

Waiting on God's Timing

One of the hardest things for us to do, imperfect sinful creatures that we are, is to wait for God to answer our prayers according to His wisdom and His timing. We are so impatient, and we want what we want, and we want it now! There is an expression used in the Bible called "**waiting on the Lord**" and we must learn to practice that kind of waiting. Sometimes God answers our prayers immediately, but other times there is a greater lesson to be learned in the "waiting on God" period, and so He does not give us an immediate answer. The word translated "wait" also has the meaning of "hope" and "lean on" God. We are not supposed to just wait on God in a vacuum, doing nothing, but we are to trust and lean on Him, trusting that He is working everything out in His perfect timing.

- **Psalm 25:3-5** "Indeed, let no one **who WAITS on You** be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause. Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; **on You I WAIT all the day.**"
- **Psalm 27:14** "**WAIT on the Lord**; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; **WAIT, I say, on the Lord!**"
- **Psalm 37:34** "**WAIT on the Lord**, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land...."

Waiting on the Lord is an act of obedience. Waiting on God's timing teaches us to trust God and allows "patience to have its perfect work" in our lives (James 1:2-4). Patience, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, will perform surgery, cutting out character defects like a scalpel, if we allow it to do its perfect work. We need to learn to obey God without analyzing the situation ("leaning on our own understanding" - Prov. 3:5), looking for other options, worrying (fretting), or whining and complaining (see Phil. 4:6-7, I Thess. 5:18).

- **James 1:2-4** "My brethren, count it all JOY when you fall into various trials, knowing that the TESTING of your faith produces PATIENCE. But **let patience have its perfect work**, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and **do not lean on your own understanding**. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall DIRECT your paths."
- **Psalm 37:4-5** "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your HEART. Commit your way to the Lord, TRUST also in Him, and He shall BRING it to PASS."
- **Psalm 37:7-8** "**Rest in the Lord, and WAIT patiently for Him**; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret it only causes harm."
- **Psalm 37:23-24** "**The STEPS** of a righteous man are ORDERED by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand."

We need to learn to trust and wait on God no matter how dark or how impossible the way may seem. God promises to "order our steps" as we take one step at a time by faith. God does **NOT** reveal His personal plan for any of us by **unfolding to us a long-range view**, but that's what we want. We want God to let us know WHY we have to wait, and WHAT He is doing, and then we'll be okay with it. Psalm 37:23 says **the STEPS** of a righteous man are ORDERED by the Lord, so we must follow **Him one STEP at a time**. He does NOT promise to reveal a long-range plan to any of us, because if He did, our NATURAL INCLINATION would be to examine and analyze it to SEE if we APPROVED of His will and plan or not! Also, He knows what TRIALS and TESTINGS we must go through, but if they were revealed to us ahead of

time or ALL AT ONCE, we would not have the faith to go through them. He only gives us the FAITH and STRENGTH (power) to handle **each day's problems as they happen**. God wants us to trust Him one day at a time, each step at a time, **being willing to just OBEY Him and make right decisions and choices for TODAY**, trusting Him to reveal the next step as we come to it. Romans 8:13-14 tells us to "walk NOT according to the flesh (our five physical senses - what we SEE, FEEL, etc.) but according to the Spirit." If we allow our physical senses and outward circumstances to be our evidence, rather than FAITH in Gods word, we will be defeated.

- **II Corinthians 5:7** "For we walk by FAITH, not by SIGHT."
- **Hebrews 11:1** "Now FAITH is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things NOT SEEN."
- **Matthew 6:34** "Therefore do NOT worry about TOMORROW, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. **SUFFICIENT for the DAY** is its own trouble."
- **II Corinthians 12:9** "And He said to me, **My GRACE is SUFFICIENT** (enough) for you, for **My STRENGTH** is made perfect in [*your*] weakness. Therefore most gladly will I rather boast in my infirmities (weakness), that **the POWER of Christ** may rest upon me."
- **Luke 9:23** "Then He said to them all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **DAILY**, and follow Me."

