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By Robert J. Tamasy

Feeling Impatient in the 'Waiting Room'?

Do you like having to wait? If you do, you are a rare individual. Most of us find waiting a great source of annoyance, frustration, even fear. We do not like waiting for a traffic light to change or finding ourselves stuck in traffic. When goals are delayed, we feel dismayed, wondering how we can speed the process. Sitting in the waiting room to see a doctor or dentist can test the limits of our patience.

Recently I had to undergo a significant medical procedure. I arrived at the hospital before 8:30 a.m., as instructed, and was informed the procedure would begin by 10:30. But 10:30 came - and went - and my wife and I were still waiting. I tried not to get impatient, but eventually asked about the delay. Finally, the medical staff got to me and started the procedure, but it was not until 12:30!

Waiting is just as unpleasant in a workplace context. Sometimes we must wait on someone before we can proceed with our part of a project. We need to discuss a major issue to discuss with our boss, but she cannot see us until later in the day. Waiting on a much-desired job offer can be agonizing.

For those who follow Jesus Christ, waiting is part of God's plan for developing character and helping us grow in our faith. Sometimes the only answer to our fervent prayers is, "Wait!" Some people have even referred to such times as being in "God's waiting room."

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We see many examples in the Bible of people God required to wait, even though He had special plans for them. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had to wait many years for the child that God had promised them. The Lord had chosen Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but Moses still had to spend many years in exile before the right time arrived. Then the people of Israel had to "wait" 40 years in the wilderness before they could enter the Promised Land.

Sooner or later, we all find ourselves in God's waiting room. What should we know about waiting - and what should we do during these unavoidable times? The Scriptures offer helpful insights:

Trust in the One in whom we must wait. When things come to a standstill in our lives and careers, we attempt to do anything possible to get things moving again. Sometimes, however, God wants us simply to wait and trust that He is in control. *"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).*

Do all that we can, but then, if necessary, wait. Being in "God's waiting room" does not necessarily mean doing nothing. It does mean when we have done everything we think should be done, we must wait for God to accomplish the rest. *"Trust in the Lord and do good.... Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.... Wait for the Lord and keep his way..." (Psalm 37:3-7,34).*

When God hits the "pause button" in your life, draw on your faith. When forced to wait, we can become discouraged and even wonder if God has forgotten about us and what we need. This is an opportunity to strengthen our faith in Him and see what He will do, often far more than we could have imagined. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

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© 2018. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. What is your typical response when you have to wait? In what circumstances do you find waiting most difficult?
2. Is there something right now that is requiring you to wait? How are you responding to being in the "waiting room"?
3. Why do you think God would want us to wait, instead of answering our prayers immediately? Can you think of any times when it turned out that having to wait actually was part of His answer to your requests?
4. How would you advise someone else who finds themselves in God's waiting room, desperately wanting a problem resolved but not seeing any answers forthcoming?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Psalm 27:14, 130:5-6; Isaiah 26:3, 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11-13, 33:3; Philippians 4:6-7

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