrying a 200-pound weight on their backs. Both experience the strain of carrying that burden. One continues moving forward despite the pressure, while the other deliberately drops the weight to obtain relief.

Both experienced the pressure, but only one remained under the burden.

That quality of remaining under pressure or a burden is the central idea expressed by hupomone. Depending on the context, *patience* may be an appropriate translation. However, perseverance, endurance, or steadfastness may better communicate the intended meaning in a particular passage.

Let's consider a couple of passages where this word is used.

Romans 5:1–5

In his letter to the Romans, Paul develops the theme that the gospel is God's power unto salvation for everyone who believes. In chapters 1 through 3, he establishes that all have sinned and are in need of salvation. In chapter 4, he expands upon the subject of justification by faith.

By the time we reach Romans 5:1–2, Paul concludes that those who have been justified by faith enjoy peace with God and have access to His grace through faith.

He then makes an interesting observation: those who have been justified by faith can also rejoice or glory in tribulations. Why? Because they understand what tribulations can produce.

In Romans 5:3–4, Paul explains that tribulation produces hupomone—perseverance. Perseverance, in turn, produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

The idea is that when a person's faith is put to the test through tribulation, remaining faithful under that pressure shows the genuineness of that faith. As the individual perseveres, his or her character is strengthened, providing a foundation for hope.

James 1:1-12

James essentially develops this same principle at the beginning of his letter.

In James 1:2–4, the inspired writer teaches that God's faithful people can count it all joy when surrounded by various trials. Why? Because the testing of their faith produces hupomone - perseverance or endurance.

James then explains that perseverance must be allowed to complete its work so that the Christian may become mature and complete, lacking nothing.

His central point is further emphasized in James 1:12:

"Blessed is the man that ***endureth*** *temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*

James taught the importance of remaining faithful when our faith is tested. Trials, tests, and temptations can initially seem overwhelming, but every victory strengthens our ability to endure. Each time we remain faithful under pressure, we are better prepared to face the next challenge.

Over time, this steadfast perseverance produces something beautiful: a Christian who is spiritually mature, complete in faithfulness, and lacking nothing necessary to please God.

Trials, tests, tribulations, and temptations will inevitably come into the life of a faithful Christian. However, when that Christian perseveres under the burden, enduring the grief and suffering that often accompany such experiences, he or she demonstrates a genuine faith that stands approved before God.

That true faith, strengthened through perseverance, ultimately leads to spiritual maturity. The Christian has access to God's grace, enjoys hope as an anchor for the soul, and looks forward to receiving the crown of life promised by the Lord.

The word hupomone, then, conveys the idea of staying power, perseverance, and endurance when we encounter trials, tests, tribulations, and temptations. While the English word *patience* can certainly communicate this idea, it is important for the Bible student to dig deeper and recognize that this particular aspect of *patience* is what hupomone expresses in these passages and many others throughout the New Testament.

Patience? – Part Two

The second word is μακροθυμία (makrothumia). This is also a compound word, combining a term meaning *long* with a word referring to *an emotional characteristic within humans that can flare up passionately but also has the capacity to subside relatively quickly*. You might think of it as having a long temper.

Interestingly, this word is often used in situations where someone has been personally wronged. Rather than immediately demanding just recompense, the person exercises restraint and defers taking action against the one who has wronged them. In other words, they demonstrate a long temper in this regard.

Once again, let's examine a couple of passages to see how this word is used in the New Testament.

Matthew 18:21–35

Take a moment to read this section of Scripture and refresh your memory concerning the parable Jesus shared about the unforgiving servant.

In the preceding context, Jesus had been teaching about how to deal with an erring brother within the community of Christians. This teaching was part of a broader discussion emphasizing the value of even a single Christian. (For a more detailed examination of this context, visit TheScripture Student.com and read the 3-part article on Matthew 18.)

Continuing that emphasis, Jesus now drives home the importance of forgiving a penitent brother in Christ as He responds to Peter's question in Matthew 18:21–22.

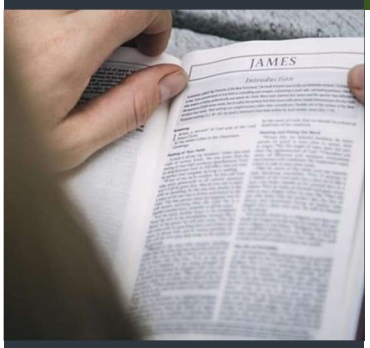
Jesus illustrates His teaching through a parable about a king and a servant who owed him an enormous debt. The debt was so substantial that the servant had no realistic means of repaying it. When confronted with his obligation, the servant demonstrated remorse and pleaded with the king in verse 26: "Have *patience* with me."

