

Waiting On God

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MY SOUL WAITS ONLY UPON GOD

(Psalm 62:1)



Introduction:

In my book, *The Essentials to Christian Living*, published in 2013, I included a chapter on the subject of Waiting on God, but I could never exhaust my thoughts on this subject, for I am convinced to the core of my being that nothing is more important to the Christian's life than obeying the biblical exhortation to wait on God. This is a major theme of the Bible and the average Christian is not aware of its importance. It is vital to God's involvement in our lives—the accomplishment of His purposes.

This subject is hardly ever taught in churches. Personally I have never heard it taught, but the Holy Spirit has surely drawn my attention to it. There have been times in my life when I have failed God by not waiting—yet I praise God for the times when I was obedient and experienced the divine intervention of God's mercy and power into some serious situations. Remember, this is God's way of working—and it is not of the self-life.

David made a monumental confession of his faith involving eternal as well as temporal consequences. Probably, no man in the Scriptures knew more by experience the divine necessity of waiting on God. And he shares much truth to us in the Psalms.

Because God's people have a gross misunderstanding of the subject, it needs clarification. So what does it mean to wait on God?—that's the supreme question. First, let me say that it does not mean to quit, to pause, to sit idle, to do nothing. In fact, it has nothing to do with your activities in the home, on your job, nor in your church. Crudely, it does not mean to give up and roll over and play dead.

To the contrary, to wait on God requires that we do something specific and definite—it means, in an act of the will, to surrender to God completely the situations and problems of life. I like this statement

**The noise of contending desires, the whispers of earthly hopes are hushed,
and the soul listens.**

F.B. Meyer wrote: "This is the test of true waiting: Wait before God till the voices, suggestions and energies of nature become silent. Only then can we realize the uttermost of salvation."

This was Abraham's secret. Realizing his natural faculties were depleted and all suggestions, questions, and opinions had ceased—he had nothing but God. Then he realized his utter helplessness and the human impossibility of he and Sarah producing a child in their old age of 90 and 100 years respectively. Then something miraculous happened—his faith was placed in the power of God and he refused to be denied the promise of God. He "*staggered not at the promise through unbelief.*" He became "*fully persuaded that what God had promised He was able to perform* (Romans 4:20-21). He refused to consider the impossible, and rested on God's promise. God answered and Isaac, the *child of promise* was conceived and born. *Now consider these necessities:*

1. Divine Delays.

You may ask, why does God make me wait for His answer? We must wait until we become willing to discover what God is doing in our lives. The answer is in the Word. David said, *"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me"* (Psalm 138:8). He will do the same for you. *"Be not as the horse or as the mule that has no understanding"* (Psalm 32:9). Paul wrote, *"Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Ephesians 5:17). Know what God is up to. *He is working out His purposes while you wait.*

2. Close the Door.

Jesus demands a closed-door conference with us. *"When you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who sees in secret:"* (Matthew 6:6). Oh, dear friend, wait until you are alone in a divine enclosure with God. Never fear being alone with God. He is your heavenly Father and your dearest friend. He yearns for your fellowship. That is when He will speak to you and you will hear His divine impressions on your heart and mind. This requires discipline in prayer that is more than merely saying prayers, but genuine communication with God. This is far more than asking God to bless or be with someone. **Objective prayer for definite answers is the key.**

3. Release All to God.

Definitely, as David exhorted in Psalm 55:22. *"Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you."* Peter wrote, *"Casting all your care upon Him for he cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7). Now **when you do the casting, God will demonstrate His caring.** Refrain from "reeling" your cares back in. Leave them with God. Human release will bring divine intervention. We must divest ourselves of all that is contrary to God's working that we may not hinder, but cooperate with the divine process.

4. Lay Out Your Case before God

All your anxiety, all your care;
Bring to the mercy seat; leave it there.
Never a burden He cannot bear;
Never a friend like Jesus.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path (Psalm 142:1-3).

Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsts after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah. Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit fails: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant (Psalm 143).

Read this passage from these two psalms and note carefully how David laid his case out before God. You should learn great truths to enable you to wait on God according to God's way. Here are a few thoughts:

- David was desperate in prayer.
- He stated his trouble to the Lord.
- He cast himself upon God's faithfulness.
- He rehearsed what Satan was doing to him.
- He expressed his hunger for God.
- He meditated and thought on the works of God.
- He surrendered to God's will.

