

WAITING GAMES

It seems like all of life is a series of waiting games.

Some of the biblical figures who were forced to wait: (gathered from *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero)

- Abraham was told he would be a father of nations. He became impatient and took matters into his own hands and birthed Ishmael through his maidservant Hagar. (Genesis 16:1-4)
- Moses had to wait forty years to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, learning to “wait on God” in the desert. During that time, he was transformed. (Numbers 12:3)
- David had to learn to wait after his victory over Goliath. He was forced to flee King Saul’s army for ten to thirteen years. In the wilderness God transformed him into a man after his own heart. (1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 1)
- Jesus learned to wait in obscurity and silence, both as a lowly carpenter’s son and in the wilderness, resisting the temptation of the devil. Out of this waiting Jesus emerged from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14).

We can trust God to do the same in us – if we will learn to wait on him. If we trust God, we can learn and grow while we wait.

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.” Psalm 40:1-3

- What does it mean to wait patiently?

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER: keeping our relationship with God strong.

Does prayer help?

But God does not always answer our prayers the way we ask.

From Philip Yancey’s book on *Prayer*:

“Yes, God hears and responds to my requests. Yes, God somehow incorporates those requests into a plan of action on earth. But . . . we do not always get what we earnestly desire.”

Yet, “. . . from the very beginning God has relied on human partners to advance the process of creation . . . God does very little on earth without the likes of you and us.”

We are in partnership with God but need to pray to be *good* partners. We need to be able to discern his will because, in the end it's God's will that will be done, not ours. Praying with that understanding is a submission to God's will; it is a surrendering of our own will. It is putting what we are waiting for in God's hands.

That is where our trust and patience will come from.

And:

...those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

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- List some of the things you are waiting for.
- How do you feel about this waiting?