

What Happens When You Patiently Wait on the Lord

“[May you be] strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy” (Col. 1:11, ESV)

Recently I was feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and discouraged. I felt off but didn't know why. Life was good! Still, I didn't feel like myself.

That's when I realized my time with the Lord had been pushed to the side. Instead of investing real time with God, I was speed-dating Him. A quick hello and then off to the next thing on my list. No wonder I felt off!

I wasn't putting in the time. I started getting up early to get my heart and mind fixed on Jesus. Instant peace! I'm not kidding. God never fails to meet us where we are and move us deeper into knowledge of Him and power in Him. You and I need great strength to have patience with others, with ourselves and with our lives.

The good news is that God doesn't expect us to find this strength on our own. If we are intentional about progressing in the knowledge of God's patience, His Spirit will empower us as we go.

In this life, we'll never stop waiting. We're constantly waiting on something: that new job, that new version of ourselves, that new relationship. For years, I waited to become the best athlete I could become because I assumed I'd be good enough to make the NFL. From there, all my needs would be met.

How foolish of me. I didn't make it anywhere close to the NFL. Now I'm able to acknowledge it wouldn't have solved my

problems. We all do this. We wait on that next thing we're sure will make us happy, and while we do, we miss the joys of being present.

And before we know it, time has passed and we've missed so much. The Bible says our lives are nothing but a vapor. The worst thing we could do is take a day for granted. Waiting, waiting, waiting—a person who lives as if tomorrow is promised will procrastinate today. But the person who lives as if tomorrow isn't promised will be productive today.

Waiting is an opportunity to embrace the present, not a reason to wish we were somewhere else. Can you recognize the difference?

Waiting on the Promise

As I stared out the window of my hotel room overlooking the Chicago skyline, I couldn't help but be impressed by the city lights. Their shimmer seemed to me as bright as the stars above. It was late, and I should have been tired and hungry and ready for some sleep.

But after a long rap show at a nightclub on the north side of Chicago, I didn't want any of that. All I wanted was some peace. I had thought the stages and spotlights would make me happy. But staring at those city lights made it clear how dark I felt on the inside. I looked beyond them to the retreating moon.

Moments later it was swallowed by dark clouds, its light extinguished. My light, I thought, has also been extinguished.

I loved making music, but in the process of making it big, I lost sight of God's dream for my life. I'd pushed my agenda ahead of God's timeline for my life, and I had to suffer the consequences of living a life of no peace.

This happens when we don't patiently wait on the Lord to guide

our lives. Peace would evade me for years until I finally decided to stop pursuing my own dreams and instead chose to wait for the Lord to unravel His plan for my life.

We have to be patient and trust God to reveal His plans to us in His time. That said, waiting on God can be hard. So, what does it look like to wait on God well? Glad you asked! We often see waiting as passive. If you're anything like me, doing nothing is torturous. Not many of us know how to wait well. Part of our problem is that we misunderstand what it means to wait on God. It's not a time of inaction but one of sacred privileges.

As always, the Bible points us toward a right understanding of how to do this. If you look at the word "wait" in the Hebrew, you'll see its connotations have a lot to do with being spiritually active.

Although God asks us to be still and know that He is God (Ps. 46:10), He also asks that we have the proper attitude, one of expectancy, which is something that cannot be done passively. God wants us to overcome our anxiety and impatience. Instead of us fretting about what will happen, He wants us to trust that He will do His good work. His plan will be brought forth into reality.

Our job is to not only trust that He's working but to be excited about what He will do. This attitude allows us to go from impatient to hopeful and hungry for whatever the Lord will do next. Having hope in God's plan is all about confident expectation that the marvelous work He began will be brought to completion (Phil. 1:6).

When we hold on to God's Word with hope in the waiting room of life, He will strengthen our hearts to endure even the most restless times. The waiting room will sometimes call us out of our career or even our calling, and it will bring us back to the heart of the one who called us.

Do you hear His voice?

He's calling you back into your simple purpose of just knowing Him and loving Him. {eo}

*This article is excerpted from **Rashawn Copeland's** book, Start Where You Are (Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, copyright 2020 and used with permission).*