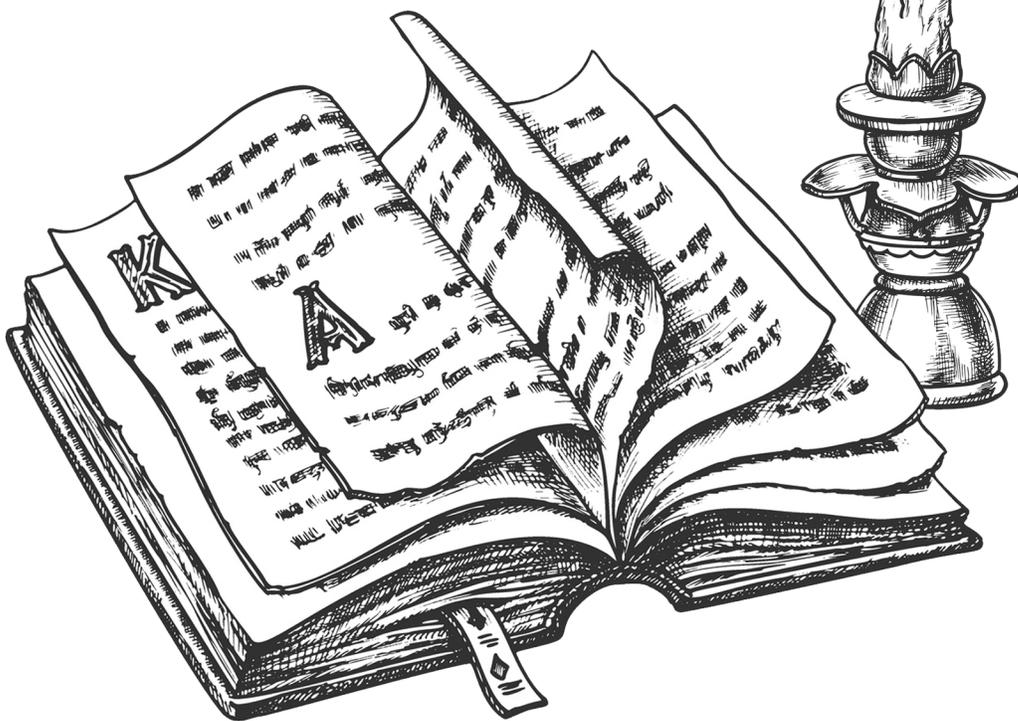


GOD IS GOD. BECAUSE HE IS GOD,
HE IS WORTHY OF MY TRUST AND OBEDIENCE.

I WILL FIND REST NOWHERE BUT IN
HIS HOLY WILL THAT IS UNSPEAKABLY
BEYOND MY LARGEST NOTIONS OF
WHAT HE IS UP TO.

— ELISABETH ELLIOT —



Waiting on God

Genesis Chapter 41

Have you ever wondered if God has forgotten about you? Overlooked your prayer? Turned His ear away from the cry of your heart? I have. Some of my prayers have taken years to be answered—some yet remain.

But, has God really forgotten my pain? Or could it be that His plan is greater than mine?

Lysa Terkeurst understood the importance of patience when she wrote, “God loves us too much to answer our prayers at any other time than the right time.”

Throughout scripture we see people waiting on God as Noah waited for rain, Hannah patiently waited for a child of her own, Moses waited 40 years before he led the children out of Egypt and another 40 in the desert of testing.

Chapter 41 opens by telling us that Joseph waited two full years before he was called out of the dungeon. According to Verse 46, he was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, and since he was 17 when he was sold into slavery, we know that he had been waiting on God for a total of 13 years. That’s 13 long years of uncertainty, trials, and testing.

What does it mean to wait on the Lord? It means to look ahead with expectation, to patiently hope and trust. Yes, we patiently trust that He’s got our best interest at heart, but during that quiet time of patience and hope we have some seeking and learning to do.

Randy Alcorn describes it this way, “The call to wait on God is an invitation to trust and hope. It entails believing that one day — even if today is not that day — he will make all things right. In times of waiting, as we seek God in prayer, we must learn to listen to him as well as talk to him — to shut out the clatter and quietly wait as he unfolds to us his person, purposes, promises, and plan.”



