

How to Wait on God's Promises

God's promises are yes and amen, but they're often far from instant. What do you do while waiting? And how do you know if He actually promised something? Bible teacher Iris Delgado explains the art of diligently handling a divine vow.

I learned a secret a long time ago from my mother. We lived in a hell-hole of a home while I was growing up, where it was normal to feel fear and intimidation. Child abuse was a secret, and promises were seldom kept. Through those years, Mother often used a phrase that went over my head: "I am trusting God and His promises. Thank you, Father, for Your promises are yes and amen."

I had no clue at the time what she meant by this "yes" and "amen" about God's promises, but it was an oft-quoted, familiar phrase in our home.

One day, my father came home in an unusually quiet and pensive mood. A demonic entity had clouded his mind. He glared at my mother and said, "Tomorrow, get ready because I am going to massacre the entire family. If your God is able, you better tell Him to save you!"

That was it. He didn't say another word that entire evening. But Mother believed him. I'm sure she prayed all night.

The next morning, Dad left early. The moment he was gone to work, Mother called her prayer team of intercessors. I was too young to understand the warfare that was really going on, but two warriors united with my mother and bombarded heaven, reminding God of His promises as they pleaded for mercy.

Mother had prayed for years for my father's salvation. But it seemed like the more she prayed, the worse he got. This never stopped her from making that daily declaration: "Father, I am trusting You. Your promises are yes and amen."

Around noon that day, while Mother and her prayer warriors were prostrated before God, praying in agreement and claiming His promises, the phone rang. The voice on the other end told her that Dad was in the hospital in intensive care. The wind had been blowing on this wintry overcast day, and Dad had been wearing a trench coat when he left work for lunch. While crossing the street, a car sped by him, catching the hem of his coat. Once the driver realized he was dragging something, he stopped his car to find my father lying on the pavement.

Dad suffered a broken spine, which rendered him a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down.

It was an unusual answer to prayer. I'm sure Mother never imagined that standing upon God's promises for help and deliverance would result in such a dramatic outcome. But it did bring deliverance from the danger facing our family that day. The enemy caused my father's defeat, but God allowed that defeat because my father refused to turn from his sin and disobedience.

I learned a great truth from my mother's example that day: God is able to rescue us when we remain anchored and unmovable upon His Word. When you become God's possession, a citizen of the kingdom of God, and you learn to walk in obedience to His Word, His mighty warrior angels are always on the lookout, ready to help and protect you.

But how do you know if God actually promised something that allows you to claim that "yes" and "amen"? Or what if you believe in a promise and then it doesn't happen? What's more, how do you get through the waiting, especially when the waiting gets long?

Perhaps, like my mother, you've been standing on God's promises for a loved one's salvation or the fulfillment of a great need or desire for a very long time. Maybe you've reached a point of desperation and your energy's starting to

flag. Maybe you've started to wonder if you heard God's promises right from the beginning. Should you just keep muddling through?

The truth is, God is never oblivious to your needs and desperate prayers, but there are certainly lessons to be learned in the waiting. Here's what you can do as you wait and watch and pray.

Develop an Awareness of Presence

In your mother's presence, if the relationship is a good one, you find a listening ear, an embrace and words of comfort. In your doctor's presence, you gain advice on how to get better. In the presence of a counselor, you receive counsel for making wise changes. In a friend's presence, you find a caring response when you unload your feelings.

And in the Father's presence, you find an inner healing and restoration you won't find anywhere else. During this time of waiting, enter into the Father's presence on a daily basis. Establish your home as a house of prayer where the Spirit of God dwells richly and freely.

But also know there is more to cultivating an awareness of presence than being aware of the Father. *Presence* may be defined as a spirit, a manifestation, a supernatural spirit that is felt to be nearby, somebody who is notably present or the physical existence of something. And so we must learn to discern when evil spirits enter our presence or atmosphere as well.

As we stand on God's promises and wait for His answers to our prayers, His divine intervention, a miracle or a specific word of encouragement, we must be aware of the presence of evil and the visitation of evil spirits on assignment—especially because they always know the precise moment to invade a weak person's life. As the Scriptures teach, the enemy will stay on your territory unless you forcefully drive him out with God's

Word (see Luke 10:19), and the only power Satan has over you is the power that you willfully surrender to him (see 1 John 3:8).

When you feel irritable, moody, bothered, angry, annoyed or dismayed, invite the Holy Spirit into your presence. Become aware of your position in Christ Jesus. Surrender into the arms of Jesus. Put on your praise music. Use this time of waiting to renew your mind with God's Word—it will protect you and help you overcome discouragement and the fiery darts of the enemy in his advance upon your life.