The Greek word used here is makrothumia. The servant was essentially asking the king to exercise a long temper—to defer demanding just recompense for the debt he owed.

Moved with compassion, the king did more than simply grant the servant additional time to repay the debt. He forgave the entire amount.

However, the story does not end there.

This same servant had a fellow servant who owed him a considerably smaller debt. When the fellow servant pleaded with him using precisely the same words, "Have *patience* with me," the first servant refused to show



Spiritual Development

Work to become a better reader, student, and doer of the Scriptures.

compassion. Instead, he had his fellow servant thrown into prison until the debt could be paid.

When the king learned what had happened, he was displeased. The servant who had received such extraordinary compassion had been unwilling to extend similar compassion to someone who owed him a much smaller amount. Consequently, the king withdrew his leniency and punished the unforgiving servant.

Notice an important distinction in this parable. Both the king and the first servant had been personally wronged by someone who owed them money and had not repaid it. Both had the opportunity to defer demanding just recompense. However, only the king demonstrated makrothumia, motivated by compassion.

The first servant had received mercy but was unwilling to extend it to another.

This passage illustrates how makrothumia involves exercising restraint toward someone who has personally wronged us rather than immediately demanding what we believe is rightfully due.

2 Peter 3:1–18

In this passage, Peter addresses an error being propagated by some concerning the promise of Christ's return. Some were questioning the Lord's promise, and Peter explains why Christ had not yet returned.

In verse 9, Peter writes:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward..."

The Greek word translated as longsuffering here is makrothumia.

Now, if it makes no difference which Greek word Peter used because both hupomone and makrothumia can be translated as *patience*, we should ask ourselves an important question: Why didn't Peter use hupomone? Think about it.

God is not experiencing trials, tests, temptations, or tribulations at our hands in the sense that Christians experience them in their own lives. Rather, we are regularly sinning against Him. Each time we sin, we personally wrong the One who created us and to Whom we are accountable.

Thankfully, God extends makrothumia toward us.

This is the divine attribute that causes Him to defer administering the just recompense our sins deserve. Rather than immediately bringing judgment upon us, God demonstrates longsuffering, allowing us time and opportunity to repent.

As Paul reminds us in Romans 6:23, *"the wages of sin is death."* Yet God, in His longsuffering, has not instantly administered that consequence to every sinner.

However, we must not misunderstand God's longsuffering as an indication that He will never bring judgment. There will come a time when God ceases to defer judgment, and His Son will return to execute righteous judgment (see also 2 Thessalonians 1:8–10).

God's makrothumia is therefore a powerful expression of His compassion and longsuffering toward sinful humanity. He is willing to defer the just recompense that sin deserves, providing people with the opportunity to turn to Him.

Does the English word patience convey something of this meaning? Yes! But unless we are willing to **dig deeper** into the original Greek, we may miss, at least to some degree, the powerful truth being communicated through this particular Greek word.

Conclusion

The lesson should be clear. You and I should study the Scriptures so that we can know God's will for our lives because we love Him and want to please Him. But unless we are willing to put forth the effort and **dig deeper**, we may very well miss some of what God has communicated to us through His written Word.

As we have seen, two distinct Greek words can be translated using the same English word, yet each communicates a different aspect of the intended meaning. Hupomonē emphasizes perseverance, endurance, and the ability to remain faithful under pressure. Makrothumia, on the other hand, emphasizes longsuffering, particularly the willingness to exercise restraint toward someone who has personally wronged us rather than immediately demanding just recompense.

Both concepts are important in our understanding of God's Word, but they are not interchangeable. Recognizing the distinction helps us better appreciate what the inspired writers were communicating.

Determine to be the best Bible student you can be. God deserves that from you, doesn't He?

Do not be content merely to read the Book, nor should you depend entirely upon what someone else says in a commentary or even from the pulpit. Take the time to investigate the Scriptures for yourself. Examine the words, consider their contexts, and strive to understand what God has communicated through His inspired writers.

As Paul instructed Timothy:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

If you would like to grow in your ability to discern God's will through careful, thoughtful, and honest contextual study, I invite you to visit TheScripture Student.com.

Let's work together to give God our best in this crucial area of our lives: studying His Word.

© 2026 The Scripture Student LLC. All rights reserved. You are welcome to share this e-newsletter with others. Reproduction or redistribution of its contents requires permission, except as permitted by law.