

ADAM HOUGE

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

WHEN
GOD
MAKES
YOU
WAIT



When God Makes You Wait™

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Waiting Has a Purpose

Sunday service had just ended, and the pastor was lingering at the foot of the pulpit. He knew a group would approach him because there was always someone who wanted to talk after service. But that's when Margret—the last person he wanted to see that day—came storming up to him.

"It's useless," she grumped angrily. "It's completely worthless."

"What is?" the old man responded a little nervously, already knowing what she was getting at.

"The waiting place, of course!" she exclaimed. "Why am I here, anyway?"

Margret needed a financial miracle. She had previously been a personal secretary for an executive of a Fortune 500 company, and money was wonderful. But after her husband was diagnosed with liver cancer and fell critically ill, she was released for missing too many days to help him. Now, several months later, she was left in a place at which neither she nor her husband worked and bills kept piling up.

"If I wait any longer, I'm going to lose my home!" she barked at the man, now leaning forcefully over his cowering presence. "Why isn't God helping me?!"

The minister needed to step back to avoid her finger, which she was shaking furiously in his face.

"It was you, Pastor Bill!" she said as her finger assaulted him. "You told me He'd show up at the last minute! But the last minute is here, and where is God?"

Pastor Bill looked at her scowling face and then at the exit behind him. He contemplated ducking for cover rather than responding; but after a moment, he released a heavy sigh.

"Margret," he started, "slow down a minute."

"Slow down? *SLOW DOWN?!'*" she yelled, now gaining the attention of some onlookers. "I don't have time to slow down! I've been looking everywhere for a job, and God hasn't heard me."

"God's timing is perfect," he tried to say in the Lord's defense, but Margret's impatience interrupted once more.

"Well, it'd be perfect timing if He did something now!"

“Margret, you’re doubting God.”

“Doubting? No, it’s plain to see I’m going to lose everything.”

“Maybe you should stop trusting in what you see. God isn’t going to work until He’s ready, and maybe He’s just waiting on you.”

“Me? How so?” she inquired demandingly.

“Look at yourself. You’re frantic and angry. Is this how Jesus acted going to the cross?”

“No,” she replied somberly.

“What if God is calling you to bear your cross right now? What if, by losing everything you have, you’ll gain everything that Christ is? Wouldn’t it be worth it then? To lose it all to gain Him?”

Margret hung her head for a moment. She was nearing retirement and her husband was a year away from his, but now she didn’t know what their future held. “Yes. He’s worth it,” she said. “I was just hoping He’d jump in and save the day.”

“Look at me. Look at my eyes,” the old man said, desiring her to know the sincerity his words held. “Your future doesn’t hold you. Jesus holds your future. Can you trust Him with your future?”

“Yes.”

“Maybe he hasn’t stepped in because you haven’t been trusting Him. Maybe you’ve been trusting your wealth, and now that it’s gone, you have nothing left to hold onto.”

Immediately Margret understood where she was going wrong. She felt she had all the faith in the world, but her faith was misplaced. She had hoped God would give her a new job to save her from her circumstances because her trust was secretly in the job and what the bank account said, not in God’s saving hand, though she hadn’t realized it. Now the Lord was testing her and stretching her through her trial, but she thought she was waiting for God to save her. Little did she know that God was giving her something even greater: wisdom for eternal life and a more intimate relationship with Jesus.

“Margret,” Pastor Bill continued, “I’ve seen it a thousand times. The waiting place isn’t a place of waiting at all. God is working silently behind the scenes to teach you something through your circumstances, and all you’ve been doing is

ignoring God's true intention for you. He wants to grow you, and if you press into that, repenting of your misplaced trust, you'll begin to experience His healing."

She hung her head again as she contemplated the facts. Then, after a moment, she responded with a nod, signifying that she finally understood. "God, I repent," she said out loud to the Lord. "I do believe Your love is better than life, and if You're calling me to lose it all to gain You, then I surrender Jesus. I'm sorry I've been hanging on so hard. If you want it, take it. I let go. Just hold my future, Jesus."

It was nearly two weeks after these final remarks when she received the phone call.

"Hello, is Margret available?" asked the man on the other end.

"Yes, this is she."

"Oh, good. This is Jim from Capital City Bank. I'm calling you regarding the pending foreclosure of your home."

