

Are You Weary of Waiting on the Lord?
Habakkuk 2:3, 2 Peter 3:8-9, Jeremiah 1:11-12

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Have you ever asked or trusted God for something, fully expecting He would give it to you, but instead the response you received was to be patient?

Though, patience is a fruit of the Spirit, the truth is we don't want to be patient for God to bless or deliver us, or at least not patient for any length of time.

So, let's be honest... we live in a microwave world where everything is immediate.

I don't care what age you are, what generation you're from, traditionalist, Baby boomer, millennial to centennial, if you're living today, you have succumbed to this microwave society.

If you think about it, nobody really wants to be patient since today being patient is more of a "have to" than a "get to."

In fact, you should never pray for patience, because God won't send you more patience; He'll send you more situations to test your patience.

The fact is... most people don't like to wait. My motto has always been: If I wanted it tomorrow, I'd ask for it tomorrow!

We get frustrated when we have to wait in line at the grocery store or when we're held up behind a slow car in the fast lane.

The problem with this attitude is that hurriedness often works its way into our spiritual lives causing us to rush into the next thing before calling on God for direction.

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While most of us feel the need to rush, God's not in hurry. In fact, as you read the Bible, you'll see that God usually solves things in what we view as slow. What we forget is that His timing is different from ours.

Habakkuk 2:3, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

Or as another translation put it: *"At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting--it will happen!"*

Today, all we want is for good things to happen in our lives, i.e. to be delivered from situations, receive healing and prosperity, or just to have peace.

But our problem is that we want it now, not later. Because when it doesn't happen right away, we get frustrated and begin whining, *"When, God, when?"*

What we forget is that God has a plan and a purpose for us according to His will.

2 Peter 3:8-9, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Although the Lord is ready and willing to answer prayers and requests, He doesn't always do it within our timeframe. In fact, the Bible gives us many examples of this.

- Abraham: When Abraham was 75 years old, God promised to give him a descendant through whom would come nations. But it was 25 years later before Isaac was born! Abraham was 100 years old by then!
- Joseph: God promised Joseph that he would rule over his brothers... yet it was 15-20 years before that promise was fulfilled.
- Hebrews: The Hebrew people were enslaved in Egypt after Joseph died. They lived in slavery for 400 years before God delivered them through Moses. Wouldn't 300 have been enough?
- David: David was anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel. Yet rather than being crowned the next day, David spent the next 7 years of his life running from cave to cave trying to keep Saul from killing him. It was 14 years before he actually became king over all Israel.
- Paul: On Paul's conversion, the Lord promised that he would become an apostle to the Gentiles, yet Paul lived in obscurity for years; meeting stiff resistance at every turn before that promise was fulfilled.
- Lazarus: Lazarus' sisters sent for Jesus when Lazarus fell ill. Instead of coming immediately, Jesus delayed, and by the time He arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days! When Jesus did show up, He was accused of taking too long.

We believe God's too "slow" because it's an inconvenience and frustrating to us. But God rarely does things according to our timeframe, and because of this we easily get discouraged.

Unfortunately, waiting is a part of life; whether we're patient or not. But, if the point of waiting is just to reach the end of the waiting period and get what we want, then there's really no purpose in waiting.

So why wait? I'll tell you why. Though waiting is tedious and boring, it's one of God's tools for developing people. Listen to Jeremiah 1:11-12.

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Jeremiah 1:11-12, *"The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" "I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied. The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."*

In these verses, we see God watching over what He has spoken come to pass in the physical world.

The Hebrew word used in this passage for *"watching"* is one which means *"to be alert, to be awake, to be on the lookout"* while waiting for the fulfillment.

God sets things in motion to bring about the fulfillment of His Word here in the physical and He knows exactly when His words will come to pass.

He could make that time be instant, or He could wait until the moment before it happens. He could eliminate waiting but He doesn't. Why? Because God is at work in the waiting.

As believers, we're told in Romans 8:28, *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

What's that purpose? If God makes us wait, there must be a reason. If so, what is it? Well, there are several reasons.

First, waiting reveals our true motives. Waiting has a way of bringing our true motives of desire and wants to light.

Non-true motives don't like to wait because they're not interested in the commitment it takes to see something through. Non-true motives are only interested in short-term gains or successes.

Most of us have good intentions, but a lot of what we want is for our own egos, or to make us feel good, or our own pleasures. These motives are not in line with God's purpose or will.

Another reason for waiting is that it transforms our character. James 1:2-4 tells us that, "*trials make us perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*"

If we go through our trials in faith, waiting has a way of rubbing off the rough edges of our lives.

