

What is your least favorite waiting room experience? Is it the doctor's office, airport, DMV, dentist, or all of the above? Whether you like it or not, you may find yourself in situations where you cannot avoid waiting. You may wait for something to happen. You may wait for someone to come home. You may even wait for the economy to get better. It is inevitable that you will eventually wait. So, how can you endure the waiting rooms of life? This week, Pastor Sasha tells us that God intends to use your waiting experience to draw you closer to Him.

The Bible says "we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" Romans 5:3 (NIV). All through the Bible, we see how God used the waiting experience in His people. Abraham waited two and one half decades to become a father; Israel waited 400 years to be released from Egyptian captivity; Moses traveled 40 years with the Israelites through the wilderness; people waited for centuries for the Messiah to come; and John spoke in Revelation of the waiting that is still ongoing when he wrote "I am coming soon."

The Bible shows that there is a purpose for waiting. What God does in you while you are waiting is just as important as what you are waiting for. In other words, God intends for waiting to be an active and not a passive process. For example, there is more to be done during a financial struggle than just saying, "I'm waiting for the Lord to provide." Rather, Pastor Sasha points out that God has three foundational requirements to help you during the waiting process.

First, waiting on the Lord requires a patient heart of trust. Even though you may not be sure what the reason is, God expects trust. The Bible says, "Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord" Psalms 27:14 (NLT). David's life is an example of this. Although he was not a perfect man, he knew who he could turn to during trouble. He understood that it was better to trust God's timing over his own.

Waiting on the Lord also requires humility. This goes against the human tendency to take care of self. People are prone to try to get the best for themselves, without realizing that the best really comes when selfish desires are set aside and God is allowed to build people up in His time. The Bible says "...humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time" 1 Peter 5:6 (NIV). Humility, therefore, is recognition of limits, where God exalts those who take a lesser position.

Finally, waiting on the Lord requires a confident hope. This is more than merely "wishful thinking," but rather an expectation that the best is yet to come. Whereas memories are the link to the past, so is hope the link to the future. Romans 15:4 (NIV) shows the connection between waiting and hope when it says "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of Scriptures we might have hope."

If you had to grade yourself in the three foundational requirements of waiting, how would you fare? Would you give yourself one star (beginning), two stars (in process), or three stars (arrived)?