Margret froze. She had been waiting for the bad news, but she hadn't realized it was time already. "I'm trying to get the money! It's just that I've been out of work for a long time and my husband—"

"Ma'am, I'm not calling about your payments right now," he started, but Margret interrupted in tears.

"Please, don't foreclose on me! I don't have anywhere to go. I don't have the money now, but I swear I'll pay. I've never had a problem paying in twenty-five years, and—"

"Ma'am. I understand, but this isn't what you think," he said, trying to find an opportunity to continue speaking. "I'm calling to let you know that your mortgage is paid off."

Margret's heart stood still. Then the man continued, "You'll be receiving the final documents in the mail."

"How is this possible?" she said in a different kind of tears.

"Someone paid your debt, ma'am, and covered the remaining \$25,000 on your loan."

"WHAT?! WHO?!"

“I don’t have the name here with me. My supervisor has that information. But there is a note on the account for you from the donor... If you wanted me to share it...”

“Yes!” she exclaimed after a dramatic pause.

“Now this is the donor words not ours, but the donor wanted you to know that: ‘God works all things together for good.’”

One of the church members who had never met Margret had heard her ranting and raving at the pastor two weeks prior and felt a tug from God. The man was a multimillionaire real estate investor who, incidentally, had just lost his personal assistant and was in need of a new one...

Needless to say, God patched Margret’s life back together. Her husband had a transplant and began making a recovery, and her new boss also helped with the medical bills. Even though she didn’t make as much as she used to, her husband was able to retire off of their income with the mortgage out of the way, and she was able to take the next five years to prepare for her retirement as well.

Sometimes God works in the most unexpected ways. However, the greatest place He works is in the waiting place. It is there, in the quietness and stillness, that He silently operates on your heart. Like a skillful surgeon, He removes the hardened places, the plaque and rigid vessels that you weren’t aware you had, and that won’t submit to His plan, then He gives you newer, softer, more pliable vessels for doing His will.

The Waiting Game

Nobody likes the waiting game. You've been seeking His will, but God isn't answering. Time and time again, you've prayed for direction but have turned up empty. It's that moment when crickets chirp louder than your thoughts. It's the waiting place.

Without fail, we end up in this place. Sometimes it ends quickly, but other times it drags on without end, perhaps leading you to wonder where God is in all the mess. In Margret's case, I can tell you where God was the entire time: by her side. Like the song "You Know Where to Find Me," written by Matthew Joseph West, says,

"If you ever need me
You know where to find me
I will be waiting
Where I've always been
If you ever need me
You know where to find me
I have never left you
I'm where I've always been
Right by your side
Right by your side"

It's the same place He is while He waits for you. The waiting place isn't really about our waiting for God but, rather, about God waiting for us. We think we're waiting for Him to reveal His will or the next step in His plan, but in truth He is waiting for our hearts to be prepared with the lesson He's teaching us.

So the waiting place isn't about waiting at all. Instead, it's a time of growth as we learn to be patient with God.

The Master Plan

Paul was in Troas waiting on God when he received the call. He had a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading with him to preach the gospel. So he gathered his things and left swiftly with his companions. Any other Christian in his shoes may have thought that the Lord was sending him or her on a mighty mission of victory. But Paul was certainly more cautious, allowing the wisdom of the Spirit to guide his heart.

Upon arriving in Philippi, the group settled in quickly but remained there for several days before anything happened. So Paul and Silas began searching for the will of God.

“I’ve found them!” the young man exclaimed from the door.

A man, in his late fifties by appearance, was seated on the edge of the bed. “Who?”

“Others. Jews! The Lord has shown me where the women meet,” said the young man.

Paul had sent out his companion Timothy to search while he and Silas meditated and prayed for direction. But now a smile drew across his face because the Lord began to reveal His will.

“Show us,” Paul said as he hastened to his feet.

The breeze was wonderful that late morning. The fresh scent of the nearby Gangites River captivated the men for a moment. A sense of deep peace covered the region near where a group of women was gathered. Usually this part of the shallow, slowly moving river was used by women to gather the water they needed. It was an ideal place for a woman of God to meet her sisters in the Lord because women were crossing each other’s paths daily as they prepared their families’ necessities. Conversations often sparked among the women, and the Jews enjoyed praying together at the water’s edge. In time a small handful of praying women slowly transformed into a large and stable group, for they shared a common heritage.

