

Trusting God's Timing

Preview

It can be frustrating when we want something to happen, but it doesn't happen in our preferred timeframe. It can be frustrating when we are doing everything we know to do and yet feel stuck in a holding pattern. How can we learn to trust the perfect timing of God? How can we learn to "run with patience" and allow the author and finisher of our faith to write our story?

Praise

Praise you, Lord, for Your perfect timing. While we don't always understand why everything happens when it does, we know that You are working out everything for our good. You will never put us in a situation that is too much for us to handle, and You will never forsake us. We know that as we stay faithful and humble, You will exalt us in due season.

Parable

Have any of you ever been on a vacation or a school trip, and the long ride was so boring you could hardly wait to get there? Have you ever ridden a school bus whose seats were so uncomfortable you couldn't wait until the bus stopped at your driveway?

Have you ever planted a flower or a garden? You plant the seed and then work, water, and wait (with the emphasis being on the wait) for weeks—or maybe months—before you see the result. It's easy to get frustrated with how slow the garden seems to be growing.

Maybe you've participated in some off-season training and have experienced what it's like to prepare for months and months without a game in sight.

Instruct everyone to write down and discuss times when they've had to wait. How did it make them feel? What did they do while they were waiting?

Present

There's good news and bad news. The bad news is that

waiting is going to be a part of your life forever. When you finally arrive at the destination you're waiting on now (perhaps it's graduation, your first job, or the upcoming weekend), you'll quickly replace it with a new goal. It's simply a fact of life that everyone is constantly waiting on something.

Yet the good news is that if you feel like you're waiting on God, you're in good company! Joseph waited thirteen years. David waited fifteen years. Abraham waited twenty-five years, and Moses waited forty years! When you wait, you aren't experiencing the disapproval of God. Quite the contrary. Instead, you likely are experiencing a great season of personal growth if you'll embrace it.

Waiting on the Lord isn't the same as waiting in line at the supermarket, and pursuing the will of God isn't as fast and easy as plugging money into the soda machine. In fact, Paul compared it to preparing for a harvest.

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9, NIV).

We must make sure that we don't allow our perceived lack of results to discourage us to the extent that we give up. If we will continually sow seeds of devotion and faithfulness to God, we will eventually see the harvest. When the farmer plants, he doesn't expect to see results the next day or week. Likewise, we must be patient, consistent, and faithful, because we grow in God at the speed of the harvest. Even when we don't see any results, we must keep planting, working, and making sure we are ready to be used by God when the opportunity arises. In sports, teams train and build strength in the off-season when there are no games to play. This may be your spiritual off-season, but make sure you are doing everything it takes to be ready for game day!

Next, we've got to be humble and trust God, being careful not to force doors open that God has shut. When we self-promote and try to create spiritual opportunities for ourselves, God will let us do it on our own, but if we are

humbly submitted to God, He will open the right doors for us at the right time (I Peter 5:6).

Finally, we must remember that God has our best interest in mind. He has a plan for our lives, and while it may not happen when we expect, it will be more incredible than anything we could have imagined (Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 40:31). He has not forgotten us; He is preparing us for what

He has already planned for us!

Practice

What are some things you can do today to prepare yourself for the dreams and goals God has put inside of you? How can you put seeds in the ground today that will bring a harvest in your life when the time is ripe? How can you train in this off-season of your life?

Discuss some practical steps we all can take to prepare ourselves for the things God has planned for us in the future.

Pray

God, thank You for Your Word that guides us and helps us grow in every season of our lives. We pray that we will recognize the value of every season we walk through. Give us the wisdom to plant when it's time to sow and to reap when it's time for harvest. Help us to be patient and to trust Your perfect timing. We ask that You keep us from growing weary in well-doing and that You will help us faithfully and expectantly to wait on You.

Plus

There are times we must help someone else reach their God-given dreams before our own dreams are realized. David served King Saul. Elisha served Elijah faithfully. The disciples followed and submitted to Jesus. Humbling ourselves before God oftentimes looks like serving our spiritual leadership. Discuss some ways you can serve spiritual leaders in your life. How can you help others reach their potential in God?