

## "Tarry Ye Here"

On June 2, 1982, Los Angeles truck driver Larry Walters fulfilled a lifelong dream of flying. However, his record-setting flight was not on a commercial airliner, but rather in a lawn chair he had purchased from Sears! When the idea hit him, Larry went to a local army-navy surplus store and bought a tank of helium and forty-five weather balloons. Larry anchored his chair to the bumper of his jeep and inflated the balloons with helium. Larry's plan was to gently float one hundred feet over his backyard. But, when the cord was cut, Larry shot into the air as if he was fired from a cannon. He did not level off at one hundred feet, or even at one thousand feet. Once his ascent leveled off, Larry had reached sixteen thousand feet in the air! Having now drifted into the approach corridor of the Los Angeles International Airport, a Delta Airline pilot radioed to the tower that he had just passed a man in a lawn chair with a gun in his lap. Once he gathered enough courage to shoot a few balloons, he slowly descended to the ground where he was promptly arrested by police. As he was being led away in handcuffs, a reporter covering the daring rescue asked him why he had done it. Larry replied nonchalantly, "A man can't just sit around."

Because we live in an age of fast-food restaurants, instant cameras, and global travel in a matter of hours, life pushes us at a hurried pace. Sadly, we try to carry this same hurry over into our spiritual life. During his agony in Gethsemane, Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 26:38, "...tarry ye here, and watch with Me." How eager we are to respond to the Lord's command, "go ye", but we find it offensive when the command is "tarry ye here." Former Moody Bible Institute President V. Raymond Edman said, "In every life there's a pause that is better than onward rush, better than hewing or mightiest doing; 'tis the standing still at Sovereign will." While our schedules and deadlines may call for a quickened pace, God's word to us is often "Wait." Joseph was made to wait thirteen years before he was ready to be Prime Minister. David was made to wait twenty years before he was trusted with a throne. Abraham was made to wait twenty five years before he was given the promised son. Each would learn a valuably clear lesson: God is never hurried by our urgency to fulfill His promises! Waiting may be one of the most difficult disciplines of the Christian life, but its rewards are never in vain. What are the secrets of learning how to "tarry ye here"?

While we tarry, **our faith is advanced**. In Psalm 40:1, David writes, "I waited patiently for the Lord..." The Hebrew verb tense of the word "waited" implies he "waited and waited and waited." As a result, David's faith was vindicated with clutch deliverance and clear direction. It seems that the Lord rarely does any deep work in our life without an extended period of prolonged waiting. When Jesus delayed in coming to Lazarus before he died, it was not to deny Martha and Mary of a miracle, but rather to lead them to a greater miracle of a resurrection! Theologian John Calvin wrote, "There is no place for faith if we expect God to fulfil immediately what He promises." As He often did with Israel, the Lord will test our lives to see if we will wait upon Him in faith or if we will act in our own presumption. Waiting is merely our refusal to act before God acts. Our impatience with God will always bear the

scars of immeasurable consequences. In Abraham's impatience, he took Hagar and was distracted from God's promise. In Moses' impatience, he struck the rock and was denied entry into the promise land. In Saul's impatience, he offered a sacrifice and was stripped of a kingdom. It would do us well to always remember that the Lord wants to change us before changing our circumstances!

While we tarry, **our focus is aligned.** In Isaiah 8:17, the prophet writes, "And I will wait upon the Lord...and I will look for Him." The hope we possess in waiting is not found in what we are looking for, but for Whom we are looking. Generations ago, when a couple was engaged to be married they were said to be "in waiting." That did not imply they were inactive or indifferent toward one another, but rather they were waiting while still yet pursuing. In Acts 1, when the disciples gathered in the upper room were told to "...wait for the promise of the Father...", they were waiting while still yet pursuing. Waiting is God's method of cultivating a deeper relationship with us. In Psalm 25:5, David wrote, "...on Thee do I wait all the day." David could have focused on his loneliness, regrets, or fears, but he chose to worship while he waited. English commentator Matthew Henry wrote, "To wait on God is to live a life of desire towards Him, delight in Him, dependence on Him, and devotedness to Him." Waiting adjusts our lives to be more attentive to the Lord's vision, desires, and interests. No wonder Isaiah 30:18 notes, "...blessed (happy) are all they that wait for Him."

While we tarry, **our fruitfulness is accumulated.** In Isaiah 40:31, the prophet again writes, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..." The word "renew" means "to change or substitute, to be new." It is the picture of a child growing to maturity, and of grass sprouting again in a barren place. The strength of waiting is the hope of something wonderful lying ahead. Once a farmer plants his seed, he waits in a season of silence and stillness. However, obscured beneath the soils surface, growth is occurring that will lead to a harvest. When a mother is told she is expecting a child, she waits in a season of misery and discomfort. However, obscured from the eye are traits and features that are being developed. Theologian J.I. Packer said, "Patience means living out the belief that God orders everything for the spiritual good of His children." Israel waited over four hundred years in bondage, but finally received the deliverance for which they cried. Caleb waited forty years, but finally received the mountain for which he longed. The lame man waited by the pool thirty-eight years, but finally received the healing for which he hoped. Waiting is the process of time by which God develops us to be fit and fruitful with His promise.

The danger we face while waiting is our fears and frustrations can cause us to be stricken with panic. Waiting seems to always make us feel like we will miss something important. I love what Vance Havner once wrote, "He who waits on God loses no time." God will never keep from us that which He has promised to us. So, you can choose to stay grounded as you wait, or you can choose to be all up in the air about nothing!

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