Every Sabbath they would meet at the same place to pray. They had been meeting there for years, and it seemed like an ideal, quiet area to seek the Lord together. Paul and his companions had come and spoke with the women. Many

were encouraged, but one particular woman had been touched by Paul's message and received the Lord. After he had baptized her in the river, she begged him and his men to remain with her family and not to waste money at the inn, nor to spend any nights in the open square. After they were convinced, they had remained with her to encourage her family in the Lord. Still, the man of Paul's vision hadn't yet appeared, so he continued to wait and pray for God's will to be revealed. Then, the next Sabbath, the unexpected happened.

The short, white stone wall that graced the side of the road acted as a barrier between the city and the field. The sun caught the stones at just the right angle, causing Silas to squint from the brightness. In this region, the small homes crafted from dried mud and clay brought a slight earthen scent to the air.

The men were leaving to join the women by the river for prayer. They passed a few small groups of villagers, who chattered amongst one another about the typical gossip. Then, as they passed a smaller group, a little girl emerged. She was short and wore slightly tattered clothing. Her neck was gripped by a collar upon which a rope was tied. The rope was held by two devious men, who used her for their own personal gain.

Her dirty face flinched and contorted as Paul and his companions walked by.

"It's them," said the crackling voice of the demon through the girl.

"Who?" asked the slave girl's owner. But rather than answer him, the girl compelled the men as a puppy does with its master through the leash.

"*THESE ARE THE MEN!*" cried the demon, gaining the attention of the nearby groups of people. Paul glanced back at the child and felt a chill run up his spine. Immediately he knew that she was possessed, but he tried to ignore her so he wouldn't be late for the prayer gathering.

"*THIS MAN LEADS THEM!*" she cried out again, pointing at Paul. The villagers were accustomed to the little girl making a scene, and they knew that whenever she did, something incredible was going to happen. So they followed behind her to see what fortune she might tell. Although Paul was growing perturbed by the demon's incessant ranting about them, he kept his peace.

"*THESE ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD!*" she continued yelling. "*THEY BRING THE MESSAGE OF THE WAY OF SALVATION TO US!*"

Paul hastened with the men to leave her presence and joined the women in prayer. But as time went on, day after day, the girl wouldn't leave them alone. She followed them everywhere, and the owners enjoyed the attention because it reminded the people of her ability to tell a fortune. Paul, however, was greatly annoyed. Yet he kept silent as he tried to determine what God was doing because he still hadn't found the man of his vision.

Then, late one afternoon, the demon stood next to the men while the owners showed no respect at all. They both stood by, grinning ear to ear, as she hollered obnoxiously next to Timothy. Rather than taking her away, they allowed her to annoy them because it was good for their profit.

She yelled again, this time next to Paul, causing him to flinch from the noise. He grabbed Timothy and compelled him along with Silas to hasten away from the girl. But rather than letting them leave, this time she continued yelling from the distance. A couple of young women propped open the wooden shutters of their homes to see what all the commotion was about. Meanwhile, a small group formed nearby, still waiting anxiously for something to happen.

That's when Paul couldn't take it anymore. He stopped in his tracks and barked at the demon.

"I command you in the name of Jesus to come out of her!" Immediately the demon left, and he continued to walk away.

"What's wrong with you!" one of owners said to the girl as she stopped hollering. Yet she stood there, astonished, and offered no reply. Her face was no longer contorted, and she acted as if she was in her right mind.

One man left the group and drew near to the owners. Then he showed them some money.

"Look, this is all I have. I need to know what my future holds because my plans haven't been working out. Especially with the lack of rain, my crops are suffering. Can she tell me what's going to happen so I can prepare?"

The other owner happily took the money. "You are very wise, sir! There is nothing better than to prepare for your future, and this little one can tell you exactly what to expect." Then the man who took the money stooped down by the little girl. "Okay now, tell the man his fortune," he said with a friendly smile. But the girl offered no reply.

“Why don’t you say something? The man paid us!” the other owner, who held the leash, insisted with a tug. This motion choked the girl, and she cried.

“What’s wrong with your slave? Can’t she tell me anything?” the man asked. That’s when an old woman who stood nearby spoke up.

“That man told the spirit to leave her, and I think it listened.”

