

God Isn't in a Hurry—Learn to Respect His Speed Limit

Have you ever wanted to go to a secluded place and scream at the top of your lungs, “God, why are You taking so long?” I have. Everything about my life has seemed too slow. My last name even means “gradual.”

Some people might look at my life and say, “You are blessed and successful.” But I waited a long time to see that fruit. Nothing came quickly.

My first job lasted eight difficult years, and the pay was horrible. Then, at age 31, the ministry I worked for imploded. After that, I went through lengthy seasons of dryness. I often wanted to quit.

I watched as many of my friends seemed to achieve financial success while I felt as if I were stuck in a holding pattern. God's blessings eventually came, but not as fast as I expected. I didn't start preaching until I was 43, and I didn't enter full-time ministry until I was 52.

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Now, I'm mentoring younger Christians who are eager to be used by God. But they are also encountering delays, disappointments and total roadblocks. They are asking me tough questions:

- ** Why am I not married yet?
- ** Why does it seem like I can't get ahead financially?
- ** Why can't I discover God's purpose for my life?
- ** Will I ever have a family? And should we even try after a miscarriage?
- ** Why can't I develop a strong network of friends?
- ** What do I do with promises from God that seem like they

have expired?

Through all my delays, I've learned that we must learn to drive the speed limit on the road of life. When God wants to change us into His image, He slows down the process.

British preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote: "God is in no hurry. His purposes can be accomplished without haste, and though He would have us redeem the time because our days are evil, yet in His eternity He can afford to wait, and by His wisdom He so orders His delays, that they prove to be far better than our hurries."

God's blessings rarely happen overnight. The Lord's timing is different from yours. We want Him to answer our prayers instantly, but before He answers He may lead us into a wilderness of testing to shape our character. The apostle Peter wrote: "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pet. 5:6). The "proper time" is God's time, and it rarely syncs with your schedule.

If you rush through life, anxiously pursuing your own goals, or manipulating people and circumstances to force your own desired outcomes, you will miss His best. Give God your schedule and take your hands off of it. Let Jesus reign over your hours, days, months and years. Be patient, and you will see a harvest in the end.

If God has imposed a speed limit in your life right now, slow down and enjoy the journey. Revving your engine or spinning your tires won't help. God's delays burn out the spoiled attitudes in our hearts. Adjusting your speed limit will crucify your flesh.

We see this painful process in David's life. During his long journey to become king, David ended up in an obscure town called Ziklag. Scholars aren't sure where this place was, only that it was in the remote Judean wilderness. Ziklag means "pressure," and it refers to the process of shaping molten metal. While David was in this dark place, he wrote, "My soul thirsts for you...in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps. 63:1).

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David didn't lose faith while he was in the Lord's lonely school of testing. He stayed thirsty for God. He prayed constantly—knowing that he was in the fire of preparation. God was applying heat and pressure to shape him for greater responsibility. In the end, David got out of Ziklag and sat on the throne in Jerusalem. The pain of delay shaped him for the promise.

What was David's secret to enduring trials? Just as the apostle Paul and Silas sang hymns of praise in the Philippian jail, David wrote most of his psalms in the bleak wilderness, and he sang them there. He worshipped while he waited. He trusted God when there was no visible sign of a breakthrough.

Paul told the Corinthians: "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4:17). God uses our delays to shape our character and spiritual fruitfulness. If we understand this deep truth, we will respond differently when He imposes a speed limit in our lives.

If you are in a holding pattern right now, don't despair. A breakthrough is coming. God is preparing you to handle the promise when it comes.

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