

Active Waiting

Waiting isn't that just your favorite thing to do? What could be more fun than a slow line at the grocery store? Or a long, long, long traffic jam on I-75 making you late? Or reading dull magazines at the doctor's office? None of us likes to wait. We get frustrated and impatient, frazzled and worn out. And when the wait involves something serious, like having to wait for medicine to kick in, hearing back after a job interview, or getting biopsy results, we can struggle with fear and discouragement and anxiety and anger.

Waiting is never easy, but it's a part of life we cannot escape no matter how hard we try. This is especially true for Believers. We are called to order our lives around God's purposes and plans, and that means waiting on His timing rather than our own. His way of doing things, not ours, is to become our priority. Consider, for example, the men and women in the Bible whom God called to do His will. Every single one of them had to endure a time of waiting, and it was often painful. In fact, we can call them the Bible Waiters: Noah (~100 years), Job, Abraham & Sarah, Joseph, Moses, the Prophets, *Yeshua*, Paul.

Two Truths About Waiting

From our roster of the Bible's "waiters," we can draw out at least two truths about waiting. First, waiting on *God is the rule* rather than *the exception*. All of us have a natural tendency to make waiting on God the exception and trusting in our own wisdom and strength the rule. When there are no open doors, we try to force the locks. But God's provision doesn't always come along the minute we want them to. We may not know His purposes until we get to heaven, but we must accept that waiting may be the very process God uses to mature us.

Second, waiting on God means resting, not worrying. We have to trust Him. David wrote in Psalm 31:15-16: ¹⁵*But I have trusted in You, Adonai. I said: "You are my God."* ¹⁶*My times are in Your hands. Deliver me from the hands of my foes and from those who pursue me.* All our times are in His hands, even in slow waits. But resting doesn't mean being passive or inert. Waiting is active. Think of Noah hammering together the ark; think of Joseph being put in charge of the other prisoners because the Lord was with him. Life goes on, God is with us. We need to be present and involved whatever our situation. So stay active while you wait – but don't be anxious.

Waiting on the Lord is hardest when we're in a pinch. David was certainly no stranger to tough times. During one crisis, he transposed his faith into a song, Psalm 62. That should give encouragement to us "waiters."

What to Do

We first learn from David's words to focus on God. *♪"My soul, wait thou only upon God..." ♪* (Psalm 62:2) waiting only upon God. We are not to panic over our circumstances, not fret over the meanness of other people who are doing us wrong. David had his enemies, but David found rest, though, in God, who is always in control and who always cares for us. The infinite God is certainly greater than any temporal enemy or passing trouble.

Then David's words remind us to trust in *God's* character. We find our rest in focusing on God because we know His character is holy and absolutely dependable. What does David mean when he calls God his "rock"? The Hebrew word for rock is *tsur*. It conveys the idea that God is totally reliable. He is a sure source of strength and he endures throughout every generation. Not only is He steadfast, but also He is a stronghold of safety, a shelter of protection, the One who delivers us and gives us hope. He is all-powerful and loving beyond our power to comprehend. People who rely on God, as their Rock, will not be moved.

How to Wait

From David, we can also learn two ways of practicing waiting. The first way is in stillness. The Hebrew word for stillness in verse 1 is *dumiyyah*, meaning *"a quiet waiting, repose."* It pictures rest. In verse 5, the Hebrew word is *damam*, *"to be or grow dumb, silent or still."* With our mouths and hearts stilted, we can meditate on the things of the Lord. During these times of quietness God may bring to mind a needed truth, a praise report, something to be thankful for, or a practical application of His Word that we had been missing.

The second way is in confidence. David says: *"I will never be moved"*; then again in verse 6b: *"I will not be moved."* Why? Because of God's character and His provision. We can wait secure and stable in His love. He saves, shelters, and strengthens us. The prophet Isaiah explained that God even exchanges our weakness for His strength when we wait on Him. No wonder David urges us to trust in God *"at all times"* (Ps. 62:9).

♪ *"But they that 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. Teach me Lord, to wait ♪"* (Isaiah 40:31, KJV)

When God wants to make a majestic oak, He takes a hundred years. But when He wants to make a squash, He takes three months. Many of us, while waiting on God, have asked a similar question, *"Lord, isn't there a shorter, less difficult route I could take?"* But it's only by waiting on Him that our roots will grow deep enough for us to be a majestic oak. It may not be our favorite thing to do, but waiting is one of God's most effective methods for growing us into patient, wise, humble, and mature people. These truths on waiting are well worth reflecting on: waiting involves trusting, waiting involves praying, and waiting implies resting. Shabbat Shalom!