



Links Players

...But I Want It Right Now

But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint....(Isaiah 40:31, NIV).

As you probably have surmised from some prior devotionals, I have numerous pet peeves that can easily distract me when I am playing golf. Besides unwelcome noises in my swing, slow play drives me nuts!

Everything is moving along at a fine pace, and then, everything grinds to a halt. The group in front looks like they're having an Easter egg hunt, trying to find everyone's balls.

They don't play "ready golf;" rather, they insist on gathering at the spot where the next player is hitting from and then taking their caravan to the next player's shot. In those situations, my frustrations grow by the minute, and suddenly, I have lost my focus, tempo, and patience.

As a Type-A personality, my reaction to slow play probably doesn't surprise you. Early in my legal career, a close friend presented me with an embroidered wall hanging for my office, which read:

LORD GIVE ME PATIENCE—BUT I WANT IT RIGHT NOW

Unfortunately, my impatience sometimes creeps into my faith life, and I am tested to "wait faithfully on God."

I realize that, among other things, my pride and lack of humility, my anxiety and worry about the future, and my desire for control, cause me not to trust God's timing.

In an attempt to temper these obstacles, I regularly turn to Scripture for guidance and reassurance that God's timing and plans are perfect. For instance, I read about Joseph's dream of becoming a leader. Yet after his betrayal by his brothers, he spent 13 years in Egypt as a slave and a prisoner before gaining a position of power.

Then I read about the long wait David endured after being anointed by Samuel before he ultimately became king. I read about Simeon and Anna's wait to see the promised Messiah in Luke 2:25-38. These stories, and others, help me to "dial back" my expectations.

I am reminded that throughout Scripture God demonstrates HIS patience as an example of the patience He wants us to exhibit. In Psalm 103:8, we learn that "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

God's words also teach us that He has a specific plan and purpose for us. In Jeremiah, He tells us: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

In Isaiah 55:8-9, we learn that God's wisdom and ways are higher than ours. Finally, as Paul writes in Romans 8:28, we are reminded that God works all things for good.

Besides relying on God's Word to overcome these barriers to practicing patience, I try to adopt a more "eternal" perspective of God's timing rather than a "day-to-day" perspective.

I seek the Holy Spirit's help through prayer and meditation. Working on developing both humility and gratitude helps me to cultivate greater patience in my relationship with God. I have found that learning to embrace the discomfort of waiting, while difficult, is a key to greater patience.

One of my early spiritual mentors suggested that I practice patience in my daily interactions with those around me. He said that "waiting on God" is an ACTIVE, not a passive endeavor.

He urged me to build "patience muscles" when confronted with "small annoyances," to challenge impulsive reactions, and to accept what was out of my control.

My daily prayer and my prayer for each of you is that we use the gift of patience to faithfully wait on Him and His plan for us.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you have given us many "fruits of the Spirit," including the gift of patience. Help us to use that gift to faithfully wait on You and Your plan for us.

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.