

## Chapter 6



### *Waiting It Out*

Waiting is a necessary part of God's preparation process. The root word for waiting is "wait," which is an action word. The Hebrew word for "wait" is "qavah," which means to look for, hope or expect. It also means to literally bind together, which gives reference to the twisting or braiding of the hair. The idea of waiting on God is that of intertwining ourselves with Him and allowing Him to fulfill our expectations. Waiting requires us to be so connected with and tied up in God that He becomes the center of our lives. Waiting for God means that we will adjust our lives to Him rather than to our circumstances. It also means that we will put our hope in God rather than in someone or something. If we wait for God to give us what we need, we will realize that what we really needed was what we always wanted. Therefore, we must fully understand the purpose and the benefits of waiting on God.

#### *Wait With Purpose*

Whether we realize it or not, waiting is an integral part of our day-to-day activities. We are always looking for a way to avoid having to wait, but it's virtually impossible to get around it no matter how hard we try. Waiting is so engrained in everything we do, so we can't escape the process. We may try to take a short cut or detour to get around having to wait, but usually we don't reach our destination any faster than taking the original route.

Have you ever been stuck in a traffic jam on the freeway and had to decide whether to wait or try to find a detour around the traffic? You may not be sure what is causing the delay – a car accident, a stalled car or people rubbernecking, but you just don't want to wait unnecessarily. Especially if you are late for a meeting at work or a doctor's appointment, you may think getting off the freeway and taking the side streets will get you there sooner. However, when you exit the freeway, you may still have to wait in bumper-to-bumper traffic on the feeder road and at several traffic lights. Then, you would get even more frustrated because what appeared to be a shortcut caused you to wait even longer. If you had been willing to wait in the traffic on the freeway, slowly but surely you would have reached your destination. Instead of always asking, "Why do I have to wait?," you should be asking, "What should I do while I wait?" The sooner you recognize the necessity of waiting, the process can be a positive learning experience for you.

Waiting is not intended to be a passive concept, but requires some action by the person doing the waiting. Waiting does not mean being lazy, going to sleep or the lack

of effort. It does mean that you are ready for action under command and have the ability to do nothing until the command is given. Think about a scenario with you sitting at home in your pajamas and getting a phone call from your parents who are on the way to pick you up. While you're waiting on them, you can either sit on the sofa until they arrive or start getting dressed in preparation for their arrival. The former would be "passive" waiting, and the latter would be "active" waiting. If you really expect your parents to show up and want to be ready when they arrive, it will take some action on your part. You wouldn't expect them to come and dress you like a child when they get there. Likewise, when you're waiting on God, you have to take some action to prepare for the arrival of His promises. If you believe that the promises are on the way, you will get up and start getting ready for them. However, you have to also be able to do nothing until God speaks, which is similar to waiting on the phone call from your parents. Waiting on God demands the absolute surrender of your life to Him, and the confession that you don't see or know your way. You have to continuously say, "Until God speaks, I shall not be moved." In other words, you must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord (*2 Chronicles 20:17*).

A biblical example of "active" waiting is illustrated in the parable of the ten virgins (*Matthew 25:1-13*). These ten virgins were waiting on the return of the bridegroom in preparation for the wedding ceremony. Since the virgins did not know the day or hour of the bridegroom's return, they had to watch and prepare for his return. If they were not ready when he returned, they couldn't go with him. The virgins' preparation during the waiting process was critical. The five "wise" virgins made adequate preparation because they had the necessary lamps and extra oil in jars. The other five "foolish" virgins had lamps, but no extra oil. While the bridegroom was delayed, all of the virgins slept. At midnight, the bridegroom finally arrived. The wise virgins were ready and went with him to the wedding. The lamps of the foolish virgins had gone out, so they went searching for more oil and missed the arrival of the bridegroom. When they returned and found the wedding feast already in progress, they tried to get in but were denied. The foolish virgins missed what God had for them because of their lack of preparation.

Are you going to be like the "wise" virgins or the "foolish" virgins? When your blessing arrives, will you be adequately prepared for it? For example, if you're waiting on the new house, have you started cleaning and packing up the old one yet? If you don't prepare for your promise now, it will be too late to start getting ready when it arrives. If you are not already prepared when it arrives, it will be too late. The foolish virgins also missed out on their blessing because they were not ready in time. Similarly, if your flight is scheduled to leave at 8:00 a.m., it's too late if you get to the airport at 8:30 a.m. You'll miss your flight because you didn't make adequate preparation before it arrived. The same principle applies to the promise you're waiting on. You have to be prepared to receive the promise before it arrives.

### ***Waiting Is A Choice***

God wants us to make a choice to wait on Him. Isaiah 40:31 refers to, "...they that wait upon the Lord," which implies that the person waiting must make a voluntary choice to wait. This scripture doesn't say, "they that are forced to wait." Whether we wait or not

should be our choice. That's why we get more frustrated when the waiting is involuntary, or we don't get to choose.

