



WHEN GOD TELLS US TO WAIT

August 2015

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

Such a great promise this is for us who have hopes for a good future! I know this verse has always given me hope for great things ahead. However, have you read the verses before this one? Are you hearing what God is actually saying to the Israeli exiles in Babylon?

God said, *“build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce...”* (vs 8) Further along he says: *“When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place....”* (vs 10)

In other words, God is telling them to wait. He’s telling them to wait seventy years! Those who were told this weren’t even alive to see this promise come to fruition. It was intended for future generations.

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Have you ever had plans—what you thought were exciting, God-given plans—and found everyone around you telling you that you weren't ready yet? You had to wait. And how impatient that made you feel! Through others God was telling you, "It's not time yet. Settle down, live your life, build. You need to be patient and wait for God's timing." If you live with health problems you might be encouraged to wait and develop better stability.

Moses' story might comfort you. He had to wait to be ready for God to make him into the great leader he became. His story shows how waiting is one of God's tools for developing us.

How does waiting help us?

- As a child's waiting for Christmas builds anticipation, so waiting for something we look forward to builds anticipation in us as well. When we're ready to step into the role we're looking forward to, we treasure it more.
- During his forty years in the desert working for his father-in-law, God transformed Moses' character. He had been brash and impatient, killing a man in Egypt and hiding the body. But we all know his story. He became a great leader. While we wait on God, He can help our character and emotional well-being to develop too.
- Waiting encourages us to become dependent on God. It builds intimacy with him through prayer while we experience life's difficulties.

We probably won't have to wait as long as the Israelis in Babylon did, but any waiting can be hard. Never forget though, . . . God never asks us to wait without him.

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