

## Four-Letter Word

Don't get excited, I'm not talking about any curse words here. Certainly not any words that seem to spew from everyone's mouth these days like a sailor from Brooklyn. I'm referring to a four-letter word that is probably more offensive and causes more anxiety than any curse word out there. I'm referring to the four-letter word, wait.

In today's hustle bustle and fast-food society, nobody likes to wait. No matter the occasion, waiting is not fun, a waste of time and a down right inconvenience. We can thank our drive through burger joints, the internet, Amazon and so on that adds fuel to this fast-paced society we have become. Stamps? Who uses snail mail anymore when with the stroke of a key you can send an email to anywhere in the worlds within seconds? How many of us seem to catch every red light or the proverbial left lane slowpoke in front of us when we're late for an appointment? Have you ever wished you had machine guns on your vehicle? Look at all of the road rage incidents that have occurred in recent years. Everyone else is in our way and they should have stayed home, right? We think we have to get there right now! But yet, we will often stand in lines for an extensive time to see a movie, ride the

latest roller coaster or some other form of attraction/entertainment and we even paid for it!

We will also break out the wallet for any new upgraded device that will shave time off of our waiting. Computers with faster processors are costly and so many people just have to have the latest cell phone that costs hundreds if not thousands of dollars. Thanks to Insta-gram and Tik Tok we can now post our thoughts and exploits to the world in seconds.

Have minutes and seconds become that important? Is our time on Earth that short? Our life span is 70 to 80 years, for some even longer. Most of our lives are spent in such a high gear, that whenever we have to wait, we get frustrated. In our frustration, we lose our patience, if we ever really had any. Our lack of patience is the real issue. According to the Free Dictionary, patience is defined as: tolerant and even-tempered *perseverance*, the capacity for calmly enduring pain, trying situations, etc.

The Bible uses the word patience in two forms: *makrothumia*, patience with people; and *hupomone*, patience in trial. There's probably few who display "hupomone" better than the patience of Job. Job's trials help us to understand the meaning of *hupomone*. The Bible even refers to the patience of Job. "Remember, we call those blessed who endure. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and

you have seen the end result of *serving the* Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies.”- **James 5:11**. Throughout his lengthy and catastrophic trial in which he lost his children, his health and his riches, Job waited for God to answer his prayers. God's answer, though humbling to a man already beaten down, produced perfect results. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in the hope of *the* glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.”- **Romans 5:1-5**.

The fact is, we humans hate waiting. The phrase, hurry up and wait, perceives that none of us likes to wait. Yet we are continually admonished to wait on the Lord. Scripture has quite a bit to say about waiting. Especially waiting on God. **Romans 8:23-25**- “And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why

would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience.” Waiting on God is the very foundation of our hope. Hope is used in the Bible not as something wished for but as a promise and the confident trust in a future event. We have the promise of God in His Word for our future redemption and adoption when we are resurrected at The Lord’s return (**1 Cor. 15:51-55**). But until that event occurs and our hope is fulfilled, we wait.

In like manner, faith and waiting are also closely linked. Our faith in God is often displayed by waiting on Him. If we trust Him, if we have faith in Him, we will wait for Him to have His will be done in our lives. He will work out the things we cannot or should do not on our own. How many times have we tried to “help God along” with a certain trial or issue we’ve been dealing with? Only to have it blow up in our face or become worse? In either case, He will let us flounder and go through it again until we get out of His way that His will be done. During our wait, Satan has a field day in twisting and attacking our faith. Our faith is directly linked to our hope. Satan wants to cast his doubts and shoot his fiery darts at our minds to make us uncertain about God fulfilling His promises. Waiting on the Lord is good for us because it reinforces our faith and trust in God.

We are not alone in trying to “help God along.” In **Genesis 12:2**, God tells Abraham that he is going to be a great nation, “And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.” This implies that Abraham will have children. Abraham later reminds God when he is in Canaan that he still has no children. Abraham later brings up his childlessness when he is in Canaan. God again appears to him and tells him that he will have an heir and establishes a covenant with him. “After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Fear not, Abram, I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.” And Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir.” And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, “This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.” And He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your seed be.”- **Genesis 15:1-5**.

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,”- **Genesis 15:18**.

But we know that Abraham didn't want to wait on God. So, he and his wife Sarah (who was getting on in years) decided to help God along and came up with their own bright idea. "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, did not bear him any children. And she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, and her name *was* Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has kept me from bearing. I pray you, go in to my maidservant. It may be that I may obtain children by her." And Abram hearkened to the words of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maidservant, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife (after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan). And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when *Hagar* saw that she had conceived, she looked *upon* her mistress with contempt."- **Genesis 16:1-4**. We can see the results in the rest of Genesis 16 that things did not go according to their bright idea. Abraham and Sarah took it upon themselves to "help" God fulfill His promise, rather than doing the real work of waiting on Him.