“*What?!*” the owner cried out. “That’s impossible!” But the customer shot them a look and snatched his money out of their hands, then walked away.

An angry pounding was heard from the front door. The young woman who had invited Paul to stay with her answered.

“Where is the man they call Paul?” asked the gruff-voiced soldier. They forced their way in without waiting for a reply and found him and Silas.

“Those are the men!” cried one of the slave girl’s owners.

Immediately Paul and Silas were bound and compelled to leave. The owners dragged them into the marketplace and brought them to the authorities to be judged before the magistrates.

“These men, being Jews, trouble our city immensely!” one of the owners testified. “They teach customs that aren’t lawful for us Romans, especially about a different king, named Jesus.” It was illegal to claim another king besides Caesar. According to Roman law, any man who served another king was to be killed, and any city that served a different king was to be destroyed. So this testimony troubled the magistrates greatly. The sounds of fabric tearing echoed through the chamber. Each man tore his garment in protest, and they commanded that Paul and Silas be beaten.

Afterward, Paul and Silas were thrown into the prison and left under guard. After a few moments, Silas spoke up about Paul’s vision and what the Lord might be doing. But then a voice from the darkness behind them spoke up.

“So much for your mission,” the other prisoner mocked. He had heard the two talking. “Where’s your God now?” Paul ignored this man, but Silas couldn’t keep quiet.

“We don’t need to know what God is doing, just what He’s telling us to do,” he said through his bruised mouth.

“Your God put you in prison. Some God He is,” the man continued mocking. “Unless, of course, you didn’t have a vision from a god but were only disillusioned by a fantasy of your mind, brought on by the heat of the day.”

Silas kept his peace and, with Paul, chose to ignore the man. Then the two worshipped loudly in faith while they waited in chains for God’s faithfulness.

Immediately, the foundation of the prison was shaken, and the whole region roared with an earthquake. The chains fell off the men, and the prison doors burst open. The guard was terrified that the prisoners had escaped, for Roman law commanded that if a guard lost his prisoners, he was to be put to death. So rather than wait for the humiliation his superiors would give him, he drew his sword and prepared to fall on it.

“He’s going to kill himself!” a man from a nearby cell yelled. Paul looked around the corner and saw the guard at the top of the stairs. Then he yelled to him, “We’re all here! Do not harm yourself!” and by these words he saved his life.

The guard, having heard their worship and having seen the power of God, fell down in tears because his life was spared. Then, like the man in Paul’s vision, he begged Paul and Silas on his knees that they would preach the gospel to him and his family.

A Reason for Everything

Similarly to what transpired in this fictionalized story about Paul's journey to Macedonia, you might also experience moments of apparent defeat. While we don't know whether Paul was mocked in prison or not, we can assume that Satan likely attempted to afflict his conscious. Whether this is true or not is mere speculation since it isn't written in the Scriptures. However, we know from our own experiences that when a decision in life suddenly knocks us off our feet, the devil likes to kick us while we're down and make us question God. You also may receive afflictions from within or from others around you during such situations. But the only way out is the same way Paul and Silas chose: through praise.

The word of God tells us that when they chose to worship from the pit of the prison, the Lord opened the prison doors. It wasn't a moment sooner. Likewise, you will be set free from your imprisoning trials through praise. Knowing this, you must learn to praise God no matter what life throws at you.

And just because life threw an unexpected curveball doesn't always mean you took a wrong step in your walk. When all the doors start closing, it doesn't mean disaster is coming; it means that God is about to open a new door. While turmoil and trials can take place, your final resting place will not be in the ash heap. God intends to use these situations for good and will most certainly lift you out of the pit into which you fell.

Consider Paul's situation. He was waiting in Troas for the Lord after experiencing several dead ends. First they wanted to go to Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade them. Then they tried to go to Bithynia, but again the Spirit didn't permit them. It seemed that every turn they took resulted in a closed door. But when they waited in Troas, the Lord revealed His will through a vision. Sometimes before God reveals His plan, you will experience a series of closed doors. When this happens, God is calling you to sit down and pray until He speaks. This isn't merely a single moment of prayer, but a season of praying. Then Paul, having applied this tactic, received a vision while He waited. Closed doors don't mean it's the end.

