

Upright Woman



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Wait for Prayers to be Answered

by: Callie Pucket



Callie is a 2016 graduate of SWSBS and 2019 graduate of Texas A&M University. She works as a pediatric nurse and enjoys traveling, hiking, baking, and piano.

The church for many years has preached against the popular health-and-wealth gospel and rightly so. The idea that God promises perfect health, endless wealth, and physical blessings in exchange for faithfulness is simply not true. Most people, I think, have lived enough life to know this is not true. It implies that we can expect our prayers to be answered the way we want them to be simply because we are faithful to God. It gives a sense of control that if we are good enough then God will give us what we crave. Luke 22:41-43 with Hebrews 5:7 shows that while God promises to answer prayer, His answer may be “no” regardless of how faithful someone is - Christ was perfect and God still answered His prayer with a “no”.

However, when correcting false teaching, we should take care not to swing too far in the opposite direction. The belief that Christians are only promised spiritual blessings or that we are only promised good things in heaven and none on this earth is dangerous and not true. It seems that this opposite, but equally hollow, belief may be the source of much anxiety and depression in otherwise faithful Christians.

Consider a few verses:

- Luke 18:1 “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” Just because God hasn’t answered a prayer yet, does not mean we should stop asking. For example, in Luke 22, Christ prayed for himself that he would not have to suffer the cross right up until Judas walked into the garden. I submit to you that, being God, Christ already knew the answer to his prayer was “no”, and yet he prayed for what he wanted anyway and was right to do so.

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- Psalm 37:25 “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” God does promise us the necessities of life, like food, clothing, and shelter, in this world. David speaks by inspiration here, but also from his own experience that God will not forsake the righteous.
- Psalm 27:13 “I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Scripturally, God’s goodness is not limited solely to heaven or to the hope of a future life. Leaving this important fact out can very quickly lead to depression and many dangerous thought processes.
- Psalm 20:4 “May He grant you according to your heart’s desire, and fulfill all your purpose.” Also, Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” God wants to bless his children! God wants to give his children good things - while we know that “good” does not necessarily mean “what I want”, that doesn’t make it any less good or joyful or blessed.

While a few hundred words is far too short to fully explore the nature of prayer, the suffering of man, God’s promises, the providence of God, and how they all intertwine, my hope is that these thoughts will encourage you and prompt you to further study. The verses assigned for this article are Jeremiah 17:7-8, so let’s conclude with them: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

First, trust that God is good and that He desires to give and to provide good things for us. This helps protect us from anxiety and depression.

Second, when the dry season and heat comes, our roots need to be strong enough to withstand it. Metaphorically, drought could be many things - physical, emotional, or spiritual. During these seasons, what will we do to continue bearing fruit?

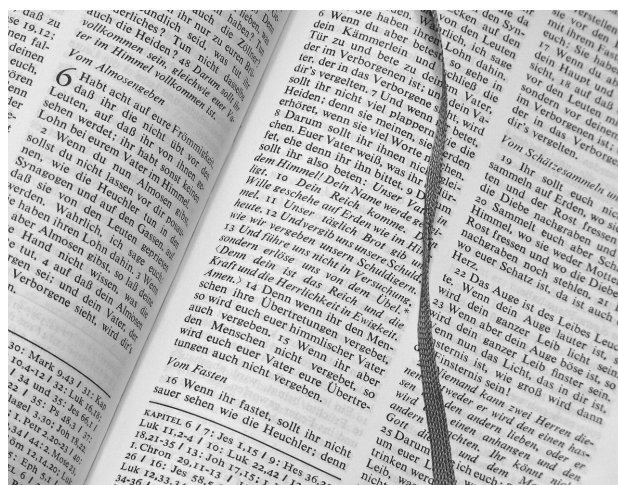
Wait for God to Settle Disputes

by: Kayla Hyde

It is inevitable -we will be on the receiving end of evil. While we cannot control the world, we can control our response. Women tend to bring a lot of emotion to any battle, and if there is a wrong committed (actual or perceived), our immediate reaction is often rash. While passion can be honed into something positive, it can also land us in opposition to God’s will.

