

10 Ways to Wait on God

I hate waiting. We all do. Waiting for God to move can feel especially uncomfortable. When pray and do not yet see God's hand at work, I tend to get squirmy. Did He hear me? Will He answer? Will these circumstances ever change?

Despite our culture's efforts to eliminate waiting from daily life (think ATMs, pay at the pump, and drive-through windows) inevitably life sticks in the waiting room. Because we serve a God who operates on His timetable and not ours, waiting is a byproduct of our prayer lives as well.

Maybe you're in the waiting room:

- Waiting for God to heal your physical body
- Waiting for God to bring you a spouse or a baby
- Waiting for God to work in your church
- Waiting for God to bring a prodigal child home
- Waiting for employment
- Waiting for reconciliation

Yep, I'm in the waiting room too these days. But, I'm determined not to spend this time kicking and screaming. I want to wait well. I don't want to waste the waiting.

An Expert Waiter

Moses was an expert waiter. First, he waited to be rescued as a wee babe in a bulrush basket (Ex. 2:2). Perhaps he was too small to remember that moment of waiting, but it was a glimpse of how the rest of Moses' life would go.

After murdering a man, Moses fled his home and family to the foreign land of Midian. He waited there for 40 years (Acts 7:30). He spent four decades waiting for something to happen or for news that he could return safely home. Something did happen. Moses encountered the voice of God booming from a

burning bush (Exodus 3:2). The wait was over! He had a mission.

But he found himself in the waiting room again soon, waiting for Pharaoh to let his people go. Once that wait was over, he wandered with God's people in the desert for another forty years, waiting to enter the Promised Land. In total, Moses spent at least eight decades waiting for the Lord. He died at the age of 120 (Deut. 34:7), meaning he spent more than 60 percent of his life in the waiting room.

As we look at his life, here are 10 lessons we can learn about how to wait well.

1. Be Content

After finding himself in a strange land with no family or possessions, Moses was invited to live with the Midianite priest and his family. I doubt the situation was perfect. But Moses chose contentment.

"And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah" (Ex. 2:21).

You have a choice. You can wait with great anxiety, fear and frustration. Or you can wait with contentment. Here's a visual. Think of the last time you sat in the waiting room at the pediatrician's office. Since I have three young boys, that's a stop I make about as often as the post office.

There are two kinds of waiters in that waiting room. There are the children who scream and cry and dump toys. And there are the children who snuggle close to their mommies or quietly wait (thanks to the help of the Disney app on their daddy's iPhone). Both kinds of kids have to wait. The kid throwing a fit doesn't get in to the doctor any sooner than the one who isn't. But believe me, as a mama who has waited with both kinds of kids, the waiting feels infinitely longer to the

distraught kid (and his parents!).

You don't have to be happy about the waiting, but you can choose contentment.

First Timothy 6:6 reminds us, "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

2. Love Your Own Family Well

Moses' 40 years in Midian were not unproductive years. He had two sons during that time (Acts 7:29) and devoted himself to caring for them and their mother.

This is a simple, yet effective, action plan for waiting well. Take care of your tribe. Love your children and grandchildren. Serve your husband. Don't force them to bear the brunt of your anxious heart. Stop wringing your hands and get busy taking care of the people in your world.

"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

3. Work Hard

How did Moses spend his days in Midian while He waited for God to reveal the game plan? Did he pace the floors? Search the Internet for answers? (No, of course not. There was no Internet, but that's often how we fill the waiting space, isn't it?) Take matters into his own hands?

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God" (Ex. 3:1).

Moses was about to get shoved from the waiting room to the operating room, where God would give him a new identity and

purpose. Moses was steps away from encountering the living God speaking from a burning bush. And what do we find him doing there?

He was herding sheep.

Training to be used by God is more likely to happen in the sheep fields than it is to happen in the palace. Especially when we are waiting for God to use us for kingdom work, we need reminded of the value of working hard and stewarding well the tasks He has already assigned to us.

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Col. 3:23).

