

4. Timing – it’s hard to grow fruit when it’s not the proper season. Though most things are not predetermined in our walk with God, there’s still an area of timing. For example, if you need to confront someone about an issue, hoping to see change, you don’t need to march into their office or classroom to do it. That’s not good timing! Good timing is involved in most every aspect of life. Sports, relationships, and even miracles require timing. Therefore, pray that the Holy Spirit will help you flow in God’s timing on issues. Bad timing can create problems and delay answers. Galatians 6:9 says, “*And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*” The waiting phase, endurance, and timing, are all included in this verse.

Character Development

Character development is one of the benefits of trusting God during the waiting phase. In fact, I’m convinced it’s one of God’s goals by design. **The Waiting Phase can help you develop your “root system” as you learn to abide in Christ. We all need to put the “root” before the “fruit.”** Yes, God wants to give you the answers you need (the fruit). But your response will, in part, determine how long the waiting phase is. It depends on how you respond. The children of Israel delayed their waiting phase (the wilderness journey) by 40 years when they did not trust God (Num 13 / Heb 4). You must allow the waiting phase to help you become more dependent on Christ.

There are several good lists of character qualities that describe this process. Each one helps us see how God wants us to respond when we pass through tests, trials, and the waiting phase. You may want to examine these lists on your own: a) Romans 5:1-5, b) James 1:1-8, and c) 2 Peter 1:1-15. We do not have the space in this Study Guide to examine each one, but let’s look briefly at the process described in Romans 5:3,4. It says, “*We rejoice in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation produces patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.*” It’s been said that you can’t have a testimony without a test! And I think it’s very true. **When you are in the waiting phase and experiencing tribulation, stress, pressure, or whatever – it’s important that you become more dependent on Christ’s ability and His guidance.** Let’s

break this down and look at the progression that the apostle Paul gives us here --

Tribulations

(Tests, trials, problems, waiting)

Patience

(You can wait because you are trusting in HIS ability to work on your behalf. Some versions say endurance or steadfastness)

Experience

(In other words, maturity. As you go through the situation trusting in Christ’s ability, you become more mature. Your “root system” grows deeper).

Hope

(As you gain experience trusting Christ, you have a greater hope the next time around when you face tests, trials, and waiting).

In short, this process produces maturity and character development. It’s what makes the difference between baby Christians and mature Christians. Babies cry every time they don’t get their way. A two-year-old may even fall down and scream and roll around on the floor. That’s expected of a two-year-old, but it’s not expected of an adult. Can you see the analogy? God wants all of us to grow up into mature adults (spiritually speaking). Maturity in Christ is equated to dependency on him, yielding to him, trusting him, and walking with him.



So dear friend, if you’re in a Waiting Phase right now, don’t give up! Realize that there are powers at war behind the scenes. God’s army is working on your behalf. Expect miracles! And while you wait, determine that you are going trust Christ through the process.

■ -- Jason Peebles

Key Memory Verse:

“*And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*”

Ephesians 6:9

Prayer for Victory

“*Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. Teach me to trust you more and yield to your influence. I want to learn how to pass through the Waiting Phase with faith and patience. I want to develop my “root” while I wait for the fruit. Thank you for your great love.*

In Jesus Name – Amen.”

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The Waiting Phase



by Jason Peebles

In the walk of faith there is usually a time delay between the moment we set out in prayer for something and the moment we receive the answer. I call this time period the *Waiting Phase*. Perhaps you are praying to see a loved one change in some way – or perhaps you are trusting God to accomplish an important project. We all like the quick miracles that happen at times. But, more often than not, you have to pass through the very important *Waiting Phase* on your way to your miracle. **Thus, the better you understand the *Waiting Phase* the more you will be equipped to succeed.** In my experience and observation, many Christians give up during this critical period. And when they do, they miss out on many blessings and miracles that God has.

The Angel Who Was Delayed

There’s a story in the book of Daniel that describes a 21 day *Waiting Phase*. It challenges the notion that the only “real world” is that which we see with our eyes. It’s an amazing account of a prayer battle that took place in Daniel’s life. I’m so thankful that God gives us this glimpse of what really takes place behind the scenes.

Daniel excelled in an extremely difficult time in Israel’s history. Israel had fallen away from God. Babylon invaded the land and enslaved every-

one. Daniel was a teenager at the time and was deported. Yet, God gave him great favor. He was a man of prayer, a man of excellence, and a man of wisdom (Dan 5:12-14). He ended up working under king Nebuchadnezzar. He was promoted to a position of influence and later advised foreign kings. Daniel is probably best known for his miraculous deliverance from the lions. Thank God for quick miracles! Yet, there's an account in his life that sheds much light on the reality of spiritual warfare and the waiting phase --

"In those days, I Daniel was mourning (prayer & fasting) for three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled" (Dan 10:2,3). So let's get the picture here. Daniel was seriously praying and seeking God. He was even fasting so that he could focus God's power on the situation. Yet, the answer he sought was not immediate. Then, after 21 days, one of God's mighty warring angels appeared to him. The angel describes a scene right out of Star Wars! The account helps us understand that the REAL battle is in the spiritual world. **The messenger explained that God's angels were warring against Satan's forces and attempting to bring his answer. The demonic powers had delayed Daniel's answer for 21 days. This angelic soldier even mentions one of the archangels who helped in the battle -- Michael.**

"Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel; for from the first day that you did set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of Persia withstood me twenty one days; but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." Dan 10:12-14

Dear friend, how limited we are if all we know is what we see with our physical eyes! Obviously, this account runs entirely contrary to our world view based on scientific observation alone. According to the Bible, there is activity taking place behind the scenes. As Christians, we do not need to fear this warfare. We have been given the blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ (Rev 12:11). And, He has provided mighty weapons for us to use – the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12) and the armor of God (Eph 6). **We can win our battles if we will but avail**

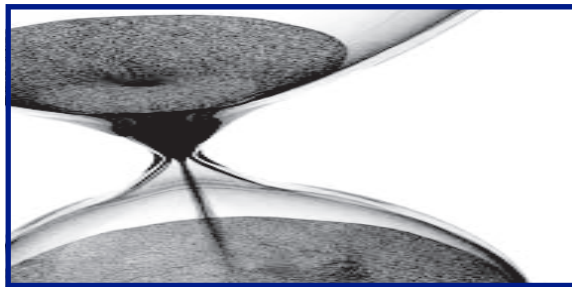
ourselves to God's equipment. It's not the purpose of this particular study to examine our weapons, but we are certainly not at a disadvantage if we will use them. The focus of this study is to remind you that there is often a *Waiting Phase*, why there is a delay, and how you can pass through it successfully. God's answers for you are on the way – but you must learn to wait for them and not give up in the process.

Faith and Steadfastness

The Bible is filled with stories and verses about the waiting phase. Hebrews 10:35,36 says, *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promises."* Do you see the waiting phase in these verses? **When you start moving towards a prayer goal you cannot be quick to give up. You cannot "cast away your confidence."** In the original language, this is a reference to soldiers who would *"throw down"* their weapons in the heat of battle and flee. The apostle Paul is telling us that that we have to be willing to hold our ground and wait in faith like Daniel did. Remember, Daniel fasted for 21 days before his answer came. Thus, you need to go into your battles with patience, steadfastness, and endurance.

Hebrews 6:11,12 says, *"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* Faith alone cannot win the battle. It takes faith and patience to inherit God's promises. Notice that it says to *"follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* Abraham waited 25 years for the child of promise. David had to duck and hide in caves for years while Saul tried to kill him. The same scenario is repeated throughout the Bible. **If you want the victory, then you have to endure the battle and be willing to wait.** And how can you wait? Hebrews 11:27 says that by faith, Moses *"forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."* **You have to keep your eyes on the future goal, realizing that the waiting phase will not last forever.** You cannot allow your eyes to focus on the

rebellion you see in the loved ones that you are praying for. You cannot allow the contrary circumstances that you are presently experiencing to deter you from God's promises that you know are true. If God has called you to a business, or a ministry, or whatever – it will take faith and steadfastness to *"inherit the promise."* Paul told Timothy to *"fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim 6:11).* In 2 Timothy 2:3 says to *"endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."*



Reasons for Delayed Answers

There are many reasons why your answers take time. In a very real sense, the slogan "it's in the pipeline" is true in the walk of faith. God hears our prayers instantly when we pray. If we are in His will and praying according to His Word, then He immediately dispatches the answer. Imagine a pipeline. **There's one end in heaven and the other end on the earth. It's like the tubes you see at banks when you go through the drive-through.** You put your request in the container and "shoot it" to the teller. They process it and "shoot it" back to you via the tube. In the spiritual pipeline, there can be blockages. So what are some of the reasons for delayed answers? Here are a few –

1. Spiritual warfare - we've already examined this one from Daniel's story. Satan is not an invincible foe when you walk in the Spirit and use God's armor and weapons. Yet, Satan and his army of wicked spirits do have a degree of hindering power. Ephesians 6:10-18 clearly says that we are in a spiritual battle. Most things that you and I face in life are not "predetermined" or set. Ephesians 6 is telling us that we must fight, stand our ground, and defeat the plans of Satan. Yes, some things (like the

prophecies regarding Israel, the return of Christ, etc) are set. But on a personal level, we are compared to soldiers who must fight to win the battle.

2. God works through people – your answers will most likely involve other people. Can you imagine the challenge that God has in trying to get people to cooperate at times? He will never violate someone's will. He will influence them, draw them, and reason with them – but they are not robots. Thus, when you set out to pray for a loved one or a project, you must know that God and his angels immediately begin working in the hearts and minds of other people. Most miracles involve other people along the way. In my mind, other than spiritual warfare, this is perhaps the biggest reason for delays. God has to influence key people in the process and it just takes time.

Furthermore, one of those people might be YOU! If you are not walking with Christ, communing with Him, and seeking His will, then God may need to delay things just to get your mind and heart ready. Disobedience will block answers. **No, you don't have to reach perfection for God to work. Thank God it's by grace and faith! Yet, there's a personal realm of "abiding in Christ" that's critical for blessings and miracles to flow.** John 15:7 says, *"If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you."*

3. Double-minded – if you are going to set your faith on something, then you can't afford to be double-minded about it. Why? 1) You should know what God's will is BEFORE you start (via the Word and prayer) and 2) when road blocks appear along the way, a double mind will cause you to give up. James 1:6-8 says, *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he will receive any thing from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."* So how can you be single minded? **You need to get to the point that you "know that you know that you know" that what you are pursuing IS God's will.** This kind of "knowing" comes through the promises in God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life.