What happens if we don't wait for Gods timing, but we go ahead and try to "help out God" through our own fleshly efforts? We see an example of that with Abraham and Sarah (read Genesis chapter 16), as they got impatient when God didn't answer their prayers when they wanted, and then they messed up everything by trying to help out God. Their disobedience ended up with the birth of Ishmael, who became the father of the Arab nations, and there have been wars and terrorist attacks going on for thousands of years between the Arabs and the Jews. So, we end up with "Ishmaels" in our lives, if we don't trust God to work in His timing. Psalm 37:7-8 tells us to "Rest in the Lord, and WAIT patiently for Him; do not FRET....Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not FRET it only causes harm." We see what "harm" can be caused by fretting (worrying) and being motivated out of fear and doubt, as Sarah was. Fear, because they were getting older and still no baby was born, and doubt, because she doubted that God would really keep His word. **To fret and worry is to let fear take over your thoughts, and fear is the opposite of faith.** Were told in the New Testament that Abraham believed God, and his faith was accounted as righteousness, and he is held up as an example for all who believe. However, at this crucial moment, he was persuaded by Sarah, and her doubt and fear were contagious. How wonderful is the grace of God, that Abrahams sin of momentarily distrusting God was forgiven, and he is still called The Father of the Faithful.

- **Galatians 3:9** "So then they which are of faith are blessed with **BELIEVING Abraham.**"
- **Romans 4:16-22** "...to those who are of **the faith of Abraham**, who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations) in the presence of Him whom he believed, God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in HOPE believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, So shall your descendants be. And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness."

As hard as it is for us to wait on Gods perfect timing, it is harder in the long run to live with the consequences of our own poor choices and decisions we made when motivated by fear, anxiety, and impatience. What are the devils two tools in his toolbox, as far as Christians are concerned? They are fear and doubt. The devil will try to get you to give up on God answering

your prayer, and will instill doubt as to whether He will really come through, or fear that it is taking too long, and something bad might happen to you. God is never late, He's always on time. He only seems to delay or be late **from our point of view**, because we don't see the whole picture. When He delays, it is for the purpose of producing character in us (such as patience, or learning not to worry and be anxious), or for some other greater lesson, or even a miracle. One example of this would be when Jesus deliberately delayed going to see Lazarus, even though He had been told that Lazarus was very sick.

- **John 11:3-8** "Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." When Jesus heard that, He said, "**This sickness is not unto death**, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, **He stayed two more days in the place where He was**. Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

Jesus had gone out to the desert, by the Jordan River, to get away from the angry mob in Jerusalem. Why didn't Jesus HURRY to be with Lazarus, and heal him? It was NOT because Jesus was afraid, but rather that the timing had to be just right. Jesus STAYED two days, plus the time it would take to TRAVEL to Bethany, so that Lazarus would DIE, and everyone would know that Lazarus was TRULY DEAD, so that Jesus could raise him from the dead. **Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do**, and that is why He said, "**This sickness is not unto death**, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it," because He would be glorified by the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

- **John 11:17-21** "So when Jesus came, He found that **he had already been in the tomb four days**.And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, "**Lord, IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE**, my brother would not have died."
- **Romans 8:28** "And we know that **ALL things WORK together for GOOD** to those who LOVE GOD, to those who are the CALLED according to His PURPOSE."

How often do **WE question the Lord's timing?** We also question WHAT God is doing or has done by saying, "Lord, IF ONLY such and such had happened...." We get our eyes off the Lord and on to the "what if"s and "if only"s. **Jesus deliberately WAITED** two extra days before going to Bethany to see Lazarus, BUT He didn't tell his disciples or Mary and Martha what He planned to do. Jesus knew exactly what He was doing, and His timing was perfect! The Lord promises that He will cause "**ALL things to WORK together for our GOOD**" if we will only **trust Him**. What is Gods promise for **those who will WAIT on Him** and His perfect timing? If we truly TRUST God through the waiting time, He promises to give us strength, power, the ability to "hang in there" and not get tired or weary, and the ability to actually soar above life's problems with "wings like the eagles".

- **Isaiah 40:28-31** "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. **He gives STRENGTH to the weary**, and to him who lacks might **He increases POWER**. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those **who WAIT for the Lord** will gain new strength; **they will mount up with wings like eagles**, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

We must remain steadfast, and NOT waver back and forth (being double-minded), if things don't go according to OUR time table. Some things take time, because God is working all things together, and waiting for certain things to happen. But there is something else very positive and constructive that we need to be doing during this waiting time. **We need to**

PRAISE GOD and PRAY with THANKSGIVING. An example is Paul and Silas in prison, praising God at midnight, even though they didn't SEE any way out, or SEE how any good could come out of that situation. Do you think they FELT like praising God? No, they had been severely beaten and locked up in the stocks. If you wait until you FEEL like obeying Gods commandments, or FEEL like praising Him, or wait until you can SEE what good might be coming out of this or that situation, that is PRIDE, and you are making your feelings and your own judgment your god! (Prov. 3:5-6, "do not lean on your own understanding")