Most of us know the story of Moses delivering the Israelite's from the Egyptians. However, few of us hear or talk about Moses having to wait in the desert 40 years before God came to him.

God used this time of waiting to transform Moses' character. We know this because when he was a young man, he was hasty and impatient.

In his impulsiveness he killed a man and hid the body. When his sin was made public, he ran for his life and was exiled to the desert.

Then, when Moses was given a second chance, he opted to do it God's way and in God's time.

In the end, the Israelite's were delivered from slavery and Moses became a great leader. Waiting transformed his life and it'll do the same for us.

Waiting also prepares us for what's coming because whatever we're waiting on hasn't come due to the fact that we're just not ready.

It may be that we need new skills, or a little more maturity, or a particular spiritual insight. For example, David waited 14 years to become king of Israel after God had anointed him king.

But when he did become king, he was a stronger, wiser, and battle tested king. Therefore, God will sometimes withhold blessings to protect us.

Another reason we are called to wait is that waiting builds intimacy and dependency upon God. How would we learn to trust Him if He immediately fulfilled our every request?

The reason we're able to read about the great men and women of the Bible is because they all had one thing in common.

They were people who learned their success in life was directly proportionate to their intimacy and dependency upon God.

For them, a relationship with God wasn't a get rich quick scheme, it was a matter of life and death. Waiting during the difficult times developed their relationship with God.

The reason we get to read the stories of these great men and women is because they went through the difficulties of life with God. In the end, they enjoyed the promises of God.

I've always believed God is just as interested in the journey as He is the destination. If not, all the Biblical accounts would only include the feel-good parts and not the bad and ugly times of waiting.

We may not always understand why we must wait, but the good news is that God never asks us to wait without Him.

Finally, waiting allows God to fulfill His purpose in our lives at the right time. This sounds a little vague because it is!

God chooses the right time, not us, and He has His own criteria for that. So, whatever we're waiting for, we can trust God that the right time hasn't come yet.

Now, if the right time hasn't come yet, that doesn't mean we haven't grown enough, or we're not prepared. Only God knows the reasons for the right time.

We shouldn't blame ourselves for a delayed fulfillment, we just need to use the time to prepare and grow.

Change, or to bring about change, is a process and we must spend time waiting for that change to occur, that's life.

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Waiting is a given. Many people want change, but they don't want to go through the waiting process. Yet the fact remains, we're going to wait.

The question is, *"Are we going to wait the wrong or right way?"*
Remember, God causes things to happen at exactly the right time!

Our job isn't to figure out when, but to make up our mind to trust Him through the process. So, stop trying to figure everything out and let God be God.

Waiting's hard, no matter for what we're waiting. Even though we don't like feeling stuck in seasons of waiting, waiting doesn't have to be an empty space of nothing until something happens.

God uses seasons of waiting to prepare us for what's coming, to draw us closer to Him, and to make sure His promises are fulfilled at the proper time.

God wants us to live by discernment—revealed knowledge, not head knowledge. But it's difficult to exercise discernment if we're always trying to figure everything out.

That's why, when we're willing to say, *"God, I can't figure this out, so I'm going to trust You to give me revelation that will set me free."* This frees us to be comfortable in spite of not knowing.

Trusting God requires not knowing how God is going to accomplish what needs to be done and not knowing when He will do it. We often say God is never late, but generally He isn't early either. Why?

Because He uses times of waiting to stretch our faith in Him and to bring about change and growth in our lives. Most of us need to grow in the area of trusting God instead of focusing on the "when" question.

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Conclusion

If you're missing joy and peace, you're not trusting God. If your mind feels worn out all the time, you're not trusting God.

Our waiting period is God's preparation time. He may put us on hold to coordinate events to line up with His will, so waiting helps strengthen us spiritually.

Christian maturity becomes more evident in our ability to wait in peaceful confidence. We'll know exactly what to do when we trust in His timing.

The problem is that our prayers often revolve around asking God to hurry up and bless what we want done or want to do. But what if God's answer is simply, *"Be patient. Wait upon me?"*

Then we need to pray like David in Psalm 5:3, *"In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly."*

If we wait the wrong way, we'll be miserable; but if we decide to wait God's way, we can become patient and enjoy the wait. That's why we must trust His response, even if it doesn't come in the time we expect.

But it takes practice. Yet, as we let God help us in each situation, we develop patience which is a fruit of the Spirit and one of the most important Christian virtues.

Patience is developed only under trial, so we must not run from difficult situations. Listen to what James has to say about waiting:

James 1:4, *"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*