

The Real Reason We Need to Wait on God

The other morning, while reading the Exodus 32, I relearned an important lesson. Moses was up on the mountain having a face-to-face encounter with God. The Israelites hadn't heard from him in a while, and they got bored waiting for him.

Let's look in at their response:

"When the people saw how long it was taking for Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. 'Come on,' they said, 'make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt'" (Ex. 32:1, NLT).

This fellow?

Moses risked his life to secure their freedom. God used Moses to preform mighty miracles on their behalf. Moses wasn't just a fellow, he was the one God used to save them. Moses' journey with the Israelites very much parallels Christ's journey with us.

I noticed three things about the Israelites' reaction to Moses' delay:

- Impatience with God's plan
- Minimizing God's place in their lives
- Willingness to default to idol worship

And we do the very same thing.

We just have to look back over our shoulder to see some of the mighty ways God has moved on our behalf. We don't have to think too far back to recall the times He met us and spoke directly to our hearts. We strengthen and encourage our own faith when we remember the ways God has come through for us

when we needed Him most.

And yet, when He asks us to wait longer than we want for the thing He has promised, we get impatient, and we wonder about plan B. We are very quick to make a back up plan when God takes too long to come through for us.

Wouldn't God appreciate a little help on our part to, you know, hurry the plan along? I mean He has the whole galaxy to manage, and well, this is just a little itty bitty thing to Him. Right?

Wrong.

Nothing is too hard for God, but that doesn't mean little things mean nothing to Him. He is the God of detail! Look at the butterfly or the hummingbird or the petals of a flower. Try to wrap your brain around the human body! He loves detail and cares deeply about the details of our lives.

God is big. He is near. And He is intimately engaged in this journey with us. Even when He seems silent, He has a divinely wise purpose for being so.

His part in our journey is of ultimate importance to us. He hasn't forgotten us. He doesn't ever accidentally look away when we take our leaps of faith. He catches us when we jump. He lifts us up when we stumble. And when He makes us wait, it's because He's making us ready.

Our part is vitally important as well.

We must not think for a minute that He won't come through for us. During the waiting season, we'll be tempted to get bored and lose heart. We'll be tempted to minimize God's involvement in our process. And we'll be tempted to build a counterfeit with our own hands. The time in between the promise and the realization of it—that matters. Infinitely so.

The time in between shows us what we're made of. The waiting season is like the tide that pulls back to sea and reveals the garbage on the beach. Waiting on God is essential to faith and maturity because it reveals our motives, our intentions and our character. When you wait for a certain breakthrough, how do you spend the time in between? Do you see it as a time to leave the well (Christ) and play in mud puddles instead?

Do you stay by the well but just bide your time by chewing your nails and watching the grass grow? Or do you consider your time of waiting an active season? A time to lean in and listen. A time to keep your ear bent towards heaven and your eyes fixed on Jesus.

Waiting is a true test of our hearts.

When we don't get what we want when we want it, our impatience surfaces. Our selfishness rears its ugly head. Our sense of entitlement makes us clench our fists and grit our teeth. And that's why the time in between is so important.

It's a time to humble ourselves and admit our need for more of Christ's character in us. It's a time to allow God to make us more fit for the blessing He so longs to give. And it's a time to pursue a deeper relationship with God. More than the treasures we receive from His hand, may we treasure the gift of better knowing His heart.

Over and over again, we read stories from the Bible of people who mishandled the time in between. But some chose not to. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is of Joseph from the Old Testament. God gave him a mighty vision for his life, and then allowed him to endure one injustice after another. And what did Joseph do with his time in between?

He was faithful, patient and humble. And every time, he landed on top of his circumstances. His character proved him ready to handle the management of a mighty nation.

This morning I was reading from the book of Matthew where Jesus was warning the disciples not to be deceived. He said that many will be partying and getting drunk right up to the moment Christ returns to earth.

Here again, whether we like it or not, we are living in the “time in between” when Christ came and when He comes again.

Will we get bored of waiting and make our own idols?

Or will we use this time to deal with what our inconveniences bring up in us? Jesus wonders this, “When I return will I find faith on the earth?” May He find faith in our hearts and faithfulness in our footsteps! No matter what breakthrough you’re waiting for, be faithful in the waiting.

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