

## Creative Waiting

God has given us all a certain amount of time on this earth. What matters most to him, and thereby to us and others, is how we use that brief time between our birth and death.

We can while that time away and arrive at the pearly gates having done nothing of worth. Or we can seek God's presence and power in our lives and learn how to use that time for his kingdom.

One of my weightlifting routines involves completing a brief set, then waiting three minutes until the next. By far the hardest thing for me is the waiting in between, not the exercises themselves.

Most of us have trouble waiting. We get DMV syndrome whenever we are presented with a moment to wait that we did not plan for.

But creative waiting, which involves doing something beneficial during it which has a goal, is something God would really want for his people. And great things can happen as we wait.

The Bible says that 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; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

So our strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord. As we wait for his timing and his results, we grow in strength and prepare for holy flight.

And while we wait, we do something. There are a variety of things which can be done even in a moment where it seems we are up the creek without a paddle.

"When your life feels like you're on a sailboat, with no wind to fill your sails, there are still choices. You can drop anchor and enjoy your surroundings. Start your motor, if you have one. Grab an oar and start paddling, or wait for the wind to fill your sails once again. There are always other choices while crossing the ocean of life..." ~ James A. Murphy

So, dear reader, ask God to show you the blessings we can find and share as we wait for heaven. Don't just wait for worship, plan to get all you can out of it. Don't just fume at a traffic light, look for how you can fire a salvo at the devil or be a blessing to someone that day. Don't fiddle with your phone when you get in line, look for a situation in which you can interact with others. Don't just wait for someone to tell you what to do as a Christian, do it, or suggest it.

And wait anxiously for those moments in which you are forced to wait because of circumstances beyond your control. These are the moments in which the divine gift of patience is contrasted with the limited amount of worldly patience people possess.

"Patience isn't tested when it is self-imposed and the duration is self-regulated. Patience is hardly tested when the outcome means little to you. However, when circumstances beyond your control force you to wait with baited breath knowing the outcome will affect your life substantially, that is the true test of patience. It is a cage inside a burning building where every exit is blocked by angels calmly advising you to wait a moment longer. Your choice is to either trust their words or madly claw through them." ~ Richelle E. Goodrich

I wait for the day when I shall be able to write powerful thoughts like the above paragraph. And while I wait, I do the best I can do with what I have.

I wait for miracles and accomplish little things in the meantime. I wait for deep faith to be shown by others and accept shallow offerings as the best which can be had at the moment. I wait for people to do all they can do and more as all barriers between them and heaven are eliminated and accept the minimum until the maximum is reached.

I wait for the sparkle of divine action in the eyes and rejoice when it happens from time to time. I wait for sudden insights in the midst of ordinary worship and rejoice when people realize a holy thought for the first time.

For creative waiting, you see, is far from doing nothing. It is full of possibility, bookended with divinity, and blessed with amazing results.

Steven Levine wrote, "If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call you could make, who would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting?"

Here is the point. Starting now, rather than waiting until it may be too late, is the gift God offers us when we wait upon him. Eagles' wings and all!

I like the way Marie Rilke Rainer puts it when she turns difficulty into delight with one stroke of the pen. "Perhaps all the dragons of our lives," she shouts, "are princesses [or princes] who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave."

And so we wait. And so we grow. Creatively and faithfully. Don't be afraid of waiting. William Faulkner writes, "And sure enough even waiting will end... if you just wait long enough."