

“Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city.” Proverbs 16:32
NLT

lectio // Proverbs 16:18-33

In this current discussion about leadership and being voted in as Lead Pastor, I am drawn to these passages about power. Here the wisdom writers compare and contrast patience and power. What an odd comparison. Is power not capable of patience? Do powerful people, leaders, CEOs, officials and rulers struggle with patience? In this instance they compare it to self-control and write that it is better than conquering. Are they referring to a takeover, a campaign of some kind? Is there more than one way to “capture?” Maybe patience or self-control is a way of “winning over” hearts and minds and is a “better” way. Jesus was heralded as a conqueror as he rode into the city on a young donkey, the absolute meekest way to enter. Jesus’ patience was extreme when he took three years talking and healing and being with the actual residents of Jerusalem. By the time he rode in, Jesus had invested hours upon hours of looking people in the eyes, inviting them to meals, calling them by name. He wasn’t campaigning for an office or a title, he was loving and serving those who had a warped view of power, religion and God himself. Patience takes time, relationship and service. It’s the slowest way to earn your way into someone’s life, but it’s the best way. Let’s be clear. This isn’t a manipulative way to get something or win their favor, it’s just a way for people to get a clearer picture of God and his grace.

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Dad,

The way I’m wired up, I don’t think I could be the kind of conqueror that captures a city, to loot, plunder and pillage the residents while I made my way to the throne to rule and reign. However, I can get better at patience and self-control to earn respect to eventually lead. I just need the strength for the long haul of building back a community, one person at a time. And, with your help, I can stay focused on the mission, clearing my motives while establishing trust in the people I serve.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root