Satan would like to deceive you in those moments to think that God's will is too complex to understand and all you should do is act in your own wisdom. But whenever you are pressed to make a decision, it is likely Satan, not God, pressing you, so that you would step out in your own strength without the Lord.

Without the Lord, you will sink in the ocean rather than walking on water. So never obey the compelling force to make a decision but, rather, drown out the wind and waves through focusing on the presence of God. Then, when the Spirit speaks, you will hear Him clearly.

Under certain, rare circumstances, such as during a crisis, you may be pressed to make a decision. Due to your own state of heart, it could be difficult to hear the Lord. However, if you are literally forced to make a decision and have no choice, then God may have already given you the wisest idea. Only once in my life has this ever happened, so it may never even happen in yours. But if you are forced to make a decision, let's say by an authority (a boss, a judge, etc.), then whatever seems most concrete as a defining answer may be the direction God is leading you. If not, then choosing the concrete decision could release the pressure while you still privately pursue the other options.

Just because the pressure is off doesn't mean your decision is over; you can still actively explore the other options. However, in the end, you will most likely find that the concrete decision was the one God wanted you to make. If not, then at least the authorities let the pressure off and you were able to find God's will safely afterward by exploring the alternatives.

In truth, if you are pressured with a decision, either Satan is pressuring you and you need to wait on the Lord or God has already opened a door for you to walk through but you haven't realized it yet. However, 99.99 percent of the time, God will speak to you if you wait, and that is the safest thing for you to do. But if you don't listen intently by meditating on the Holy Spirit through prayer and worship, you may never hear the Lord when He speaks. It is easy to be distracted when everything around you is crashing down and falling apart. Remember, though, that Peter fell in the water when he was distracted by the crashing waves and howling wind.

It's also important to realize that not every road down which God leads you will end in what you expect to be victory. Consider that Jesus was led to the cross, and so was Peter at the end of his life. James was murdered by Herod's men, and Stephen was full of the Spirit when he was stoned to death. Paul's experience in Macedonia is also a good reminder of this fact. If God gave you a mighty vision and compelled you to preach the gospel at a specific place, would you expect to end up in the pit of a prison in the end? Or would you expect victory? When God tells us to do something, sometimes we question the Lord—or our understanding of His voice—when failure happens. Yet just because we've failed doesn't mean we haven't heard from Him. Either it was always in His plan, and He intends to

use our crosses to reveal the resurrecting power of Jesus, or we have sinned.

When we sin, we veer off course. To sin means “to miss the mark.” So when we miss the mark in our walks, we have taken a wrong turn and chosen something that appealed to our own heart rather than obey the will of God. This doesn’t always happen in an obvious way, and due to the subtle nature sin can have, we must be even more vigilant as to our state of heart.

That sin can lead to failure is evident. Consider that the Israelites failed to take Ai after Achan disobeyed God in Jericho and kept treasure for himself. As we read,

“So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

“Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, ‘Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!’”
Joshua 7:4–7

Then the Lord made clear that the failure was due to sin being in the camp of Israel. As the Lord said,

“So the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, sanctify the people, and say, “Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.’”’” Joshua 7:10–13

Likewise, if you have experienced failure, there may be sin in the “camp.” The waiting place in this example is really just God giving us a time-out to repent. Examine your own heart and be humble enough to admit your faults. The only

way out is through repentance.

While God disciplines us for our sins alone, if you're married or have children, every member can suffer if one member has made a mistake. Your sins don't always hurt you only. They can hurt others as well. If the husband loses his job, the wife loses that income as well. You are one body. If the hand gets struck with a hammer the whole body experiences it. As it is written,

"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26

So the sin which causes failure could be a mistake any of the members of your family might have made. It is not that God is disciplining the innocent members along with the guilty. Rather you are one body in Christ and must move and walk in Jesus as one body. When one member is brought down all the members are brought down. If you stub your toe doesn't your whole body react? Doesn't your whole body bend over and your hands embrace the sore? Likewise, as a family you are a body, and if one member sins and remains unrepentant it can affect the other members if they get disciplined.

For example, I knew a family that needed two incomes and the husband sinned, paving his own way in life to a new career. In the end the Lord disciplined him that the man would learn to follow Christ's plan rather than his own. Then the wife and children suffered for his mistake, because they only had one income rather than two.

I knew another married couple in which the husband trusted God with all his heart, but the wife trusted in the bank account. Before long both of them lost their jobs at the same time, and faced losing their home. The husband comforted her, reassuring her that the Lord would make a way to save them.