5. Commit to Discipline

When trouble comes and we resort to waiting on God, we are tempted ride the emotional roller or the treadmill of worry, but we will not get God's response and intervention without discipline. We must refrain from seeking out someone to listen while we rehearse our trouble. This is nothing but self-pity that is a deterrent to the exercise of faith. The discipline of prayer and bible reading serves to enable us to stay focused on the Lord and His Word, feeding upon His promises rather than fixed on our own plans. *Looking further into this subject, we find three words that give us understanding:*

A. The Advantage to Waiting on God. The Keyword here is "God."

Why God? Why wait on Him? We wait on Him, not only because of His attributes of wisdom and power, but specifically His character. He is faithful. James says that there is *no variableness nor shadow of turning with Him* (James 1:17). He is stable, steady, and steadfast. He is *the same yesterday, and today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8).

Since Adam, God has been working in the situations of His creation. He is more than equal to any problem or situation we could be faced with—He has had thousands of years of experience. Our feeble efforts cannot compare with His knowledge, power and wisdom. The tragic mistake so many have made in times of trouble is failing to acknowledge God. We are admonished in Proverbs, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths* (3:5-6). We are not only to allow God in on our situations, but to definitely surrender them to Him.

Take note of several advantages of waiting on God:

❖ God's Power

There is never a situation that God cannot handle. Think of His power in creation. Paul wrote: *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist* (Colossians 1:16-17). Consider one of my favorite verses:

Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20).

❖ God's Understanding

We are told in Isaiah 40:28, *There is no searching of His understanding*. David wrote, *He knows our frame* (Psalm 103:14). and, *He has known my soul in adversity*. Nothing escapes His all-seeing eye. He knows all things: the in's and out's, the crooks and turns, the beginning and the end. We are in good hands when we wait on God.

❖ God's Sufficiency

Paul confessed, *Our sufficiency is of God* (II Corinthians 3:5). There is never a situation or problem God cannot handle. Every situation we face must have God's sufficiency. He knows how to handle things. Although He is not a God of time, He knows when to intervene with impressions, direction and supervision.

❖ Spiritual Rest

Paul implies that rest comes from waiting on God, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him* (Psalm 37:7). Heart and mind are at rest while our situations and problems are in God's hands.

❖ Spiritual Strength

They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31). Such renewal is so necessary in this dark world. We are prone to become weary and worn, spent and exhausted, but as we wait consciously and patiently we experience the renewal we need. Paul states that it is a daily thing, for *the inner man is renewed day by day. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait I say upon the Lord* (Psalm 27:14).

❖ Valid Expectancy

David wrote, *I wait for the Lord. My soul does wait and in His word do I hope* (Psalm 130:5). We do not expect a dream nor a vision, but a sure and solid divine intervention with the fulfillment of God's promises.

❖ Divine Promises

There are almost 8000 recorded promises in the Scriptures that God made. Receiving the fulfillment of God's promises is contingent on our waiting on Him.

B. The Alternative to Waiting on God. The Keyword here is "Self."

The primary alternatives are the self-life and man, but why choose another—God is infinite in understanding, love, willingness and power to help. The alternatives are fickle, faltering and fallacious. When we wait on God, we get what God can do, but waiting on self we get what self can do. God works in the realm of the supernatural, the self-life in the realm of the natural and superficial. Those who fail to wait on God usually make a mess of their situation. They are prone to work themselves up into a frenzy resulting in three frustrating responses:

1. Impetuous – fretful and fearful, hasty and headstrong.
2. Impulsive – with uncontrolled emotions, thoughtless and excitable.
3. Impatient – frantic, nervous, anxious and restless, irritable and agitated.

Those who choose the alternative to waiting on God do not consider the:

1. Futility of the self effort,

2. Frustration of self effort,
3. Failure of self effort.

They may work things out to a compromised solution, but it will not have the pleasure and perfection of God's works. *Consider now the limitation of the self-life:*

- ❖ Self can only deceive and disappoint.
- ❖ Self has no capability of Holy Spirit given discernment.
- ❖ Self is without divine direction.
- ❖ Self is as shifting sand and a sinking ship.

Depending on the plans of the self-life is like arranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic. It offers nothing substantial.

C. The Aversion to Waiting on God. The Keyword here is "Satan."

This world is a graveyard filled with the ruined and wrecked lives of people who excluded the God of grace, love and power and came under the tyrannical merciless dominion of the sinister being of Satan who Jesus said came *to steal, to kill and to destroy* (John 10:10). Dear Christian friend, God has never been intolerant of sinful disobedience, whether it be careless negligence, ordinary indifference, or willful refusal to comply with His purposes.

Paul admonished in his Ephesian letter, *Neither give place the devil* (4:27). Aversion to waiting on God does just that. Such rebellion against God, a willful refusal to obey the exhortation to wait on God brings terrible consequences. Disobedience in the life of Christian is fertile ground for Satan's work. Even in the life of a believer.

Satanic restraint is lifted as resistance is lessened.

In Psalm 106, David has painted a gruesome picture of the horrible results of disobedience in the life of God's people in their wilderness journey. The first few verses describe the goodness of God. Verse 12 says, *Then they believed His words; they sang His praise*, but oh what a drastic change in verse 13:

They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel.

I will mention briefly a few extremely disturbing facts in Israel's behavior:

- ❖ The earth opened up and swallowed many,
- ❖ A fire was kindled and burned up the wicked,
- ❖ They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image,
- ❖ Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass,
- ❖ They forgot God their savior, who had done great things in Egypt,
- ❖ They believed not God's word, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD,
- ❖ They ate the sacrifices of the dead,
- ❖ They served their idols: that were a snare unto them,
- ❖ They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

- ❖ They shed the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed unto idols ,
- ❖ They were defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.
- ❖ Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry.

I think Christians should read this Psalm often to be reminded of just how far a believer can go in a state of spiritual declension and just how powerful the self-life really is in provoking God's judgment. In our day of grace, degradation may not be as extreme as it was in Israel, but never underestimate the power of the flesh under Satan's influence. While Israel's sin was manifested more in a physical way, our sins of the spirit are just as serious. However, we have heard of parents drowning their children. And don't forget the account of King David's adultery, and murder to cover it up.

In closing, I want to mention several ways aversion to waiting on God adversely affects a Christian:

❖ **Arrested Spiritual Growth**

As Christians, we are commanded to *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. Growth is not optional, but mandated. However, we cannot grow unless we wait on the Lord for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Spiritual development ceases when we do not wait on God for His supply of the means of growth.

❖ **Leanness of Soul**

The best way to describe this is to say that the Holy Spirit is so grieved that He does not produce the fruit of the Spirit in a believer's life. Instead of being spiritually rich and satisfying with the manifest presence of the image of Christ, a disobedient Christian's life is a miserable existence, devoid of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And what a tremendous contrast are the works of the flesh Paul names in Galatians 5.

❖ **Barenness of Life**

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

These words of Paul tell us what God will do in a life yielded to and dependant on Him. There is no lack with God. He will work to make a surrendered life joyful, fruitful – *productive in the body of Christ*.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

A Christian does not have to remain a babe in Christ—a spiritual infant, but can *grow up in Christ, unto the measure of the stature of Christ*. And now my appeal to you, my friend, is with the words of

David in Psalm 39:7: *And now Lord what wait I for? My hope is in You.* If you are not one of, *they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength* that Isaiah referred to, there is room for you. Become one of them now.

Conclusion:

In my life and ministry, my supreme desire has been to:

- ❖ Rely on God's Omniscience – His divine knowledge and wisdom,
- ❖ Rest on God's Omnipotence – His divine Power,
- ❖ Reckon on God's Faithfulness – His unfailing grace.

And as I have grown older, the desire has become progressively more intense, for I have mourned my frailty and the presence of the self-life that Paul called *sin that dwells in me* (Roman 7:17). God's love and grace continue a precious reality as the days have come and gone. And the words of this old hymn have been a comfort beyond description. I pray that it will be to you also:

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord my Father,
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
 As Thou has been, Thou forever will be.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
 Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
 Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 All I have needed Thy hand has provided;
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.



