

This is something I wrote which was inspired by my own "waiting season" and based upon my song "In the Waiting." I pray it is an encouragement to you...

We've all experienced the agony of waiting at one time or another - standing in line waiting to pay for our groceries, getting stuck in traffic when you are in a hurry to get somewhere, or even counting the days until a joyous event arrives on your calendar. But waiting on God is quite a different story, and here's how. In waiting to pay for groceries, you can see the other customers, how fast or how slowly the check-out clerk is moving, and know approximately how long it's going to take you to get out of there. But not so with God. His furnace of waiting is not so clearly defined, and we are not allowed the benefit of viewing His timetable. And to top it all off, He is not required to answer questions like "How long?" and "Why me?" while we roll our eyes and sigh heavily, shifting from side to side in line. In fact, there is no line at all, no number to be taken! Some people may only have to wait a week for the very same thing we have waited years for! And unlike most Customer Service Departments, if we are unhappy with His timetable, He doesn't give us a discount or a free dessert because we have waited too long. No, He is not in the business of making us comfortable, He is in the business of building our character and conforming us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, His timing very rarely corresponds with our own, and life just doesn't seem fair.

I speak so confidently about waiting because the Lord has bestowed upon me my very own personal season of waiting. Believe me, I've kicked and screamed and pouted and cried, only to wait some more. You see, my husband Mark and I have been trying to have a baby for over 8 years now. Oh, I have been consoled by the fact that so many other women of God in the Bible waited on God for their "bundle of joy," and the timing was usually later than sooner. So, I'm in good company, right? Perhaps so, but I also have not received a reassuring word from on high declaring that "my descendants shall outnumber the stars or the grains of sand." So I wait, not knowing what the outcome will be. But through this process, as I have surrendered to the Lord, He has shown me some valuable things.

First of all, though it sounds cliché, there is a purpose in the pain. He declares that "His ways and His thoughts are higher than ours." There is a bigger picture and we cannot see it with our earthly eyes, for it requires heavenly vision. And while we perceive our waiting season as God pushing the "pause" button on our lives, He, in reality, is working more in us in these valleys than on the mountaintops of our lives. He longs to teach us greater compassion, to learn to identify with other people's suffering and to comfort others with the comfort we have been given. He longs to produce true faith and trust in us - trust beyond our circumstances. He desires to refine and purify our motives and bring us to spiritual maturity and surrender by breaking us. And most of all, I believe He longs to reveal His glory through us.

I was leading worship at a Women's Conference where Joy Dawson was speaking. She said, at one point during her message, that she had been suffering with a back problem which kept her in constant pain - so much pain that she could no longer stand to speak, but has to sit to teach her messages. She had prayed and prayed for God to heal her and finally came to a point of surrender when she said to the Lord, "Please don't heal me until the time that it will bring You the maximum amount of glory." I was utterly amazed at the humility of this prayer. She had come to the point where her desire for the Lord and the glory of His name had far outweighed her desire for comfort and personal healing. We see a Biblical example of this very thing when Paul refers to his "thorn" and God replies, "My grace is sufficient for you." Paul's response was to boast gladly about his weaknesses and to say "rejoice in the Lord always!!" In the same way, God has been teaching me to rejoice in the fact that He has positioned me in a place of desperation, if only to bring Him glory. He is showing me that there is a Divine purpose in the pain of waiting.

Another lesson I have learned in this waiting process is that waiting does not equal rejection. God's delays are not His denials. Having grown up in a divorced home, my tendency at times is to see through the eyes of rejection. I tend to equate God not giving me the desires of my heart to Him rejecting me and withholding His love. The truth is that our perfect, faithful, Heavenly Father will never fail us, will never reject us, will never cast us aside. In fact, I have come to the realization that His love is even more apparent in my waiting season. He chastens those He loves. My Father loves me and He is asking me to wait because HE LOVES ME!!! Now on earth, if our parent kept us waiting and waiting and never gave us a reason, we might begin to question their love for us, but God's love never changes. He can be 100% trusted with our lives and He promises that "He will not abandon the work of His hands." And so I am experiencing a new revelation of His love in the waiting.

Each of us is waiting for something. Maybe you're waiting to have a child, waiting for a mate, or maybe for a loved one to come to know the Lord. Maybe you're waiting for a healing or for a job. There is an old saying that bears repeating, "I may not know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future." We can look ahead with full confidence that God's love for us will never waver, that He can be fully trusted, and that He will complete the work that He has begun in us. Yes, it requires a leap of faith on our behalf, but if we will embrace and not just tolerate the season of our waiting, I believe we will begin to discover the numerous miracles He is performing on our behalf even in the waiting.

Take a number? Stand in line? Free dessert? U-m-m-m, no thanks - I'll just wait here in my Father's arms, where He makes all things beautiful - in His time.

For Your Personal Study

Isaiah 26:8 - "Yes, Lord, walking in the way of Your laws, we wait for You: Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts."

Isaiah 40: 31 - "But those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Psalms 27:14 - "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

Psalms 37: 7 - "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

Psalms 40:1 - "I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry."

Jeremiah 29:11 - "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."

Philippians 1:6 - "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

1. Instead of seeking the gift, focus more on seeking the Giver. This will bring fresh, heavenly perspective to waiting on the Lord. Begin to ask the Lord what He is trying to teach you in this season of your life.
2. Do you tend to doubt the Lord's goodness and love when prayers go seemingly unanswered? Ask the Lord for an extra measure of faith to stand on His promises and believe in His character, even when the answers don't come when you expect them.
3. Do you feel like your life is "on hold" because your answer hasn't arrived? Begin to live each day to its fullest potential, and realize that HE has a destiny for each day, and your destiny in Him is not "on hold" simply because you are waiting.