

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

10. Waiting Times Don't Need to Be Wasted Times

You are listening to episode 10 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. Hello and welcome back! Thank you for joining me here today. How do you handle waiting? Or more specifically, the waiting times of life? Waiting is something we each are familiar with, right? Waiting in line. Or waiting in traffic. Waiting for test results. Waiting for a child to be born. Or waiting for cooler weather. Do you, like me, ever feel like you're just wasting time in the waiting times? Well, let's get right into this week's episode where we discuss this very subject, and find hope and encouragement as we go. Let's not wait a minute longer.

Let me start off by stating some truth.

I'm not the example to follow in times of waiting.

In fact, most of the time stink at it. I'm terrible at waiting. Like waiting at a stop light when I want to get somewhere. Or waiting for a table at a restaurant. Or even waiting for someone or something that's late. That may be my worst waiting challenge. How about you? How do you do in times of waiting? Are you a more patient person or are you more wired like me?

But patience is a virtue, right?

It may be. I looked for that exact saying in the Bible, because I wanted to see how it was referenced. But you know? It's not in the Bible! Some verses reference patience being a good thing, but not exactly in that way. Instead, it's assumed that phrase was written by William Langland between 1360 and 1387 in a narrative poem title Piers Plowman. Interesting huh? So there's our fun fact for the day.

Even if patience is a virtue, I have a tendency to try to rush things along.

To speed things up according to my plan and schedule. I prefer to get things done and cross them off my list, thank you very much. And quite honestly, my speed is more of a microwave than crock pot. Microwaves are quick and crock pots are for waiting, as they cook things slow, right? I think I could use some lessons from my crock pot. But, that's another episode for a different day. Be on the lookout for a crock pot episode in the future!

One big reason I don't like waiting is because I feel like I'm wasting time. And I'm not one who likes to waste the precious time I'm given... or anything else for that matter.

But God changed my thinking on waiting times last year.

Through the lockdown last year as I was holed up here at home, God taught me waiting times can be blessed times. As I couldn't wait for all of it to be over, He opened my eyes to the truth that waiting is a

gift. Even though it was uncomfortable and challenging at first, God used it to renew me, refocus me, and refine me. He helped me understand times of waiting don't have to be terrible or unpleasant or a waste of time as I used to perceive it.

No, times of waiting can be good. Waiting times can be sweet times.

Maybe you can relate. While we were locked down and in waiting, what did you do? Did you spend extended time with your family while you were all at home? Did you try new recipes? Or did you learn a new skill, read some good books, find new ways of doing things? Did you bless your neighbors or serve someone in need? Did you learn how to use Zoom or Facetime to stay connected with loved ones? I think we all learned something new about ourselves, about humanity, or about God.

Waiting times don't need to be wasted times.

[One definition](#) of waiting I found in Merriam-Webster surprised me a little. It gives us a fresh perspective of waiting: *to look forward expectantly*. Maybe seasons of waiting don't necessarily have to carry a heavy, negative tone with them, like *we're waiting for the season to be over* or *we're waiting to get going again*. Maybe, quite possibly, the waiting can be more of a season of expectation. Of hope. Of renewed joy. *We're waiting for what's to come. We can't wait for what's next.*

We can choose what we do with in the waiting. You and I can either waste it by complaining, grumbling, or fretting about it, or we can make the most of our waiting times. Even as we wait in the long check-out line. Or as we sit at the stop light. Or as we wait for the test results. Even as we wait for our spouse who is running late.

What can we do in these waiting times?

How can we make these times of waiting count? How do we wait patiently, productively, and perseveringly? Because here's the thing, how we wait matters.

Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians life-changing truth. One verse in particular continues to encourage me. This verse is written in the context of marriage and relationships. Not only does it speak to my heart for marriage, but it also encourages me regarding waiting times in my life. It hangs here on my office wall, and I can't tell you how many times I read it last year as I was holed up here at home in lockdown just waiting.

It's 1 Corinthians 7:17 MSG. Here it is:

Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there.

1 Corinthians 7:17 MSG

How can we apply this verse to our lives? Especially in the context it was written for marriage and relationships? How can we apply it to where God has us in a season of waiting? It reminds me God has me in this place, in this season, in this particular moment. No matter what moment I'm in throughout the day. I can either defy it and be miserable, or I can allow God to refine me in it. I can try to rush through the waiting and be anxious, or I can appreciate the gift that it is and find His peace. God is calling me to live and obey and love and believe, right where He has me.

Could He be calling you to do the same?

Taken from the above passage, let's look at four ways our waiting time is not wasted time.

Live

How do we live in the waiting time? We live out who we are through our God-given calling. We make the best of our current circumstances. And we make our lives count. Galatians 6:4-5 has better words than me.

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

Galatians 6:4-5 MSG

Obey

How do we obey in the waiting time? We continue to do what God has called us to do. Whether that's the small daily acts of kindness He prompts us to do or obeying God with something else no one else will ever see. What is God prompting you to do? What's stirring in your heart? Is there a nudge or a thought of action that just won't go away?

Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

John 13:17 NIV

Love

How do we love in the waiting time? We love others well... our family, our neighbors, our co-workers, our followers on social media. When the world spews out hate, you and I scatter love. And we show love while behind the wheel, letting someone else go first in the check out line, paying for another's coffee in the drive-thru line, getting on the floor and playing with our children. Love can be our way of living.

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14 ESV

Believe

How do we believe in the waiting time? As we wait, we look forward and believe the best... the best in God, the best in others, the best in ourselves, and the best in our situations. We believe God is using this season for good, and as a result, we live our days out of that belief. And as we do, we share that belief with others to encourage, to inspire, to extend hope. Certainly, our belief helps others believe.

All things are possible, if you only believe.

Mark 9:23b VOICE

If you find yourself waiting in this season, take heart.

Waiting times don't mean wasted times. May you and I make every moment count, every experience count, every day count, even while we're waiting. For our growth, or the good of others, and for God's glory.

What's one way you and I can use your times of waiting for good?

We're discussing this in our Encouragement for Real Life Community Facebook group all week long. I invite you over to join in the conversation. You'll receive some extra encouragement and hope over there in your season of waiting. The link to that group is in the show notes.

Also, if you've found encouragement in this episode, I invite you to add a review and rate it so others can find this encouragement too. Please share it with someone you know who is finding herself in a season of waiting.

Thank you for tuning in. Thank you for allowing me to journey with you for a short time today. I consider it a gift. You make a beautiful difference in this world. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre