

## *Women & More*

### **'Dis'cipline of Delay**

**Lesson 25:** April 30, 2015—*patience*

When it is necessary, and it often is, for us to wait on God and others, we can become so 'dis'gruntled, so 'dis'appointed, so 'dis'illusioned, and so 'dis'couraged. So it's not really hard to see why God puts us through this waiting 'dis'cipline so much. V. Raymond Edman said, **"Delay is written large in the lives of God's people."**

- Moses was delayed in the obscurity of the desert to begin leading at 80;
- Abraham and Sarah were delayed for their son of promise;
- Joseph was delayed in prison for his 'delivering-all-Israel' assignment;
- Hannah was delayed at the 'altar' of God for her answer for a son, and
- David was delayed by years between his anointing as king of Israel by Samuel and his kingship realized (Psalm 31:11-12).
- Jesus was delayed 30 years in Nazareth, before beginning the greatest ministry on this earth—ever!

"Delay does not forget God's servants nor cause His faithfulness to fail; rather, it fortifies their souls and vindicates His name," said Edman. "The delay that instructs and prepares saves time, never loses it. From it one can walk with a step of assurance and a heart of flame." James talks about the perseverance (patience in *KJV*) of Job in James 5:11 *"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."*

And the Apostle Paul had this to say about his long delay in 'chains' in Philippians 1:12-13—*"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ."* David summed, and alluded to Christ's suffering in Psalm 34:19-20—*"A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; 20he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."*

Psalm 40:1-3 outlines our part—*waited patiently for the LORD*—and then God's part, remembering that God is always going to do the 'lion' share:

1. *turned to me*
2. *heard my cry*
3. *lifted me out*
4. *set my feet*
5. *gave me a firm place*
6. *put a new song*

**So that:** *Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD!*

There is so much more going on than the fact that we are delayed, that we have been made to wait: Our waiting patiently will show just how much we trust that 1) God is working; 2) He has a 'right' timing, and 3) He wants others to see and fear and trust Him through our patient, persistent and persevering waiting through the delay. Delay is a discipline that the Christian cannot do without!

The disciplines that make the difference include: delayed answers to prayer; waiting in God's word; waiting obediently and waiting on God and others. Remember that it is delay, properly endured, not denial, that produces deference to our God! "No prayer is lost: There is no such thing as prayer unanswered or unnoticed by God, and some things that we count refusals or denials **are simply delays**," said H. Bonar.

Edman again: "**Delay never thwarts God's purposes, rather, it polishes His instrument.**" Hebrews 10:35-39 *"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. 38But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.'*

*39"But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."*

Deuteronomy 17:14-15—God had planned for Israel to have a King—a man after His own heart—because Jesus would be in the lineage of a king. **But the people couldn't wait!** 1 Samuel 8:5—Israel demanded a king—"If Israel had not been impatient, they need never have suffered under Saul," said Edman.

David assured himself that he would wait and receive an answer, and he addressed his assurance to 1) the LORD (Covenant Father) and then to 2) Lord (Anointed One—Jesus) in the same Psalm 38:15 *"I wait for you, O LORD; you will answer, O Lord my God."* This is so significant, because David recognized God (LORD) and His will and His Word (Lord) way back in the Old Testament. And who revealed that to him? The Holy Spirit of God!

Charles Spurgeon said, "Patience is the fair handmaid and daughter of faith; we cheerfully wait when we are certain that we shall not wait in vain. It is our duty and our privilege to wait upon the Lord in service, in worship, in expectancy, in trust all the days of our life. Our faith will be tried faith, and if it be of the true kind, it will bear continued trial without yielding." Oh the patience of God: God even chooses 'ones' He knows will turn against Him. Saul in the Old Testament and Judas in the New, and there are more.

God has a timing apportioned and a day appointed (Exodus 19:11)! Edman again, “God keeps His appointments—every one—and He is always right on time: the delay we experience is not denial, but, rather, deference to the God Who Knows what-time-it-really-is!” Exodus 12:41-42a—“*At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD’s divisions left Egypt. 42Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt....*” Exodus 12:51 “*And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions.*”

And Exodus 19:1—“*In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on the very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai.*” And when they crossed the sea in Exodus 13:7—God did not take them the ‘shorter route’ through the land of the Philistines, because He knew them; He knew their propensity to turn back when things got rough. Remember that many times they grumbled to Moses about how they should have never left Egypt—how things were so much better back there.

**There’s a work of waiting:** Paul told the Colossians in 4:17—“*Tell Archippus: ‘See to it that you complete the work you have received in the LORD.’*” Timothy had joined Paul and Silas in Acts 16:7-8 “*When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to, 8So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.*” And there Paul had a vision of a man begging him to come down to Macedonia. George Matheson said, “The Spirit has not only a service of work, but a service of waiting. In the kingdom of Christ there are not only times for action, but times in which to forebear acting.”

J. I. Packer said, “Therefore He takes steps to drive us out of self-confidence to trust in Himself—in the classical scriptural phrase for the secret of the godly man’s (woman’s) life, to ‘wait on the Lord’.” Bishop Francois Fenelon wrote:

“O waiting soul, be still, be strong,  
And though He tarry, trust and wait;  
Doubt not, He will not wait too long,  
Fear not, He will not come too late.”

**We will patiently wait for what we really, really want,** evidenced in this humorous exchange: A woman to her neighbor,

“Your husband seems to be very impatient lately.”

To which the wife responded: “Yes, he is, very.”

“What is the matter with him?”

“He is getting tired of waiting for a chance to get out where he can sit patiently hour after hour waiting for a fish to nibble at his bait.”

Many will stand in line for hours to get tickets to a concert, movie, or sports event, because they really want what’s at the end of their wait.

**It seems that we will wait for things much longer than we'll wait for people.**

EXAMPLE: The story is told of a teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on. He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots did not want to go on. By the time she got the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on, but she managed to keep her cool as they worked together to get the boots back on—this time on the right feet!

He suddenly announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. Once again she struggled to help him pull off the ill-fitting boots. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My mother made me wear them." She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again, asking, "Where are your mittens?" And he answered, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots."

Proverbs 15:18 *"A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a **patient** man calms a quarrel."* Proverbs 16:32 *"Better a **patient** man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city."* Proverbs 17:14 *"Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out."* And then Solomon focuses on two specific problems of contention in Proverbs 19:13, and *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says: "How to ruin a family. Folly and strife destroy a home. Two problems bring chaos to a family: a foolish son, "son of a fool," and a quarrelsome wife. The foolish son brings 'ruin' to the father, but the quarrelsome wife is merely annoying."

Israel was delayed in their cry by at least 400 years. Micah 7:7 *"But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me."* And when the answer came it was God Himself incarnate born to save His people. G. C. Trumbull: "God is going to test me with delays, but through it all stands God's pledge: His new covenant with me in Christ, and His inviolable promise of every lesser blessing that I need."

*Patience* is the first half of God's definition of agape'—love is patient—that He wants us to have. The second component is "love is *kind*" in 1 Corinthians 13:4a. God demonstrated His long-suffering patient love to Israel in the Old Testament. The Israelites saw God do marvelous things for them, but they had a fascination with the 'no' gods of foreign nations that would end their following the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and plunge them into idolatry.

So there was and is idolatry, infidelity, and the problem of pride: 2 Chronicles 26:5b says about Judah's King Uzziah: "As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success." And verse 26 says, "But after Uzziah became powerful, **his pride led to his downfall.**" Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 7:8 "The end of a matter is better than its beginning and **patience is better than pride.**" Edman commented, "The enemy would have us see the hosts of evil against us rather than the hillsides covered with ministering spirits (2 Kings 6:15-17)."

God opened His New Testament with kindness galore: *Messiah*—Jesus Christ! This demonstrated God's kindness to Israel and to us all after being patient for hundreds and hundreds of years. Our human tendency is **not to** be kind after being patient with someone for a long time—certainly not as long as God was. We must have a saving relationship with God and His love—agape<sup>7</sup>—through His Son, before we can demonstrate that patient love to anyone else.

"We shall not grow weary of waiting upon God if we remember how long and how graciously He once waited for us," said Spurgeon. James 5:7-8 "Be **patient**, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how **patient** he is for the autumn and spring rains. **You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.**" Today, we are waiting for the Lord's return for us in the air—the Rapture of the Church! There is not one prophetic thing that has to happen before Christ will gather all believers to Himself. **It is because of God's great patient love and compassion for the lost of this world that he delays his return** (2 Peter 3:8-9). He wants the unsaved to be counted in the believing number—and when the last person who will receive Christ as Savior does so, it's like God is telling us to have a little more patience for these lost ones, while assuring us that He is coming soon!

The Divine's discipline-of-delay in coming should be met with our patience! The Lord Jesus is making great preparations for us in the Father's house—John 14:3—"And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**" Jesus' parting instructions in 4-6 fixes the immediate destination for the believer leaving earth as the Father's house!

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 tells us how: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead **in Christ will rise first.** <sup>17</sup>After that, we **who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage each other with these words." The Lord promises that he will return for believers at "an unexpected day or hour"—leaving the any-day to His Father's knowing alone. In view of this, we must prepare and patiently live out our days in that prepared, ready-to-go discipline!