But rather than waiting on God she sinned further, and chased her own heart. In the end she never found the job she was looking for. God gave the husband a better position and every worked out. So she fretted, and fretted some more all while the husband had to carry a cross in a season of leanness so the wife could learn that Jesus is all she needs. In the end she learned that lesson, and they never experience a trial like that again. But it required patience on the husband's part while he watched his wife trust her own heart rather than God's

If you have entered a season of leanness it is always best to have each believing member ask the Lord if they have sinned, beginning with yourself. Have an open heart to hear what you may not want to hear. However, it is always best to not to

point fingers. Ask every person to, inspect his or her own heart to know who made the mistake so that the sin can be eradicated through repentance.

Let us make it clear, however, that the innocent members are not being disciplined for the guilty member's sin. Rather they are carrying a cross in their innocence, like Jesus, while a member of their body learns to obey God and not his or her own heart.

Also, not every "failure" is due to sin. But it is always best to ask the Lord if you have sinned, just in case.

Most often, what you view as a failure will really be a part of God's plan. Ending up in a prison experience, like Paul, doesn't mean you took a wrong turn. However, it is good to pray and ask the Lord at that time if you did make a mistake. He will reveal it to you because He gave you the experience so He could get your attention for repentance. If He reveals that it wasn't sin, then embrace His will for you and worship Him, even though it may seem difficult in the moment.

We may not always understand why things go wrong, and whether we do or don't doesn't change the fact that God is still worthy of our praise. Don't allow your inability to understand a situation keep you from glorifying the Lord through every moment of life. Job didn't understand why he lost his children and everything he owned, but he still praised God through it all, and we should be found doing likewise.

Praise God No Matter What!

There will be times in your life when you may wonder how God can bring anything good out of your situation, but He is capable of anything. Remember that God created the heavens and the earth and saw that it was good. How did He do this? In the vast emptiness of nothing, God made something. And in the moments of nothingness in your life, God will create good and bring every circumstance together for good. He also will use the bad for good. It isn't that there is anything good about the sufferings you go through, but that He is so powerful He can and will turn the worst moment of your life into good.

I once knew a man who lost his five-year-old daughter. After she died, he sought comfort from one of his friends, asking him, "How could God let this happen?" His friend, thinking he knew the proper answer, said, "God works all things together for good."

This enraged the man, and he had to be restrained from punching his friend.

"What good is there in my daughter's death? How can you call it good?" the man yelled.

His friend, not understanding the scripture, thought that God had allowed the man's daughter to die for a good reason and the Lord would reveal that reason later down the road. But in truth, the scriptures don't say that God actually is the one working the destruction in our life. Look at Job's life. Who destroyed him? Who killed his children? It was Satan who incited the Lord. God's own hand cannot and will not rise up against the righteous. He will rise against their sins for repentance, but not against their righteousness. Remember also that the word says,

"The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: 'Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,' says the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 14:12-14

God didn't consider Noah's family to be as righteous as he was. We know Ham, for one, was very unrighteous and mocked his father. The Lord could have killed his sons in the flood and repopulated the earth with new descendants from Noah. So why did God spare them? Likely for Noah's sake.

Consider for a moment: Why was Jesus crucified? To save life and spare it, not destroy it. So God gave His own Son to spare our lives. Why, then, would He want to take it? Why did Jesus grieve at the tomb of Lazarus? As it is written,

“Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’

“They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’

“Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’

“And some of them said, ‘Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?’

“Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’

“Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, ‘Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.’” John 11:33–39

Jesus wept because He felt for those who had lost their loved one. Then, with a groaning in His heart, He commanded that the stone be rolled away to raise the dead. Even so, God will roll your stones away and bring life to your desolate moments. All you have to do is wait for His word. Then when He speaks, He will command your situation to come to life and bring you joy.

It doesn't matter how murky your life may be: Remember that when God created Adam, He reached into dirt and pulled a man out. His hand dipped into a mud pit and brought forth life. When you look at your circumstances, don't say to yourself, “How can God bring anything good out of this?” because you are thereby declaring, “I can't see how God will create anything good; therefore, I am not going to believe He will” when the Scriptures make clear that faith isn't something you see. Just because you can't see a way out doesn't mean God isn't going to create it. A miracle doesn't require possibility, and the Lord doesn't need the physical laws of nature or the understanding of man to accomplish His will. For as the Lord reached into the mud, so God will reach into the muck of your life and pull out something beautiful.

