

A CALL FOR GODLY PATIENCE

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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. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8–9, NIV)

In this passage we learn that the way God sees time is different from the way we see time. God is not bound by time like we are. He created the time. Peter points us to the eternity of God.

WHAT IS PATIENCE?

The Dictionary defines patience as; *the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, problems, or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.*

WHY DOES GOD MAKE US WAIT?

Isaiah 55:8-11

1. **God knows we are not ready.** God has perfect timing; never early, never late. It takes a little patience and it takes a lot of faith but it's worth the wait:

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:2-4, NKJV)

2. **To reveal our hearts true motives:** God tests us not to find out how we'll do, He already knows, but to show us, what's really in our heart.

(1 Samuel 13:7 -14). By all appearances, Saul was a good choice as king. He was tall, handsome, and blessed by God. But Saul forgot that his kingship was from God. Saul's impatience cost him his throne. Saul sinned by burning offerings in Samuel's absence. That moment was an important test for Saul.

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for

Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. (1 Samuel 13:13-14, NKJV)

According to Samuel, the Lord would have permanently established Saul's reign if Saul had obeyed. Instead, God would appoint a king who was loyal to Him. (1 Samuel 13:13-14)

3. **The promise is discovered in the process which requires patience:** The reason you wait is that the promise God has for you, is usually discovered in the process and the process will always require patience. Anything of value takes patience.

As you look at the life of David, you find he spent a great deal of his time waiting. David had to wait something like 15 to 20 years from the time he was first anointed by Samuel to the time he became king over Judah. (1 Samuel 15:1 - 2 Samuel 1:27)

When Samuel had David summoned and then anointed him, David must have wondered how long it would be before he became king. The answer was that it was much longer than he imagined, and much more difficult, too. Because when God gives you the promise, He does not explain the process.

David eventually became king of Israel after a considerable delay, and with a great deal of adversity. That is what 1 Samuel 16:1 - 2 Samuel 5:5 is all about. This period of David's life can be summed up by two words: "time" and "trouble." The delay in David becoming Israel's king is not unusual, but it is typical of the way God brings about His promises and purposes. Stated concisely, God is not in a hurry. In this we learn that before God blesses someone or gives them authority of any kind, He tests them over time to see if they will be worthy of the blessing or calling.

4. **To increase our trust in Him:** Waiting reminds us we're at the mercy of God's timing and we have no power to change that. As human beings we crave control, but God wants us to know He is in charge.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6, ESV)

5. **To increase our faith:** If God always gave us what we want when we want it, we would never have a reason to trust Him. So, God makes us wait and as we wait, deeper trust is instilled and consequently our faith increases.

I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God. They just drop down and say a few words, and then jump up and forget it and expect God to answer them. Such praying always reminds me of the small boy ringing his neighbour's door-bell, and then running away as fast as he can go. (E.M. Bounds)

But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV)

6. **To promote gratitude in us:** God makes us go through situations and at the end of it all we have nothing to say but to thank Him.

Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. (1 Samuel 1:1-10, NIV)

HOW DO WE WAIT PATIENTLY FOR GOD?

1. **Through prayer:** (Philippians 4:6-7) Go to God in prayer. It's not easy to pray when you are frustrated, in fear or angry at the situation you are facing, but as you develop in prayer, you will find the waiting becomes easier.

Pray for others as you wait, bear each other's burden. It is important to pray for each other.

2. **Read the word:** Staying in scripture keeps you grounded in God's plan and promises. Daily reminders of God's faithfulness will sustain you. (Joshua 1:8)

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT WHEN WE ARE PATIENT?

Patience is a fruit of the spirit.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness. (Galatians 5:22, NLT)

When you look at the fruits of the spirit, faithfulness and patience are the only one with the prerequisite of time. You can't tell you are faithful or patient unless you do it over time.

- **Patience sustains you where character alone can't,** and when you get there, you appreciate it. In God's wisdom, He knew Abraham and Sarah needed decades to learn that God was enough, that he deserves their trust. He knew Joseph needed years of languishing in prison and cycling through suffering to learn humility and forgiveness. He knew Moses needed 40 years as a country shepherd before he could shepherd God's people, just like Joshua needed his 40 years assisting Moses to learn leadership and courage.
- **If we are not prepared to be patient, we will forfeit our promise.** Think of Joseph he waited for 14 years before he could become the Prince of Egypt, David waited for 15 years before becoming King and Noah waited for 50 years before the flood.

(James 1:2-4). God has not forsaken you because it's taking time, He is giving you an opportunity to work patience in your life.

Conclusion

How you wait directly affects how long you wait. The only thing that is harder than waiting on God is wishing you had. Waiting is not wasted time. Delay is not a denial. Patience is an important part of the Christian life, and it is essential for those who want to live a life of faith. We must be willing to wait on the Lord, to trust Him even when the waiting is hard, and to practice patience in all circumstances. When we do this, we will find that our faith is strengthened and that we are able to live a life of faith more fully.