

# Conversation Starter

For the week of December 7-13, 2008

This week's theme: Be Patient  
Current sermon series: Watching For Jesus  
Sunday's Readings: 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8

Many years ago a favourite song at Christian children's camps in this part of the country was called "The Countdown Song". And why did children enjoy it? Because the song began with them counting down from 10 to 1 and then they shouted "blast off" before singing the words to this song. Even though shouting out "blast off" was lots of fun, it wasn't the main point of the song. The song's message is about the future return of Jesus Christ. "Jesus will come again and tho' we don't know when, the countdown's getting lower everyday." Almost 2000 years have passed since Jesus returned to heaven and He hasn't yet returned. We are still watching for Jesus. And while we're still watching and waiting for Him to come back, we're called to be patient. It's understandable that if we're going through tough times, facing difficulties, feeling overwhelmed, and/or stressed to the maximum, we would want the return of Jesus to be sooner rather than later. Who wouldn't? To these people, God says: be patient. And why does God want us to be patient about the return of Jesus? Because more time until He comes back means more people will be going to heaven ... more time until He returns means more people have the opportunity to repent ... more time until His second coming means more people receiving God's gift of salvation. As the apostle Peter wrote in his second letter: *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9)* Since God is patient with us, let us be patient about His return. "Jesus will come again and tho' we don't know when, the countdown's getting lower everyday."

1. Even though the scriptures state that God "is patient with you", do you feel this is so? Why or why not?
2. Why do you look forward to the return of Jesus?
3. How are you preparing yourself for His return?
4. How will life on earth be different after Jesus returns than it is today?

If time permits, continue past this point for further discussion:

READ Galatians 5:22-23.

READ Psalm 40:1-3.

5. In the Galatians reading, "patience" is referred to as one of the fruit of the Spirit. What does this mean? Why is this important? How should this impact our lives?
6. Describe the positive outcome David, the one who wrote Psalm 40, had as a result of waiting patiently for the Lord.
7. Why is it sometimes difficult to wait patiently for God?
8. Why is waiting patiently for the Lord advisable?