

Trusting God While Waiting When Everyone Says, 'Do Something'

Waiting. I've never been a fan. But it seems I have a Ph.D. in the art. Waiting for the results of infertility treatments, waiting for an offer for a job, waiting for a change in a relationship, waiting for a change in life.

And recently, waiting for test results that could mean cancer or mean nothing. Once again, I was in the waiting place, and while there, I wrote this:

I find myself here again, in this waiting place. The place where I know God is sovereign. I know He holds my life in His hands. I know He is there. I know He cares. I know the very hairs on my head are numbered ... as are my days.

And yet there is a knot in my stomach, and my eyes flicker to the phone. Again. And again. It does not ring. Not yet. Of course, not yet.

But I watch anyway. I swallow. And remind myself of all the things I already know.

- “Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?” (Matt. 6:27/Luke 12:25, NLT).
- “Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself”(Matt. 6:34, NIV).

And my glance skitters to the phone again.

Today I had my yearly mammogram and screening. Today they found something on my right side. Today could be the first day of a very painful journey.

But I don't know yet. I am stuck here, in between.

It's the not knowing that twists through my soul. It's the not being able to move forward. Not being able to move back. Trust is harder in the waiting place.

So I watch the phone, even though I know the radiologist probably hasn't even looked at the scans. Even though I know it is too soon. Even though, if she calls, it will only be to bring me in for more tests.

I hate waiting.

But it's not a choice.

It's something that's thrust upon you.

And still I wait. ... I drown in the waiting.

God, you were with me in the past. You will be with me no matter the future.

Are you here, too, in the waiting place?

The test results came back as benign. But even if they had not, I've found that waiting is often the hardest part of a journey because we feel a unique kind of fear, of dread, in the waiting place. We sense that nothing is in our control. We cannot just "do something." We can't fix it. There is no plan to foster hope, no to-do list to get us out. We don't know when change will come, and deep inside we carry the fear that we may be stuck forever in the awkward, painful in-between.

I have a friend who is getting divorced. For two years she's been in proceedings, and nothing is yet settled. "Divorce is awful," she says. "But the waiting to get divorced is even worse. I can't make plans. I can't move on. I can't even start to heal."

That is the struggle of the waiting place. It is the fight against fear, against despair. It is the fight to remember the promises of God when they aren't getting any nearer.

Who's in Charge

When we're feeling stuck in the waiting place, our culture says, "Get out of that rut! Life's too short. Stop the excuses. Do something." In the Huffington Post, you can find 13 inspirational quotes for when you're stuck in a rut. You'll be told to smile more, care less, be happy, and think good thoughts.¹ Elsewhere, you might find thirty quotes that will "most certainly get you out of any rut," where you can read that you need to rise up and attack your day, and never give up.²

Good advice, but sometimes change is outside our control. Sometimes we're not in charge. Sometimes we're stuck, just like Abram and Sarai were in Haran. On their way to the promised land, Genesis 11:31 tells us, "Terah took his son Abram .. and his daughter-in-law, Sarai ... and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Harran, they settled there." Haran wasn't the promised land. But because of Terah, they got stuck there anyway, and Sarai didn't have the power to choose to continue the journey. God had to remove a barrier before she could move forward. In their case, Terah himself had to die.

¹ .com/2015/03/03/inspirational-

² holly-humphreys/2014/05/30-quotes-that-will-most-certainly-get-you-out-of-any-rut/

Excerpted from *Waiting for Wonder: Learning to Live on God's Timetable* by **Marlo Schalesky**© 2016, Abingdon Press. Marlo is an award-winning author of both fiction and non-fiction whose articles have been published in many Christian magazines. Her latest release is *Waiting for Wonder: Learning to Live on God's Timetable* (Abingdon Press). She is the founder and president of Wonder Wood Ranch, a California charitable organization bringing hope to a hurting community through horses. Schalesky lives with her husband, six children and a crazy number of animals at her log-home ranch on California's central coast.