

Bloom

Hope...for the uprooted woman



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Life on Pause.

Waiting to Begin Again By Ann Kelley

Once the dust settles after a move or other major life change, it can feel like your runaway-train-of-a-life has suddenly come to a screeching halt in the middle of a wilderness. The hours tick by in your silence and isolation as you gaze out the window at a world that is foreign and unfamiliar. The quiet may be broken by a trip to the grocery store or to the DMV, but the sense of isolation persists - even in a crowd.

It's only natural to feel that your life has been derailed. You long for a sense of purpose to your days and a sense of connection with your new surroundings and the people you see.

But this stage is good and necessary.

You've entered a time of waiting. I know. Nobody WANTS to wait. Every day we do what we can to AVOID waiting. The checkout line, the ticket line, slow traffic, the doctor's office - don't make me wait! But waiting for our lives to be full and "meaningful" again isn't something we can control or rush.

It's easy to wonder if God is doing anything as we wait for life to begin again.

In Acts, chapter 9, in the Bible, Saul (later called Paul) is on the road to Damascus, intent on imprisoning all followers of The Way (early followers of Jesus). As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you, lord?" Saul asked.

The voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Saul picks himself up off the ground and realizes he's blind! He must be lead into the city where Jesus told him to wait. Not only is he blind, but he doesn't eat or drink for three days!

He's been called by Jesus and then told to WAIT.

This place of blindness, dependence, and waiting has stripped Saul of all that gave him his identity, purpose, status, and meaning. He's no longer the authoritative, respected, and powerful religious leader. He's weak and helpless.

He's emptied of all that has defined him. He waits.

We know what he could not know: out of his empty state of being and waiting will be birthed a life and ministry that will have an impact on the lives of individuals and nations for two thousand years. His letters will make up much of the New Testament and his missionary journeys will help to spread and establish the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Are you in a period of waiting?

You may feel you've been stripped of your identity, value, and purpose. Be present to THIS moment - not ruminating on the past, not clamoring for the future. God will birth something new from this period of waiting.



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For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. (Isaiah 43:19)



Walking By Faith By Mimi Dixon

I never have stepped into my vehicle, turned on the engine, and started to drive without first having a clear sense of where I am headed. When I plan a journey, I begin with a destination clearly in mind. And I communicate it to other travelers. God does not, apparently, share the value of this logic.

[In the gospel of Luke, chapter one], notice how Luke...describes an older couple who have served God faithfully all their lives, yet been denied the one thing they desired the most: a child. Now, as they near retirement, Zechariah is visited by an angel who announces that God is about to answer their prayers.

What? Now?! Are you sure? Aren't you a little late?

It is tempting to think that this approach was out of the norm, but even a cursory reading of God's story reveals that this experience is more common than not.

Noah "bobbed about on an oceanic flood," clueless as to when his ordeal would end; Paul and a half-starved shipload of travelers dodged shoals in a storm off the coast of Malta (Genesis 6 ff.; Acts 27). All they could do was wait it out. Wait and, as it turned out, do one other thing. At Paul's urging, they broke bread and gave thanks to God. Under the circumstances, it was a crazy thing to do. But they were strengthened by this faithful act and made it through the long night. As dawn glowed crimson in the east, the ship shattered on a reef, yet all on board made it safely to land.

In the uncertainty and suspense of not knowing, we learn to keep our eyes wide open, scanning the horizon of our experience for evidence of God's leading. Like Noah we may have to do this for a long time before at last a spring sprig signals that there is land ahead. Like Paul and his near-sinking boatload, we would be wise to feast ourselves again and again on signs of promise and hope even as we are tossed about on the sea of not knowing. This is the invitation we embrace.

On the one hand, we firmly grasp the promise that "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). On the other hand, we embrace the reality that God operates well outside our frame of reference. Unlike us, God operates by a different timetable; God is comfortable with chaos; God's ways are not our ways.

So, what does it look like for us to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7)? Some years ago, I was confused. My ministry was getting nowhere and I didn't know if I was where God wanted me to be. I telephoned my father to ask, "Have I made a mistake? Have I somehow wandered out of God's will and that is the reason for what I am experiencing?"

My father listened to my story, and then asked, "When you made the decision to be where you are, how did you discern God's leading? Did you pray about it? Did you seek the counsel of godly people? And when you made the decision, did you feel peace about it? Did you experience a deep sense that this was exactly what God wanted you to do? The peace you felt is important to remember. Let the memory of that faithful beginning sustain and guide you now. Know that this turbulent time will pass. God brought you this far; he will make a way."

