

Wait to Succeed

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **—James 1:4**

In early 1956 I felt that God gave me a fresh message to preach. I saw things in Scripture that I had not heard preached anywhere. I saw teaching, doctrine, and insight that I thought had been revealed to nobody but the apostle Paul! I foolishly left college since I felt I had no more to learn there. I also was convinced that the Second Coming of Jesus was so near that I was wasting my time with further preparation.

My dad was distraught that his only son had come to this. Dad begged for proof that I was in God's will. I assured him God was going to use me—powerfully and internationally! I had been given visions from the Lord that showed me clearly that I would see great revival. Dad had one question: When? I replied with absolute confidence, "Within one year." He asked me to write it down so he could have it to show me one year later! I wrote it down. One year later I was selling Stroll-O-Chairs, a portable assortment of baby equipment. I had no opportunities to preach.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones once said to me, "The worst thing that can happen to a man is to succeed before he is ready." That statement was probably the most powerful word he ever gave me. I believe it to be true, and I can only conclude that I was withheld the success I had hoped for by God's gracious will. One reason I took myself too seriously back in 1956 was that I received visions that indicated I would be used of God. I assumed these visions would be fulfilled soon. They weren't. But because I had them and believed they were truly from the Holy Spirit, I assumed I was special. I became arrogant. I was not ready.

I am so thankful God is still peeling away those layers of arrogance and presumption. I'd rather not be greatly used at all than be given a greater anointing that I would abuse. God has withheld the success for which I have hoped for my own good—to keep me from being successful before I am ready.

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