God’s word tells us that the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. (Gal 5:17) Therefore, we have need for instructions such as those in Proverbs 20:22;

“Do not say, “I will repay evil;” wait for the Lord and He will deliver you.” Patience, like other things we are called to put on, is fruit of the Spirit, not a work of the flesh. It’s pretty much the opposite of our natural instinct when dealing with others. But patience, not vengeance, is what God calls for. In Galatians 5:20 a partial list is found of works of the flesh, including “enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy...” In contrast to those things is the fruit of the Spirit, of which is patience. This kind of patience is NOT waiting calmly to receive what we want for our own satisfaction. The Greek word here, makrothumia, is self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate. (1) The Christian is called to be long-tempered, treating others the way Christ treats people, because we died to self. That quick temper and vengeful attitude were crucified. “If you have been raised with Christ” and have “put to death evil desire,” you have put on the new self. (Gal 3:14) That new self has a “compassionate heart, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you so you must also forgive.”



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**"Wait for the Lord and
He will deliver you"
Proverbs 20:22**

Our actions and our motivations must both reflect that of our Lord. We can't choose vengeance, but long-suffering, because He is long-suffering.

When we suffer at the hand of evil, it is not our place to act as law enforcement and punish those responsible. Their final judgment will come from the Lord, just as he made clear in Romans 12:19 where He states, "Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God." Our role is to continue to be Christ like, no matter what the world throws at us. Christ told His followers not to "resist the one who is evil" but "pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 5:44-45) Pray for those who are your enemies: pray for their heart to be softened, pray for their soul to be saved, pray to not be overwhelmed with the situation. Jesus' famous plea "Lord, forgive them, they know not what they do" is the ultimate example of just that. (Lk 23:34) The patience, the forgiveness, and the prayers are essential. Our actions should reflect Christ, be guided by Christ, and point others toward Christ. Be prayerful, not vengeful.

This proverb, however, does not end with what not to do, it contains a promise! Deliverance, though undeserved, is performed by God, and HE gets to decide what that looks like and when it happens. "When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles".(Psalm 34:19) We may be removed from the evil, we may be strengthened by God's word or people, or we may keep (long)suffering until the end of our earthly life. But what God has promised, God will perform. He has made it clear that He, and He alone, is our deliverer. In His time and in His way, He will rescue His people. Remain faithful and wait on your Deliverer.

As with any verse in the Bible, misapplication of this is dangerous. The promise is made to deliver us from evil- not from hurt feelings. We need to make certain that we do not confuse sinful actions with things that we just do not like. Sisters, we need to get those emotions in check, because when jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder, and every vile practice. (James 3:16) When we have this self-centered heart, we are more likely to feel wronged in matters of opinion and cause disorder in God's church and in our lives. Simply having our feathers ruffled or our pride injured does not mean someone has actually wronged us. Use wisdom from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere." (James 3:17) Remember that "a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:18) When our feelings get hurt because we're not included in someone else's plan, or we're offended because a new sister in Christ says something about us (maybe there's even some truth to it), we need to strive for peace. On some occasions, we need to look at ourselves and clean up our own heart. Not every unpleasant situation is caused by someone sinning against us. Check on your heart and see if the problem lies within.

There will be suffering, but the takeaway here is that we have a promise of deliverance from evil. We can run our race, not looking around for someone to get back at, but looking forward, to the perfecter of our faith, and know that the hardship we experience in this life doesn't compare with the glory of heaven. (Rom 8:18) We CAN endure the suffering here. Consider Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) We can join Him there, after our deliverance, if we will wait for the Lord.



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Wait Patiently During the Trials of Life

by: Zo Anne Mason

Trials, sufferings, hardships, difficulties, etc. of life, may leave one reeling, even asking “why.” However, there are answers as to “why,” there is comfort and understanding to be found in God’s Word. Let’s define the verb “wait.” “Wait” is not drudgery of merely passing time. It is endurance, remaining steadfast -- combined with a confident expectation of better things in the future. (See, Brown, et al. 1907).

While we are waiting, we are to be patient, steadfast, and rejoicing in tribulation: (Rom. 12:12) “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.” (1 Pet. 4:16) “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”

In (Pet. 1:6-7), Peter states that as we walk by faith, we will be grieved by various trials in which we should rejoice. “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

My son, Steven, was 22-years old when he was diagnosed with a rare form of testicular cancer. Chemo was started the next day. Upon entering his hospital room that afternoon, he said “Mommy, if someone in our family has to have cancer, I'm glad that it’s me, not you, or Daddy, or Jennie.” A little later, he asked me to go the courtyard with him to sit in the sun. The chemo had weakened him very quickly. My 6’6” son, in the prime of life, had to use a walker, so weak he couldn’t hold up his head. After we sat down on the courtyard bench, with his head still hanging, he looked over at me and said, “I’m sorry, I know this is so hard on you.”