At times we may be tempted to take things into our own hands to relieve the pressure of a trial or an injustice, but God advises in **Psalms 37:7**, "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way; because of him who carries out wicked schemes."

There is an important lesson here. Not all waiting is actually "waiting on God." It could be procrastination on our part. It could be stubbornness or outright laziness. It could be we're dragging our feet because we are fearful, uncomfortable, or like Jonah, we just flat out do not want to do what God wants us to do. "And the Word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. And he went down to Joppa. And he found a ship going to Tarshish. And he paid its fare, and went down into it, in order to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD."- **Jonah 1:1-3**. Not wanting to do what God wants us to do may be the reason we have over 30,000 "Christian denominations."

We might convince ourselves that we are waiting on God, when He is really waiting for us. We are blessed by His Divine patience with us! When we were kids, did we take our time to do something mom or dad told us to do *right now*? Probably not as there were consequences for our failure to comply, usually immediate. God is not always patient as there are differences between His promises and His instructions. He used the "great fish" to get Jonah's attention, "And the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in

the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”- **Jonah 1:17**. In this, we see that there is a difference between God's promises and God's instructions. When God tells us to jump, “how high” would be the proper response. The time to wait on God is not when He gives instructions. When He instructs us, He expects us to act on it. Our time to wait on God is when God promises to do something or says that something will happen. He provides us with scripture that may give us a glimpse of the future, but we will have to wait on Him to bring it to pass. That waiting isn't always pleasant. It takes work, it takes discipline, restraint, patience, and our all-out effort.

Waiting for God is an acquired virtue requiring patience and longsuffering, which we know is a fruit of the Spirit (**Ephesians 5:22**). Times of waiting are times to practice obedience and fellowship with others and grow closer to Him. We know the alternative is to go out and try to bring God's will to pass ourselves, and that never ends well. The lack of patience can actually keep us from the Kingdom of God. **Luke 21:19**- “By your patient endurance you shall gain your lives.” Focusing on God's plan will produce more patience. We need patience in understanding God's plan for us as individuals, as well as for the world. **James 5:7-8**- “Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord. Consider the husbandman *who* waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the*



former and latter rains. You also be patient. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near.” **Matt. 10:22**- “And you shall be hated by all for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved.”

**Mark 13:13**- “And you shall be hated by all men for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved.” Remembering how patient God is with us will encourage us to be more patient ourselves and the reward is eternal.

The faithful heroes of the Bible saw the promises of God far off and were willing to wait on God and His perfect timing. God's promises were at the front of their minds and in their hearts. If their minds were in the least like our minds today, it took incredible work to stay focused on what God said and not grow weary. The time waiting was decades in some cases, yet they did not give up. They did not always succeed at first as we have discussed just a few.

There are numerous others we can briefly mention, Adam and Eve did not want to wait to be conformed to God’s image when they sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Talk about waiting? Look at Noah and how long he took to build the ark all the while telling everyone the flood was coming (**Genesis 6:3**)! God made Jacob wait 14 years for his **wife (Genesis 29:20, 27-28)**. Joseph was sold into bondage by his brothers (**Genesis 37:28**)! But God delivered them all the promises He had made and in His own time. Waiting is a foundational aspect of faith, hope, and love, and is sometimes one of the hardest works of all. The greatest example of this is our

Savior Jesus Christ and His crucifixion for our sins. Enduring the shame, pain and death on the Cross, waiting for His life to pass and pay the ultimate price in fulfilling the plan of God for our salvation. **John 15:13**- “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.”

I see so many people distracted and absolutely refuse to wait on God or live and obey His Commandments. They treat Him like a genie in a bottle to be summoned out when the need for a blessing arises or a bailout in the time of trouble. If you need a better job, do you ask God for it, just waiting for Him to provide it? Or do you ask, doing all you can to be prepared for it? Are you being obedient to His Word?

The next time we find ourselves waiting for that message that is long overdue, or that life changing phone call or even the old white-haired slowpoke in the left lane to move over, pause for a moment and remember those of faith in the Bible who waited on God. Waiting on God was one of their greatest works, and it is also one of the hardest works that we will ever do.

**Psalm 27:14.** Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD.”

**Isa. 40:31-** “But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up *with* wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Wait is a four-letter word that will help us develop the patience we so desperately need. Just wait, you’ll see.

BL-02/12/22