Remain Steadfast in His Promises

One of the greatest problems I notice as I minister throughout this country and abroad is an epidemic of lukewarm hearts among Christians. Impatience, discouragement, doubt, fear and hectic lifestyles trap countless believers in desperate situations in which they are unable to trust God with their whole hearts. Yet that trust is the most important thing we can give God—and the most important muscle we can exercise while we're waiting on God's promises to be fulfilled. I can give you a list of other things to do—writing down God's promises, declaring them every day, meditation, warfare prayer, etc.—all of which are good. But we can't turn God's hand by following a list. All together, these practices only work when we do them with sincere hearts.

Do you believe God's Word is infallible truth? If you do, then you have the inward capacity to understand that God doesn't play favorites and that His promises are for *all* of His children. He doesn't withhold anything from us without a specific purpose—some of which we will never know.

And so, if you have a need and find a promise related to that need, consider it an actual promise from God. That's how I see it and believe it.

I stood for my healing of an incurable, debilitating disease

of lupus with lung involvement for 18 years. I found the promise in Isaiah 53:5 that “by His stripes we are healed.” I stood, believing that promise every day. I also confessed the promise in Proverbs 4:20-22: “My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.”

I never gave up. For 18 years, I stood on those promises. And not too long ago, as I wrote the book *Satan, You Can't Have My Miracle*, I was totally healed from the disease.

Why did it take so long? I have no idea. Sometimes I think my faith and tenacity in the midst of adversity was a testimony to my family and all the many people I have ministered to during the years. I simply refused to question God. I just waited on Him. My husband and two daughters never heard me complaining or lamenting of pain or weakness or questioning God's timing. I've left a legacy of endurance and trust in God. Today, I'm able to see my example of endurance expressed through the lives of my family.

The bottom line is, you either believe the Word of God and that His promises are true, or you don't. The choice is yours, and it must be made. Every day we make choices, whether we want to or not. We decide to be happy or sad, to be angry or self-controlled, to accept fear or God's peace, to be moved by feelings or God's promises. We choose. And in this place of waiting, you must choose to trust God with His promises.

Trust God With the Outcome

One of the most frequently asked questions among God's people is, “What if God doesn't come through?”

I remember listening to the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as a child in my Sunday school class. I was enthralled, appalled and relieved as I listened to the details

of their daring adventure of facing the fiery furnace.

It wasn't until many years later that I understood the great love and reverence those three Hebrew young men had for their God. They decided they would not bow down and worship a golden image, even if they were doomed to die in a fiery furnace! They knew the consequences—everybody in the kingdom did. But they made a clear, unyielding decision that if the God they served wanted to deliver them out of the fiery burning furnace, He would—*but even if He did not*, they still would not bow and worship another god. Their commitment was unwavering and non-negotiable.

Their story has a good ending. God showed up and kept His promise. However, God showed up *inside the furnace!* They had to walk into the furnace that was meant for their demise. Can you just imagine it? Those moments of standing before the guards, being bound by hand and foot with rope, wondering if God would save them before they stepped inside the fire?

God didn't save them before they stepped inside the fire. He saved them *inside* the fire. And yet even though their salvation didn't look the way they expected it to look, they remained unwavering in their commitment to God. They trusted in His promises to them, no matter the outcome.

In the same way, you and I may go through many trials and tribulations, and the outcome of those troubles may look nothing like we hoped. When we make a quality decision to trust Almighty God no matter what may come—no matter how many days, months or years we wait for His arrival or the way He chooses to arrive—God will always deliver us out of the hand of the enemy. The secret is in the declaration: *I will not bow down, no matter what!*

Consider Other Possibilities

If you have been standing on God's promises for a long time and have taken to heart each of the admonitions outlined

above, you may want to consider other possibilities at work in your situation that may be hindering God's response and activity in your life. Keep in mind that unanswered prayer may be the result of some of these additional factors:

- *Prayers not aligned with God's Word.* Are your supplications supported by Scripture? Are you asking after the heart of God?
- *A curse that hasn't been broken.* These can be curses placed upon you or curses dating back generations. Gather your prayer warriors and have them pray for the breaking of any curse still at work in your life.
- *Secret sins that need repentance.* Are you hiding a part of your life from the light? Are you hoping it won't be seen? Trust in God's mercy toward you, and turn away from it in repentance. Unrepentant sin can block the Father's activity and blessing in your life.
- *Unforgiveness that creates a hindrance.* An unforgiving heart, just like secret sins and unbroken curses, can block the work of God in our lives. Are you harboring unforgiveness toward another? Confess your unforgiveness and ask for God's grace to forgive the offending party.

Continue to Show Up

While you are waiting, you cannot stay passive. Your involvement here is necessary. Your faith must remain active. Believe through faith that you will inherit the promises, just as the saints of old "subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle [and] turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. 11:33-34).

While you wait, stay vigilant, keep your armor on and enlist prayer warriors' help—just as my mother did on the day she prayed for our family's deliverance from my father's evil intent. We serve the same Almighty God, who is the same

yesterday, today and forever. He is a God who is mighty to save.

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