- **I Thessalonians 5:16-18** "**REJOICE ALWAYS**, pray without ceasing, **in EVERYTHING give THANKS**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
- **Philippians 4:6-7** "Be **ANXIOUS** for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with THANKSGIVING**, let your requests be made known to God. And the **PEACE of GOD**, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- **Acts 16:24-25** "Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were **PRAYING and SINGING HYMNS to God**, and the [other] prisoners were listening to them."
- **James 1:6-8** "But let him **ASK IN FAITH**, nothing wavering (doubting). For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let NOT that man think that he shall receive ANYTHING of the Lord. A **DOUBLE-MINDED man is unstable in all his ways.**"
- **Romans 4:20** "He (Abraham) did not **WAVER** at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in **FAITH, giving glory (PRAISE) to God**, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform."

So, **WORK on your ATTITUDE** and **ASK for the faith**, trust, and patience to put everything in Gods hands and **leave the results up to Him**. Don't try to tell God HOW YOU think He ought to answer your prayer. You can put it all in Gods hands because He loves you and wants what is best for you. Remember, if you keep on insisting that God answer your prayers YOUR WAY and on YOUR SCHEDULE or timing, that is really a form of PRIDE! Make a decision to confess what Gods word tells you rather than what your physical senses or emotions tell you. **FAITH is the evidence of things NOT SEEN**" (Heb. 11:1), so if you are waiting until you SEE something, **that is not FAITH!**

- **I Peter 5:5-7** "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you **at the PROPER TIME**, casting ALL your care (worry, anxiety, fear) upon Him, because He cares for you."

If you say you have prayed and believe God has heard your prayers, but you still go around TALKING like it hasnt happened or it isnt going to happen, then you are being DOUBLE-MINDED, and you are sabotaging your own prayers! Mark 11:22b-24 says "...**Have faith in God**. For assuredly I say to you, that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and **does not doubt in his heart, but BELIEVES** that those things **which he SAYS** will come to pass, he will have **whatever he says**. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you desire, when you pray, **believe that you RECEIVE them**, and you shall have them."

- **I John 5:14-15** "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we **ASK** anything according to His will (His WORD), He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we **ASK**, we know that **WE HAVE THE REQUESTS that we have asked of Him.**"

What is it you **NEED** from God? Phil. 4:6-7 & 19 tells us to "Be **ANXIOUS** for nothing, but in everything by **PRAYER** and supplication with **THANKSGIVING, let your REQUESTS be MADE KNOWN to GOD**. And the **PEACE of GOD**, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard

your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" and "...my **God shall SUPPLY ALL your NEEDS** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If you are out of work, and have prayed for a job, start THANKING and praising GOD, and also tell your friends that the Lord has answered your prayers for a job! Tell them that God has the perfect job for you, but you just don't know where it is yet. Keep sending out resumes and making phone calls, that's YOUR part, but start confessing that God HAS already given you a job. If its money you've prayed for, and you need it by a certain date, start thanking God for giving you the money you need, even before you have it in your hand, or before a check arrives in the mail! What if your request is for God to give you a mate, or a couple praying to have a baby? God's word is FULL of PROMISES you can grab a hold of, and while you are waiting for Gods perfect timing, PREPARE yourself to BE the best wife, husband or parent that you can be! Prov. 18:22 says "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord." Get honest with yourself and God! Maybe if God answered your prayer RIGHT NOW, it wouldn't be a good thing! Make whatever changes you need to make in your life, in your attitudes, in your character, while waiting for God to answer your prayer. Make sure that you are READY for God to entrust another human being into your life. His timing is perfect, and "No GOOD thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). Learn to **WAIT on God** and allow the peace of God to guard your heart and mind. Do not be anxious while waiting for your answer, but realize that God will bring it about at the "proper time" according to His schedule. Remember, "whatever things you desire, when you pray, **believe that you RECEIVE them, and you shall HAVE them.**" What you do in that INTERVAL between BELIEVING you RECEIVE and "HAVING" is critical! Find some scripture promises in His word that you can HOLD ONTO while you are waiting, and **continually PRAISE God** for the answer.

- **Matthew 6:31-33** "Therefore, DO NOT WORRY, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or With what shall we clothe ourselves?..... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But SEEK FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and ALL THESE THINGS shall be added unto you."