After Steven transferred to M.D. Anderson in Houston, and had settled in, he made rounds on a daily basis to the rooms of the other patients with testicular cancer to comfort, counsel, and cheer them up. The Social Worker told me that he helped them far more than she could.

Close to the end of Steven’s life, when the pain had worsened because the cancer had spread throughout his body, I was sitting at his bedside holding his hand, silently crying due to his suffering. He opened his eyes and looked at me. While patting my hand he said, “Mommy, it’s okay, we’re going to get through this.” While he was waiting on the Lord, he busied himself teaching, comforting and being of service to others. When people asked him how he was dealing with his illness, he told them that he was in a win-win situation. If he lived, he would live for Christ, if he died, he would die in Christ. Though Steven died, he was victorious. I’m thankful to God for the blessings of being Steven’s mother for 23 years, and for the hope of being with him in Heaven for all eternity.

Trials help us to mature as Christians. (Jas. 1: 2-4): “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

I was in a car/train accident in which a dear friend died. My heart was not just broken, but crushed, as was the whole of me, head to toe. There was a constant flow of tears of grief and at the same time thanksgiving to God for access to medical care. When I returned home, when I began memorizing and meditating upon the following scriptures, they helped my heart to heal and to find tears of joy again.

There cannot but be joy when God is upholding you with His righteous right hand. (Isa. 41:10) Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Also, (Hab. 3:17-19); (Psa. 73:21-26); (Psa. 19:7-14); (Psa. 31:24); (Psa. 37:39-40); and (Phi. 3:13-14)

Here, while Job was waiting on the Lord, he can’t see his way ahead, but he understands that God knows. (Job 13:15) “Though He slay me, yet I will trust him.” (Job 23:10) “But He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 27:6) “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.”

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The whole of Psalm 27 is ripe with encouragement. Particularly near and dear to me is (Psa 27:10) “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.” My childhood was traumatic and had a negative effect on my relationships, most tragically with God. I was distraught about it and was searching for help. I read self-help books and attended Adult Children of Alcoholics meetings – to no avail. One day, while reading through Psalm I came upon Psa 27:10. I sat there for a long time laughing with joy and crying all at the same time. There was the answer I had been searching for all along!! I let go of my parents’ hands and grabbed ahold of God’s righteous right hand. (Psa 27:14) ‘Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say on the Lord!’

We must triumph while in the midst of trials, not afterwards. It is within the furnace of affliction that victory must come. We must triumph over temptation, while in the midst of temptation; over despair while in despair, over suffering while suffering; over sickness in the midst of sickness; over sorrow while sorrowing; and over death while dying. (Hobbs 1990)

Last night I heard a robin singing in the rain,
And the raindrop’s patter made a sweet refrain,
Making all the sweeter the music of the strain.
So, I thought, when trouble comes, as trouble will,
Why should I stop singing? Just beyond the hill
It may be that sunshine floods the green world still.
He who faces trouble with a heart of cheer
Makes the burden lighter. If there falls a tear,
Sweeter is the cadence in the song we hear.

I have learned your lesson, bird with dappled wing.
Listening to your music with its lilt of spring--
When the storm-cloud darkens, then’s the time to sing.
-- Eben E. Rexford

Victory is possible and necessary. If we would have the joys of heaven, we must be triumphant. “These are they which came out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:14). It is possible. Others have. We can. The saints of yesteryears were human beings with all the weakness that characterize us; so their victories are within our reach. (Hobbs 1990)

Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, Charles Briggs, 1907. Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Long, England: Oxford University
Lottie Beth Hobbs. 1990. Victory Over Trials. Forth Worth, Texas: Harvest Publications.

Wait for the Seed to Take Root

by: Midge Seibert

God’s amazing love, grace, and mercy motivate us to live righteously and to sow the seed of His Word. “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men...” (Titus 2:11-12). We can scatter that seed among the world in many ways. We influence others more than we realize when we extend acts of kindness and offer an encouraging word during times of trial and hardship, allowing them to see the light of God’s Word shine in our lives. We can also invite them to come to worship services or leave a tract or information about the church at the restaurant table or in other public places. The invitation may go unheeded at that time or the tract may be tossed in the trash can, but should that stop us from sowing? Of course not! When Jesus sent His apostles out to preach (Matt. 10:16-18), He warned them that most people would not be interested in hearing the Word and He tried to prepare them for the rejection they would encounter. However, they were not to force the gospel on anyone: “Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them” (Mark 6:11). But then a word of encouragement: “But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 10:22).

