

The Art of Waiting

by Judy Jacobs

Waiting rooms are not my favorite places. I get impatient. I sit there and jiggle my feet. I sigh. I have so many other things to do. Besides, those magazines are so old.

Waiting for God to show up can be a lot harder than waiting for a doctor's appointment. Even on the doctor's slowest day, I know I will get out of that waiting room after a few hours. Waiting for God is a little different. Waiting for Him can take an entire lifetime, and the magazines are optional.

You can make a whole career of waiting for God.

So, although it seems contradictory to say so, waiting is part of pursuing God's moments in your life. Waiting—and being willing to wait—is a very important and practical part of any divine appointment.

It's not a passive thing at all. Oh, no. When you are waiting, you are quite active. On the negative side, you are busy fending off all of your impatient fretfulness. On the positive side, you are busy growing in your faith and trust. You are getting rid of distractions and refining your focus on Jesus. You are listening—waiting for your name to be called.

The Bible says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10, NKJV). If you want to know God better, then you have to get still, get quiet. When you have hushed your soul and spirit and body, you will start to put down roots and draw up strength.

The Bible also says, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). You have to get to a special place, alone with God. If you are really serious about laying hold of your destiny, you have to realize that it will be a process, one handhold at a time, and a lot of it will happen when you're closeted with God, waiting, pondering, soaking up His presence. It's part introspection, part prayer, part sitting at His feet where you learn and grow and get transformed so that you reflect His image.

It is not something you can achieve in your own strength. You know already what will happen if you think your own strength

is sufficient. (You will fall flat on your nose—in public probably.) God wants to provide for you, but to do that He needs you to be aware of your insufficiency. You need Him.

Waiting is an expression of your desire for more of Him. God is stronger than any obstacle or any human being, and He wants to have an opportunity to show you how strong He is. That can't happen if you're noisily charging around full-steam ahead, acting like you have everything you need already. Sure, once in a while He will knock you off your high horse as He did with Paul on the road to Damascus, but normally, that's just not the way God works.

The humble English preacher Smith Wigglesworth (who was known for saying, "Only believe!") explained how God works with us:

"Sometimes we are tested on the lines of faith. For twenty-five years Abraham believed God. God said to him: 'Thy wife shall have a son.' Every year his wife grew weaker. He saw the wrinkles and her puny, weak condition. Did he look at it? No—he looked at the promise. For twenty-five years God tested him; but he gave glory to God, and considered neither Sarah's body nor his own. And as he did so, God said, 'Yes, Abraham.'

Listen to what the Word of God says: 'Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification' (Romans 4: 23–25).

All who believe are blessed along with faithful Abraham. God wants to show us that nothing is impossible to those who believe."

Waiting is also an acknowledgement of God's times and seasons. Very often, we wait simply because it's not time yet. The prophet Habakkuk said: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3).

Sometimes you have to do like church folks did in the old days—you "tarry" until He gives you what you need. You wait patiently, faithful to the vision He has already given you even as you seek for more vision. The apostle James wrote,

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8). Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

This waiting/seeking thing seems to be one of the most basic principles in the kingdom of heaven. You may feel like you’re doing nothing. You may feel like you’re in kindergarten. But hey, there’s nothing wrong with kindergarten! The Bible says, “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin” (Zech. 4:10, NLT).

You will grow. And the person who has already gone on up to a higher “grade” needs to wait and seek some more in order to grow too. The thing about God is that He keeps beckoning you to go higher. That’s all well and good, but the glorious problem is this: just when you think you are about to get to that point where you have finally reached your place in God, He moves on you and takes you higher still.

All you need to start with is your mustard seed of faith. Just get away to your place with God and plant that seed. It will start growing steadily. Take care of it and keep waiting for it to grow to full maturity.