

RT Kendall: Are You Running Ahead of God?

Waiting for God to act—waiting for Him to show up, to step in, intervene, take over or fulfill His promise—is arguably the most difficult discipline of the Christian life. The commands to *wait on God*—explicitly or implicitly—emerge again and again in the Scripture, but also come with the promise of blessing if we do indeed wait and not give up:

“But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).

“Those who wait for Me shall not be ashamed” (Isa. 49:23d).

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him” (Isa. 64:4).

You might ask, “How long must one wait?” My answer: as long as it takes to see why God said for us to wait. His command is for our good. He would not ask us to wait if what He has in mind were not worth waiting for.

One of the easiest things in the world to do is to run ahead of the Lord. Is it a sin? It is what Joseph and Mary did. The child Jesus—age 12—had been with His parents in Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary headed back for Galilee, they assumed Jesus was with them. He wasn’t. Unbeknown to them, Jesus stayed back in Jerusalem. “Supposing them to be in their company, they went a day’s journey” (Luke 2:44b). I elaborate on this story in my book *The Sensitivity of the Spirit*.

I will say to you right here I think that is what Abraham and Sarah did when they decided they should sleep with Sarah’s maidservant Hagar (Gen. 16:2-4). They had no children. They

were trying to make good the promise that God did indeed give to Abraham—that his offspring would be as the stars of the heavens. This was when he was 75 and Sarah 65. Years passed after that without Sarah getting pregnant. She gave up hope and suggested that Abraham sleep with Hagar. He did. Although it was a part of God's sovereign plan, Hagar's giving birth to Ishmael gave great pain to Abraham and Sarah. And to the whole world.

How wonderful it is that "all things work together for good" for those who love God, to them who are the "called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). The fact that all things work together for good does not mean all we did was right at the time. When I left home in 1956 and began work as a salesman, I went deeply into debt. I was so foolish. I bought expensive stereo equipment; I even bought an airplane (a Cessna 120)! I bought a car—a new Edsel. I was then too deep into debt to go into full-time Christian ministry. Going into debt like that was not good. But those years as a salesman taught me how to handle money. (I have not owed money to anyone since 1962.) I learned how to work with people. I learned how to be a businessman. I learned that waiting on God has great reward. Those years were not for nothing. All things have worked together for good.

So with you. Are you waiting for God to act? Have you cried out, "How long?" Take heart. He will show up—never too late, never too early, but always just on time.

 *Adapted from The Presence of God by R. T. Kendall, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House-Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. In this book, Dr. Kendall once again teaches us how to develop a sensitivity to the presence of God so that our relationship with Him will deepen and grow. You'll discover why God might at sometimes withhold a sense of His presence and at other times overwhelm you with it. To order your copy, click on this link.*

Prayer Power Week Beginning Sept. 3, 2017

This week, as you move into an awareness of God's presence in good times and bad, remember those affected by Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana, and ask God how you can be His hands and feet to share His heart and love with them. Pray also for those hit by the massive landslides in India, and ask the Lord to connect you with those bringing aid to those suffering at home and around the world. Pray for the responders, missionaries, local enforcement agencies, volunteers and survivors. Continue to pray for the president and those working with him to make decisions affecting the nation and the world, whether it be regarding natural disasters, crime, terrorism or threats of war. Read 1 Peter 5:7; Nehemiah 8:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.