We are Believers

Paul complimented the Christians in Thessalonica on their "patience and faith". They were going through tough times, yet Paul says to them, "your faith is enlarged" (2Th 1:3-4).

The Hebrews are encouraged to imitate "those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb 6:12).

Notice again the connection between patience and faith. The writer goes on to discuss the promise God made to Abraham and Sarah. We realise that they were not perfect in their faith and patience toward God. Had they been fully trusting and patient, Hagar would not have borne Ishmael. Nevertheless, the faith and patience of Sarah and Abraham is a great example to us (Heb 11:8-19).

The more we trust and believe in someone, the more patient we are toward them. If a tradesman promises to come as soon as possible, we will wait for him more patiently if we trust him and know that he is reliable and means what he says.

(The tradesman will also be more patient and understanding of our calls upon him, given that he knows and trusts that we are genuine and not humbugs).

We are Keepers

Likewise our patience with God depends upon, and is a measure of, how much we trust and believe in him.

James says, "...faith produces patience," but I left something important out of that quote. It should read, "the testing of your faith produces patience" (Jas 1:3-4).

God strengthens our belief and trust in him by testing. Each time we pass a test we become stronger in our faith and longer in our patience toward God.

We are Waiters

One of the words used in the Bible to express patience is "keeping" — in the sense of holding on to, and not losing, our faith and obedience.

We show our patience by “keeping” God's commandments (Rev 14:12).

We build up our faith and show our patience by “keeping” ourselves in the love of God (Jude 1:20-21).

We “keep” the faith (2Tm 4:7).

In Revelation Jesus blesses those who are watchful keepers. They are not (metaphorically speaking) in bed naked and asleep, but they stay awake and “keep” themselves clothed and on watch. They “keep” prepared (Rev 16:15).

Sometimes people keep things because they are too lazy to get rid of them.

However, another reason people keep things is that they believe the things they are keeping will have great value in the future. They keep things patiently for years. They do this because of what they believe about the things they are keeping.

We are Waiters

"Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord" (Psa 27:14). "Be still in the Lord and wait patiently for him... those who wait for the Lord will inherit the land" (Psa 37:7-9).

"Wait for the Lord and keep his way" (Psa 37:34).

James, when exhorting us to be patient, uses the illustration of the farmer who “waits” for the rains and for the crops to grow (Jas 5:7-8).

"God acts on behalf of the one who waits for him" (Isa 64:4). When we pray to God, we wait for his answer, because we know and believe that he will act for us, even though it may take a long time (1Jn 5:14-15).