In addition to waiting on God, there's something else at play in this chapter. The character of Joseph is once again revealed as we see his complete reliance on God. The moment he's given an opportunity to shine, he hands it over to Him.

"It is not in me," he says. "God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Those are the words of a man who was faithful to God. Throughout his trials, suffering, and years of waiting, Joseph's eyes remained fixed on the Father. While his circumstances were a constant roller coaster of emotional highs and heart-breaking lows, his faith was unchanging.

Remember, Joseph already went through this in the last chapter. He was ready and willing to interpret their dreams, but what did that give him? Nothing. The baker went on his way and forgot about Joseph. So, why would this be any different? Why would he want to put himself out there again?

There's a verse in Ecclesiastes that answers this question. It illustrates our place in all this, and reminds us that all things are determined by Him. While we may be used by God to plant seeds, He determines the harvest. We must do good at all times and trust in Him for the outcome.

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. (Ecclesiastes 11:6, KJV)

I've learned a big lesson when it comes to the Lord: not to question His wisdom, which is far greater than mine. Even when I *think* that He's not at work in my life, He is—just not the way I might expect Him to be. Remember, just because God is silent, it doesn't mean we're forgotten. In fact, He's never really been silent, it's just our perspective some days. All we have to do is open our eyes to see the provision of God. The marvelous ways that He speaks through creation, the wonderful way that He loves. Moment by moment, we're surrounded by His miraculous power and bathed in His grace.

My job is to go about my day planting seeds, but I am not the Master of the field, God is. A flower doesn't bloom because I want it to, it blooms in its own time according to the will of God.

When will we learn to trust in His timing? When will we learn to lean on His strength? It's not my answer to prayer that's the gift, the real treasure lies in the journey. It's who I'm becoming in Christ.

But they that 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, KJV

So, here's the thing—instead of looking for the gift, focus on The Giver. Marvel at the person He's creating you to be. Not the person you think you should be—the one you're

becoming in Christ. Use your time of waiting to listen to His voice. Take the opportunity to pray. Learn to follow His lead.

Joseph patiently waited until God opened the door, and with a humble heart he stepped out of prison ready and willing to serve. It's rare for a man to endure what he did, to be patient and humble, and still remain faithful to God.

God rewarded Joseph's faithfulness by elevating him to a position of authority both in the King's home and over all of the land of Egypt, so that everyone therein would bow their knee to him.

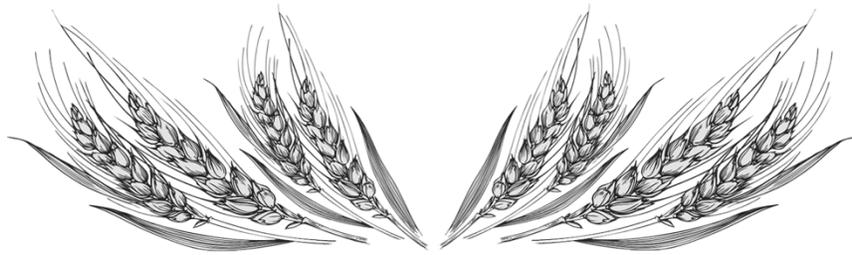
Does that sound familiar to you? It should. We see a picture of Christ here as he went into the grave and rose again to sit on the right hand of His Father in Heaven. The Bible tells us that He was obedient and humbled himself unto death. Therefore, He's been given a name above all names to which every knee on earth, above the earth, and below the earth will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. (Phil. 2:7-11) Hallelujah!

Did You Know...

The position that Joseph was promoted to was known as a "vizier" in ancient Egypt. The vizier's paramount duty was to supervise the running of the country, much like a prime minister. (Wikipedia)

"God wants us to learn how to follow him and put down our demanding selves — to calm that screaming child in us. One way he helps us do this is to say, "Wait." That miserable, uncomfortable, sometimes painful state of silence is one of God's most powerful tools to set us free. If we are willing, that is."
—Jade Mazarin, *DesiringGod.com*





Pause and Reflect

What does Proverbs 3:5-6 say about waiting on God and trusting His wisdom?

What encouragement do we find in Galatians 6:9?

Have you been waiting on God for a change to happen in your life? What are some of the things you've been waiting for, and what has your attitude been like during this time of waiting?