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It takes time for some seed to germinate. Sometimes we give ourselves too much credit and forget that the power to change lives is in the Seed (God's Word, Rom. 10:17), not in us. Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). "The saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps'" (John 4:37). One person may lay the groundwork and another build on it before a positive response occurs. This does not suggest that the one who made contact first is less effective than the one who taught later. The Word is powerful and it can change hearts, resulting in obedience. However, if this is not the response of one who has been taught the truth, we should not take it personally and throw up our hands and declare, "I am just not a good teacher!" It is the message that has been rejected, not the messenger. You planted the seed but the ground (heart) did not yield fruit—at least not yet. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9). Remember Elijah who had defeated the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and angered Jezebel to the point that she had threatened to kill him? He also became discouraged, thinking he was the only one trying to do righteously, but God demonstrated His power to him and assured him that he was not alone (1 Kings 18-19).

Who needs the seed of the Word? Those whom we consider to be "good" people (cf. Matt. 7:21-23)? What about the unkempt homeless person on the street? The grumpy neighbor next door? Do we judge them not to be worthy to hear God's Word? Jesus gave us a description of different soils (hearts) in the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13), but God is the only one who knows hearts (cf. Gen. 6:5ff; Ps. 44:21). God has said that His Word will not return to Him void (Isa. 55:10-11), and we are His planters. Do we need to change the seed to make it more attractive to the changing hearts of the world? Absolutely not! Our culture is constantly changing, but God does not, and His Word is constant (cf. Mal. 3:6; Matt. 24:35).

Satan is also busy sowing seeds (those of doubt, discouragement, and despair); and the consequences are revealed in the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:4-7, 18-23) and the Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). Are we sowing sparingly or bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6)? We need to take advantage of every opportunity given us to influence others (Gal. 6:10). Many a Bible study has been started because someone showed an interest in a visitor to the worship services. Often visitors are seeking to better their lives. Certainly, this would be fertile soil for the Word of God. Even after one has been baptized into Christ, we must continue to cultivate and fertilize the soil (the heart). This would include prayer, encouragement from brothers and sisters in Christ, and continued teaching of the new convert (who also needs to be taught how to study for herself).

"Seven date palm trees have grown from 2000-year-old seeds that were found in the Judean desert near Jerusalem. The seeds—the oldest ever germinated—were among hundreds discovered in caves and in an ancient palace built by King Herod the Great in the 1st century B.C." (www.newscientist.com/article/2232464).

God created those seeds. Why should we be surprised that they would grow plants? It was approximately 2000 years ago when "...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14; cf. John 1:17). The gospel of Christ, when sown in good and honest hearts, produced Christians in the first century (Acts 2:41,47); the same holds true today. Let us plant the Seed, and God will give the increase!

Wait for Salvation

by: Annabelle Bond

Throughout our lives, we wait for so many things. We wait for big things and small things. We wait for happy things and sad things. Some of us are patient waiters and others are impatient waiters. Although waiting at times is unpleasant, it is a fact of life! While we wait for many things, one of the greatest things we wait for is salvation. Since we have all sinned according to Romans 3:23, we are all in need of salvation. Salvation is what saves us from the sin that we committed and shelters us from the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 5:9). There are many other benefits and blessings that we have through salvation such as peace in the most difficult of situations, confidence in our heavenly inheritance and so many other things.

We have established that we all need salvation and that we must wait for our heavenly salvation, but how do we obtain salvation?

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The answer to this great question is that salvation from sin is only found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must follow the steps of salvation before we can begin waiting for our eternal reward. First, we must hear the gospel, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).

Hearing the gospel is what convicts us that we need salvation. Next, we must believe, "But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6). We cannot obtain salvation if we do not believe in what we are hearing. Thirdly, we must willingly repent of our past sins and determine to follow Jesus, "I tell you no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Confessing Christ is the fourth step to gaining salvation. This is a confession of the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32). Finally, we must be baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16).

Once these steps are followed, we begin to walk a new walk that is marked by our patient waiting for the day of salvation. If we leave out any one of these steps, then how are we able to gain salvation? We know that salvation is important, and we know how to obtain salvation, but it is important that we understand what the day of salvation we are all eagerly awaiting actually is! The day of salvation is the day that we, as children of God, long for. It is the moment when all struggles cease and we enter the state of eternal rest promised to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. For the child of God, the day of salvation is a day of great blessing. It is the day that all of our hopes are realized. However, if we are not children of God, the day of salvation is something to be dreaded and feared. If you have not obeyed the gospel, it is my prayer that you will do so and join us in waiting patiently for the day of salvation.

About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.



“FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE.” PSALM 11:7

We pray that, with every issue and with every article, all glory is given to God.