4. Intercede for Others

As Moses wandered in the wilderness, waiting for deliverance into the Promised Land, he prayed bold, powerful prayers for God’s people. (See Ex. 33:12-16, Num. 14:13-19). He knew the promised outcome, but he didn’t stop praying for God’s work.

As you wait for God to work in your own life, pray like crazy that He would move in others’. Your faith will be shored up by seeing God’s hand in the lives of other people.

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Tim. 2:1).

5. Value God’s Commands

We all know the story of when Moses brought down the Ten Commandments on slabs of stone only to smash them out of anger for the people’s rebellion (Ex. 20:1-21). Moses was passionate about both God’s Word and righteous living. So much so, that he trekked back up the mountain to retrieve a second copy of the commandments from God (Ex. 34:28).

I don't know about you, but sometimes when I am waiting on God I feel bitter about how He has called me to live. I don't want to have joy in the waiting room. I want to pout. I don't want to trust in Him when I cannot see Him, I want Him to reveal Himself. Frankly, sometimes I want to be the one to "throw down the tablets" in frustration.

Instead, I need to trek back up the mountain to be with the Lord. I need to ask Him to remind me of His priorities. I need to be about the business of living like He calls me to live. The waiting room reminds me that I serve a big God who does not jump through the hoops I set for Him. I should live according to His Word at all times.

6. Go to War Against Idols

In Exodus 32 Moses came down from the mountain (another waiting room) and found his people worshipping a golden calf. His reaction to this idol was not passive.

"He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it into powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it" (Ex. 32:20).

Throughout the exodus Moses was diligent about purging idolatry from his people. The waiting room has that effect. Often, waiting exposes idols in my own heart. As my heart gets squirmy, I often come face to face with the fact that I am looking to something other than God to meet my needs. Then I have to swallow my pride, which tastes about as bitter as the powdered gold Moses' made His people drink, and repent. Because of this pattern, I have found the waiting room to often be a gift. It is there that God does business with my heart. It almost always hurts, but the end result is a heart more devoted to God. If waiting makes your heart go wild, ask the Lord to reveal any idols you may have settled for.

7. Celebrate!

Moses' people did lots of wandering, but they also did plenty of partying.

"On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I am the LORD your God" (Num. 10:10).

Even in the waiting room, God has given you much to celebrate. Instead of focusing on all that He has not done yet, rejoice about all He has already done for you.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

8. Keep Your Eyes on the Promised Land

What has God promised you? Even if He has not delivered yet. Even if the finish line is nowhere in sight, you can take His promises to the bank. Moses knew that and spoke these words,

"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9).

Moses knew what it was like to wait. He waited longer and more often than I ever have, but all of that waiting didn't weaken his faith. It strengthened it. In the end, he decided God is faithful. We can trust Him to take us where He has promised He will.

9. Seek God

One phrase Moses uttered over and over in the wilderness was,

“Let me ask the Lord.” He was constantly double-checking with God that they were headed in the right direction. As you wait, seek God often. Read His Word. Squeeze your desires and plans through them and make sure you are headed in the right direction.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

10. Enjoy the Journey

While Moses waited for God to deliver His people into the Promised Land, he saw:

- God change Pharaoh’s heart
- God part the Red Sea
- Food rain from heaven and water spout from rocks
- Clothing and sandals that did not wear out for 40 years
- A pillar of fire led Moses by day and a cloud of smoke by night
- By God’s power alone, somewhere in the neighborhood of 2 million people survived in the desert for 40 years. Moses had a front row seat.

God may not be doing the one thing you want Him to do at this moment, but He is doing a million things that He promises are working for your good (Rom. 8:28). Don’t get tunnel vision, honing in only on what has not happened yet. Widen the lens and see all He has already done.

Moses refused to try to manipulate God. He waited well and stayed ready to move when God called, and what a ride he got to take! As I wait, I want to be like Moses. Do you?

*Taken from **Erin Davis’s** blog post “The Next Time Life Has You in the Waiting Room.” . Used with permission.*