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT
ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERY
SITUATION, BY PRAYER AND
PETITION, WITH THANKSGIVING,
PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS
TO GOD.
PHILIPPIANS 4:6



God is Using Your Trials

Genesis Chapter 42

How many times have you gone through a storm when everything around you felt dark? How many times have you felt like Jacob—disappointed, discouraged, afraid? We've all been there, and every one of those times, God had a plan. All we see are results. We don't see His hand at work beneath the soil. We don't see the depth of the roots, all we see is dirt.

God used a famine to reconcile the brothers. Sometimes, the things that bring the most pain are the very circumstances that God uses for good. Our greatest trials may be the soil into which our blessings are planted. Jacob felt the weight of his trial in the midst of a storm, but he couldn't see God at work. "All these things are against me," he said. (v. 36)

What he didn't realize is that all things were working together for good.



And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28, KJV)

This story doesn't end with Joseph, as it very well could have. It begins with the brothers. Remember, He's the Good Shepherd who is willing to leave ninety-nine of His sheep in the wilderness to seek out the one who is lost. God loved the brothers. He could have left them out of Joseph's story but he cared enough not to leave them.

God wanted to set them free, just like he wants you and I to be free. But here's the thing: they weren't ready to be free until they were broken before God.

In Mark 8:35, Jesus said, “whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” God wants to bring us to that place of restoration, but we need to be both *ready* and *willing* to go there.

God disciplines those he loves.

He wanted to do an incredible work through these men. They would one day become the twelve tribes of Israel, the famous forefathers of the Jewish nations, and most importantly of the coming Messiah. Before He could do work *through* them, there was work to be done *within* them, and so we see God allowing them to be tested and tried.

Everything that was working against the brothers--the famine, their brother Simeon being held in Egypt, the accusation that they were spies, the discovery of the money in their sacks, and having to face their father, was all for their good.

If God didn’t love them, he would have left them where they were, but He loved them and disciplined them as a father disciplines the children he loves.

God wanted to use these twelve men, but in order to do that He had to prepare them. In other words, He broke them down before He rebuilt them.

Don’t be surprised in the midst of a trial—trust in His wisdom and power. Allow Him to lead. And while the trial may sting, let Him have His way as He’s reshaping your mind.

While there may be countless reasons God allows us to be tried, here are a few of them that come to mind:

1. He has a divine purpose unknown to us.
2. He’s using this trial to teach us.
3. He’s using this trial to strengthen us.
4. He’s using this trial to increase our faith.
5. He’s using this trial to draw us closer to Him.

Come to think of it, it’s more probable that all five of these reasons are working together any time we’re feeling the heat.

We used to sing an old Hymn at the church (and maybe you still sing it). It goes like this:

*Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Thou art the potter I am the clay
Mold me and make me after Thy will
While I am waiting yielded and still*

Little did I realize that “molding and making” would be a painful time of growth. And yet I’ll sing it again and again if it means that God is reshaping my life.



Pause and Reflect

What are some ways you've been strengthened by trials?

What encouragement do we find in James 1:12?

What benefit is there in suffering? See James 1:2-4

Read Hebrews 12:1-15. You'll find tips on handling trials peppered through these verses. Can you list some of them?

Are you in the midst of a trial right now? If so, what could you do today to improve your attitude or strengthen your fortitude?



When you're going through trials, what are the people around *you* listening to? Are they hearing you grumble and complain from a place of despair, or are they hearing you praise God for His goodness and grace?

There's a famous quote that says, "You might be the only Bible that some people read." And so, we must give careful attention to the message we share. If you're ever wondering what that should look like in your life, remember the fruit of the Spirit:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Gentleness
- Goodness
- Faith
- Meekness
- Temperance

Did You Know...

This wasn't the first time this family went to Egypt because of a famine. Abraham and Sarah had been there about 200 years before (Genesis 12). In fact, this is where Abraham accumulated much of his wealth.



Prayer Use My Trials to Teach Me

Dear Heavenly Father,

Sometimes the trials that bring the most pain are the very thing You're using for good. And so, Lord, I ask for Your strength. Give me patience as I'm learning to lean.

Let these trials be the soil into which our blessings are planted. Teach me to trust in Your wisdom and strength. Help me find peace in the eye of the storm.

Before You work through me, You must work within me, and so I hand over my life. As clay in the hands of a Potter may I be molded and made, fashioned and formed, created and cast, according to Your almighty wisdom and power.

In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.