Until then, worship God while you wait. As the song “While I'm Waiting” by John Waller says,

“While I'm waiting I will serve You

While I'm waiting I will worship

While I'm waiting I will not faint

I'll be running the race even while I wait"

No matter what happens, be found running the race and worshipping God. Isn't the Lord worthy of this? Isn't He worthy of your praise while you wait for His faithfulness to unfold in your life? When God is silent, be occupied with seeking Him. Meditate on the Spirit and His presence; then, when He speaks, keep your face lifted in prayer and your hands raised in worship. Remember that it is written,

"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.' In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."
Job 1:20–22

If you want to be found righteous, even as God found Job righteous, then no matter what may be happening in your life, be found doing likewise—worshipping God from your heart.

The Real Reason Why God Makes You Wait

There are multiple reasons why God makes you wait, but usually it is either for your growth while He makes preparation or for sin, as we previously mentioned. When you're waiting, you won't always understand why, but the best way to get through the hiatus of your pilgrimage is through continually abiding and seeking the Lord.

When God is making preparations, He isn't only preparing the circumstances that lie ahead of you. After all, He has the power to have them prepared beforehand so that you need not wait. So while He may be preparing the situation for you, He also is preparing your heart for eternal life.

Many times when we experience a waiting period, the only thing we can think of is getting through it. However, God wants us to focus on the lesson at hand. If you aren't aware of it, then focus on prayer, worship, and studying your Bible. Sometimes after the waiting period you'll have 20/20 hindsight; thus, God will grant you wisdom from your circumstance after it's over.

Not every season of waiting is the same. Sometimes we wait in turmoil, wondering where God is and why He's allowing us to suffer rather than swooping down and saving the day. In other situations, we're waiting for the next blessing to start, and we must learn patience while we wait. Both of these situations are similar to King David's experiences.

After he was thrust out from the presence of Saul, David was forced to live in the wilderness. David had been honored before a king and anointed by God through His prophet to be a king himself, yet where did he end up? On the run, hiding in the forests and fields, constantly in danger for years. Saul sought him diligently to kill him.

Sometimes a similar situation can happen to us: God confirms to us that He will bless us with something in life, but then after a time of waiting for Him, we end up in a trial. During that trial it becomes impossible for us to receive the blessing God promised. Then we may be tempted to pray, "God, why did You let this happen? I thought You said I would receive that blessing! But now it's impossible."

However, the Lord allows such situations to occur because it isn't time to receive the blessing. He merely informed us in advance of His intention, and we should feel blessed to know the future. How we get there is up to God. So, rather than

questioning God, we should wait patiently to receive what He's promised. Also, we need to remember that nothing in heaven or on earth has the power or ability to stop God. He doesn't require possibility to work because He isn't governed by the laws of nature or the logic of man. As the inventor of nature's laws, He is above the law and can create new laws if He wants to do so. So if God said to you He will do something, then all you need to do is believe with patience.

These waiting periods are really just testing grounds. During these periods the Lord tests our hearts to see if we will believe Him and follow Him through everything. Sometimes He allows trials to arise and the devil to push us for this same reason. When we feel driven to make a decision or else suffer, we are given the choice to remain in our trial and obey God or to forsake the word of the Lord and use our own logic to escape the situation. Perhaps it may be possible for human logic to deliver you from the trial. However, sometimes God does want you to be delivered immediately so that you may learn from it. And even though human logic can deliver you from a temporary trial it has never been able to preserve you for eternal life.