Excerpt from *Traveling Unfamiliar Pathways* by Mimi Dixon

Jesus said that there are times when your Father will appear as if He were an unnatural father—as if He were callous and indifferent—but remember, He is not. "Everyone who asks receives..." (Luke 11:10). If all you see is a shadow on the face of the Father right now, hang on to the fact that He will ultimately give you clear understanding and will fully justify Himself in everything that He has allowed into your life.

- Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

Why You Have to Stop Waiting for the Future & Begin Living Now

By Myquillyn Smith

I've wasted so many years being restless. We've lived in fourteen different houses in our nineteen years of marriage and *I did it all wrong*.

I was always waiting. Waiting for that *next* house where I just knew we could finally settle down and I could create the kind of home where I imagined our family living. I assumed, once we were truly settled down, *then* I could invite people over and we'd connect, *then* I could create a meaningful, beautiful home. *Then* life would start. I put all my hopes in *The Next House*.

We've lived in ten different rental homes. We've owned four different homes—all in different cities, three in different states. Still, I was perpetually restless, waiting for perfect circumstances and I didn't even realize the years were passing by.

Life was passing by.

It wasn't until we moved four times in three years that I figured out that **I had to create a home wherever we were**. I had no choice.

Our boys were getting older and if I wasn't careful, their entire childhood would be one where Mom was waiting for our forever home, hanging nothing on the walls because this house is just temporary and we need to wait for something better. They would only know me as mom who was always living for the future because right now was never enough.

So I gave up.

And in giving up, I finally gave in and made a home *right where we were*, in the middle of imperfect circumstances, in a rental house where I had no idea if we'd ever move. *It was the best thing that could have happened.*

I realized that my restlessness really was a trust issue with God. The fact that I put off inviting people over was a trust issue with my friends.

I chose to start acting like what I believed was true: that God had provided enough for me, and that it was possible to enjoy it right now. I began to settle, right where I was, even in the midst of imperfection.

I invited friends over, purposely knowing what I was really telling them was that **they can be trusted with the imperfections of my life.**

I didn't have to go to great lengths to hide the truth. My friends could be trusted not to judge a thirty-five-year-old weirdo who was still paying off debt and renting a house with carpet and paint she'd never choose.

For so many years I put all this pressure on my house and circumstances when really, at any time, **I could have decided to embrace what I had been given and find rest in the midst of the imperfect.** Even if it was in a two bedroom condo where one of our boys slept on a sofa.

Once I chose to accept what had been provided for me and rest in the undone—I *finally found home*.

Myquillyn Smith is a blogger and author of *The Nesting Place*. "When you're ready to love the home you're with and willing to embrace the imperfect." thenester.com



I finally gave in and made a home *right where we were*, in the middle of imperfect circumstances...



Hurry Up, Lord! By Susan Miller

Sometimes we feel like saying, "Hurry up Lord! I'm tired of waiting. I'm weary and worn out. Can't you please just get to me and my situation a little faster?"

Learn to wait on God. Don't go before Him and short circuit what He is trying to accomplish in you, or through you. God is working on many levels of your life that you may not even see, or understand at the moment—deepening your trust, strengthening your faith, or teaching you things you can only learn as you wait on Him.

Remember, only God can redeem your waiting. It is in *His* perfect timing, not yours, that He will reveal the answers.

Four things to do while you are in God's waiting room:

- 1. Wait Expectantly!** Live each day in anticipation for what the Lord will do and how He will work in your circumstances. Look for God's presence and His touch in everything and everyone around you. *...I will wait for the Lord... I will even look eagerly for Him.* Isaiah 8:17
- 2. Wait Actively!** Don't just sit and do nothing as you wait. Do something—pray diligently, read His word in scripture and mark verses that are meaningful to you, listen to worship music as you walk or exercise, or get involved by serving others. *Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.* Psalm 27:14
- 3. Wait Joyfully!** Inner joy does not depend on your circumstances. Your joy depends on your relationship with God. Tie joy to your Savior, not to your situation. Choose joy daily, even if you don't feel joyful. *These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.* John 15:11
- 4. Wait Continuously!** It is not easy to keep on waiting, especially when you feel like God is not on your timetable. Sometimes waiting can seem like forever. Continue to put one foot in front of the other, and persevere through each day. Remember that your times are in His hands. Trust in Him as you wait on Him. *But as for me, I trust in Thee, O Lord, I say, "Thou art my God." My times are in Thy hand...* Psalm 31:14,15

From *After the Boxes Are Unpacked* by Susan Miller. Available at JustMovedShop.com



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