I recall being stranded at my church when it flooded unexpectedly in Houston a few years ago. I drove from work to church on a very rainy night. After about an hour, an unknown man walked into the church and announced that our cars needed to be moved because of the flooding. I didn't believe him and ran to the door to see for myself. The water was already coming inside the church and was up to my car door. Several men went out to move our cars onto an incline. As the water began to rise inside the church, we were forced to evacuate the building. We sat in our cars for about six hours until the rain stopped. At this point, my pastor told everyone that it seemed safe to leave. I felt very uneasy about leaving because the water appeared to still be too high in the streets. I watched car after car, even a small Echo, leave the parking lot without any trouble. I was the last car in the lot and was urged to come join the group. Everything in me was screaming, "Don't do it!" However, against my better judgment, I pulled out of the lot into the street. The high water began to rush into my car, which immediately stalled. I knew deep down that it was not time for me to leave, but I followed the crowd. I realized that if I had chosen to wait a little longer, I could have saved myself from a big headache. Instead, I had a long wait for the wrecker to arrive, to get a rental car and for the repair of my car. I had already waited for six hours at the church, so it wouldn't have made much of a difference to wait a few more hours for the water to completely reside. It does pay to wait, and I am a living witness. So don't be moved by what you feel or what others around you are doing. It may be someone else's time, but not yours or vice versa. I learned an important lesson from this incident about waiting on God and His divine timing. If I had stuck with my choice to continue to wait, I could have avoided the unnecessary delay and frustration that followed.

Most of us would be willing to endure the waiting process if we knew that we would definitely receive our blessing at the end. If Oprah Winfrey told you that she would deposit a \$100,000 gift into your bank account on next Friday, would you have a problem waiting on the money? Probably not, because you know she has the means and the money to follow through with her promise. Likewise, God has the provision and the power to back up His promises. So why do you have a problem waiting on Him? I'll ask you once again, "Why do you trust people, but refuse to trust God?" I could understand your anxiety and impatience if you were not sure about receiving the promise, but this is not the case with God. You know that you can expect to receive everything that God has promised you.

On the other hand, you never really know what to expect when dealing with people. For example, I once had flu-like symptoms and went to see my doctor. I don't get sick very often and dreaded going to the doctor because of the long wait to see him. At this appointment, I waited for three hours (two hours in the waiting room and one hour in the examining room) before I ever saw the doctor. Although I was uneasy about having to wait so long, I took a sigh of relief when my doctor finally came into the room. He looked at my medical chart and asked if I had cold or flu-like symptoms, which I confirmed. He then asked if I was taking any over-the-counter cold medicine, which I also confirmed. The doctor then told me to continue taking that medicine, and there

was nothing else he could do for me. I was very upset because not only did I have to do a self-diagnosis, the doctor didn't even bother to examine me or confirm my condition after I had waited such a long time. He was too busy rushing to the next patient. At my request, the doctor agreed to do a basic examination of me, but his prognosis did not change. I felt like my waiting had been in vain because I still didn't get what I had waited for in the end. Needless to say, I never went back to that doctor. Moreover, it's a blessing to know that God is not like that doctor and does give us what we need after we wait on Him. God does not leave us in His waiting room any longer than necessary. When He comes in to examine us, He not only gives us the right diagnosis but also the prognosis for our situation. We can rest assured that when we wait on God, our waiting will not be in vain.

### ***Good Things Come To Those Who Wait***

Remember the old clichés, "good things come to those who wait" and "anything worth having is worth waiting for." We have all heard these expressions so many times that we know them by memory. They are intended to remind us that our patience will eventually be rewarded if we wait for whatever we desire. If we become anxious about our situation, a friend might quote one of these well-known clichés to encourage us to be patient. We may take comfort in the words, whether we really believe them or not, because they make us feel better about having to wait.

I used to think that most people generally viewed waiting as a "good thing" even if they didn't want to do it. However, someone asked me before why I was not married yet, and my response was, "Because I am waiting on God, and good things come to those who wait." I received a sarcastic reply, "But not to those who wait too late. God helps those who help themselves." I have heard this response before, but I didn't fully realize how much this response reflected our society's perception about waiting. Now, waiting seems to be considered a bad thing to be tolerated only for a limited period of time. If we wait too long after such period, the perception is that we could actually miss out on the very "thing" that we've been waiting on.

Accordingly, we tend to follow the philosophy that there is no better time than the present. As a result, we get in a hurry and make impulsive and foolish decisions that we end up regretting later. We will buy a new house or car that we can't afford or run up our credit cards buying things that we don't really need because we don't want to wait. I've heard people say very casually when they get weary, "Well, I don't have the money for a new car, but I am going to step out by faith." Sometimes what we call "faith" is actually foolishness. Remember that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. So my question to those stepping out by faith is, "What did God speak to you about your situation? Are you stepping out on what He said or on what you want to do?" A lot of the time, we step out on what we want, and then wonder why the new "faith" car is later repossessed or the new "faith" house is foreclosed on. As discussed in Chapter 1 of the book, you have to know what God is speaking to you. It's ironic how we will claim to move by faith on our own initiative, but we won't move at all when God actually tells us to do so. The real reason that we step out too early is because we get tired of waiting on God.

After you know the true purpose of the waiting process, you must understand the benefits that are available to those who choose to wait on God. You can be confident that your preparation time will definitely be worth the wait in the end. Good things will come to you if you decide to continue to wait on God's promises. The many benefits of waiting on God include your being able to:

- 1) Step out by faith on God's promises;
- 2) Allow patience to help you persevere; and
- 3) Receive the renewed strength of God.

When you wait on God, your faith, patience and strength will be increased. In other words, God will empower you to wait on Him when you take advantage of the benefits He offers those who wait.