Thus, God allows you to suffer your circumstances through pure and perfect love as He prepares your heart and soul to live forever. As a Christian you must learn to be led by the Spirit at all times. Christian literally means "follower of Christ." So if you choose to follow your own way out of a situation rather than follow the Spirit of Jesus, how are you being Christian at all? Following the Spirit step by step is fundamental to a walk with Christ. Hence, it is written,

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Romans 8:14

And as it is also written,

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" Matthew 16:24

It is for this exact reason that we are forced to wait in trials, because God is teaching us to wait patiently for the words of His Spirit so that we can live by them. This concept was also foreshadowed by Israel's desert experience, as they waited forty years to be prepared for the promise of God. And this foreshadowing applies perfectly to your waiting experiences as well. As it is written,

"And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in

your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” Deuteronomy 8:2–3

Sometimes God will humble you, but only to teach you to wait for and live by the voice of His Spirit. But why must we live by His words? Because every time He speaks, the natural response must be with faith. As the Scriptures tell us,

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

Why is faith in His word so important? Because faith saves us, as the Scriptures say:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith...” Ephesians 2:8

Since faith saves you, do you see why it’s important to grow in faith? God grants you an opportunity, through the need to wait for His word, to increase your faith for your eternal security. So even though it may feel as if God is destroying you through your trials, He is actually building eternal life in you. When God breaks down, He really is building up, and when the Lord brings you low, it’s to raise you up again. For Jesus said that those who want to be greatest must first be least.

Why then, Beloved, would you grieve if God has allowed you to be brought very low? But know this: that if you have been humbled, it’s because God desires to exalt you and prepare you for eternal life. Remember also that Jesus was crucified before He was resurrected. So if you want the resurrecting power of God to be on full display in your life, then you must first learn to embrace your cross. Jesus embraced His for the joy set before Him. Therefore, go and do likewise, knowing that an eternal relationship with the Lord is far greater than any earthly thing—if indeed you do believe that His love is better than life.

The second way David waited was when he was going from one blessing to another. First, he received the kingdom of Judah while he waited for the other eleven tribes God had promised him. As it is written,

“Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.” 2 Samuel 2:10–11

It took seven years before David saw the full blessing of God—seven! You also may be forced to wait much longer than you would ever desire. Nonetheless, learn to be patient with the Lord while you wait to receive the blessings.

Now, one may ask why God makes us wait for such a long time before receiving a greater blessing. Yet as we mentioned previously, our periods of waiting are not idle moments of life. During them God is operating on our hearts to prepare us for the blessings that lie ahead.

This is similar to how Israel received the kingdom little by little instead of God driving the nations out quickly. As it is written,

“I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.” Exodus 23:29–30

And as Moses furthermore said,

“And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.” Deuteronomy 7:22–23

Likewise, God drives our trials out little by little, one by one, as He grows us to a full stature in Christ. If we are ill prepared for the Lord’s blessings, as was Israel receiving the Promised Land, then the beasts of our hearts will rise up and overtake us. Our flesh will lust beyond the blessing of God. Even as it is also written,

“Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.” Proverbs 30:8–9

When we receive too great of an abundance, we learn to rely on the material blessings rather than on our Lord who gave them. For this reason we receive the blessings little by little as we grow in the Lord and learn to walk with Him—taking each step one by one as He leads us.

Therefore, I’d like to encourage you to pray right now and ask the Lord why He is requiring you to endure this season of waiting. This shouldn’t be a one-time

prayer but, rather, an ongoing pursuit for His answer. That way He may increase your wisdom. So use this season to pray fervently and to abide.

Whether you are waiting quietly and learning patience or are suffering through a trial while you wait, take this time to worship the Lord. Thank Him right now for this opportunity for blind faith that He will work it together for good. However, be extremely attentive to His voice and don't make any assumptions, for the waiting place can end in a series of unexpected twists and turns. If you aren't following right at the heels of the Spirit, you will certainly stray off course.

So this is the most important time to learn the practice of continual prayer and worship. Have you ever tried to pray all day without ceasing? Have you tried to allow the Holy Spirit to guide your prayers and your mouth as you pray the entire day? If not, I'd like to encourage you to do that now. Worship in faith that He will restore and bless you in His perfect timing. Furthermore, pray constantly for direction and wisdom.

By nature, if you pray and worship constantly, you will be more attentive to the voice of the Lord. Thus, when He speaks, you will hear Him clearly the first time and be able to follow him perfectly through every dip, hop, twist, and turn in the jungle of life. For this reason I challenge you today to pursue the will and wisdom of God through continuous prayer and praise.

I'd Love to Hear from You!

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About the Author

Adam is a preacher, teacher and #1 internationally bestselling author of over 100 books on the Christian faith. He is a devoted husband and father of three boys. Through his travels, he's seen the need for a new awakening and a new revival: a revival of the heart. Come join Adam on this journey of redemption and experience God like never before!

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