

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

49. How to Remain Encouraged in the Waiting

You are listening to episode 49 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "How to Remain Encouraged in the Waiting." Welcome back to the podcast today, friend. I'm grateful you are here. Are you finding yourself in a season of waiting? Have you been praying for something, yet God seems silent? Do you desire for a certain situation or circumstance to change, yet nothing appears to be changing? I think we all know how it feels to wait, right? So, how do we remain encouraged in the waiting, especially in the seasons that last longer than we expect? What can we do to stay hopeful while we wait? Hang out with me here for the next short while and we'll find some help and hope as we dig into this subject a little deeper today. Let's get into this episode.

For over five years I've been waiting. Waiting for God to answer my prayer regarding a certain situation. Someone in my life needs His healing touch, and in this particular circumstance, God seems silent. It feels to me as if God could care less about this situation and what's going on with it. Because nothing has changed since I began to lift this concern in prayer to our God so long ago. My prayers seem to mean--and do--nothing. As if they are falling on deaf ears.

Do you know the feeling?

Maybe you're experiencing something similar. You know how it feels when God seems silent. You understand the wonderings if God still cares. And you get how frustrating and heart-wrenching it is when you question if your prayers are making any difference at all. You also understand some of where I'm coming from here, and you are extremely familiar with the sometimes unsettling and enduring seasons of waiting.

But you and I know better when it comes to God. Right? You and I know God is perfectly sovereign, meaning He has the power, wisdom, and authority to do anything He chooses with His creation. You and I know God cares about what we care about. We understand the value of prayer and the truth of how God hears each one we offer to Him. We know we can trust God with everything. Yes?

Yet, in the waiting, we wonder.

God, do You hear me?

God, do You see me?

Do you still care, God?

God, where are You?

Why, God, are You taking so long?

Why, God, do I have to wait?

How much longer, God?

Whether it's an answer to prayer, a pleading for healing, an imploring for change, a request for renewal, a petition for direction, or something else near and dear to our hearts, we like to see some action from

God. We desire some sort of confirmation from God. That He heard us in the first place. That He isn't too busy or has bigger problems than ours to solve.

We like to know if He's going to respond in the way we'd like Him to. Or respond at all. You and I desire for the reassurance that God will act on our behalf. That He will again be faithful. We want assurance that God will come through again. Because we can begin to question when the waiting season lingers.

This reminds me of two verses in 1 John. And how bold and free we then become in his presence, freely asking according to his will, sure that he's listening. And if we're confident that he's listening, we know that what we've asked for is as good as ours. 1 John 5:14-15 MSG

Because we get antsy when nothing appears to be happening.

We're used to instant gratification, like finding quick answers on search engines, and quick microwavable food. We like fast results and the fastest routes to get where we're going. And we'd rather run our errands than walk them. You and I are conditioned to expect our requests, no matter what they are, to be filled quickly.

But the thing is, we must remember God's timeline is not ours. His timing is most often different than our timing. We may think He's acting slow, because we're comparing His action to what we experience in this world. Yet, God's timing is always perfect, and it's always right on time.

So, what do we do in the waiting?

How do we remain encouraged in the waiting?

Because you know as well as I do, it's not so easy to stay encouraged. It's quite easy, on the other hand, to become discouraged and to believe God doesn't care. It's easy to feel abandoned by God when silence is all we hear, and inactivity is all we see.

But we can remain encouraged while we wait. But it won't happen naturally. You and I will need to choose to stay encouraged by what we do and how we think. With what we fill our minds and with where we set our focus. And I say it's always best to begin with truth from the Bible.

God's Word helps us remain encouraged while we wait.

I find the best encouragement comes from God's Word, don't you? And through these five years of waiting for my pleas and prayers to be answered in this particular circumstance, these verses continue to encourage my heart. They infuse me with hope and promise, and I pray they do that for you today, too.

REJOICE IN HOPE

Do not forget to rejoice, for hope is always just around the corner. Hold up through the hard times that are coming, and devote yourselves to prayer. Romans 12:2 VOICE

WAIT ON GOD

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:13-14 NIV

GOD'S TIMING IS NOT OURS

Don't imagine, dear friends, *that God's timetable is the same as ours; as the psalm says, for with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day.* 2 Peter 3:8 VOICE

GOD IS NOT SLOW

Now the Lord is not slow about enacting His promise—slow is how some people want to characterize it—*no, He is not slow* but *patient and merciful* to you, not wanting anyone to be destroyed, but wanting everyone to turn away from following his own path and to turn toward God's. 2 Peter 3:9 VOICE

Aren't these wonderful verses to cling to?

Another tool that encourages while we wait is prayer.

Prayer helps us remain encouraged in the waiting.

Through prayer we seek God. We ask Him to help us in the waiting. And we recount with God all the ways He has been faithful in the past. We can pray the scriptures I just mentioned (they are in the show notes as well), and we can continue to walk this journey with God conversing with Him as we go. Because doing so will strengthen us for this journey. Praying equips us to keep going. Praying fills us to overflowing when we're feeling weary and worn out from the waiting. Prayer makes a powerful difference in our everyday lives, especially in the waiting.

A simple prayer might go like this:

Father God, You are faithful and trustworthy. You are merciful and kind. Yet, Lord, You are personal and compassionate. I know You know my situation. You see me waiting. You have heard my pleas and my prayers. So, I trust You in the waiting. I lean on You in Your perfect timing, to answer and act according to Your will. As I wait, I will continue to seek Your face. Grow me in this season. Teach me and transform me. Please bless me with Your peace and presence always. I thank you in advance for how you are already working in this situation, Father God. I love You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

As we wait, we can trust God is at work.

Friend, you and I can trust God is working behind the scenes. We know He works all things out for His good, so we can believe He's working in our situations. Even when it doesn't appear so. Even when we can't see any evidence of His work. And even when it feels like we're alone in our circumstances. We can trust He knows what He's doing, and He knows what's best for us. God is at work, friend. He is. We can excitedly anticipate He's working in the waiting and soon we'll see how the waiting will be worth it.

To us, waiting is wasting. To God, waiting is working. --Louie Giglio

Our willingness to wait reveals the value we place on what we're waiting for. --Charles Stanley

And I'll share again my favorite verse about trusting God. I've shared it here on the podcast a couple times. It's Proverbs 3:5-6 in the MSG translation.

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.

No matter how long it takes in the waiting, may you and I continue to trust God from the bottom of our hearts!

The day will come when the waiting will end. What we've prayed for, hoped for, dreamt about, and believed for will come to pass. And what a glorious day that will be, right? We will see the waiting was worth it. We will understand more fully why the waiting was necessary. But until then we will remain encouraged. We will seek God through His Word, we will pray and converse with God, and we will trust He is at work while we wait. Amen? Amen!

We are discussing this further over in our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. This community is filled with hope-filled, encouragement-seeking individuals just like you. Come on over to check it out and join in the conversation. The link is in the show notes.

Also, if you found encouragement in this episode, would you rate it and/or review it so others can find this encouragement too? Subscribe to this podcast so you never miss a new episode.

You'll find additional free resources designed to encourage your heart over on my site on my Resources page. Tools like bookmarks, lock screens, printables, and social posts will keep you encouraged and inspired. Plus, my fun scavenger hunts are a great way to add a special touch to make someone's (or your own) day special. Check them out through the link in the show notes.

In closing, waiting time is not wasted time when God is involved. In our seasons of waiting, may you and I keep our encouraged as we fix our eyes on God. Come back and listen to this episode whenever you need a reminder. Thank you for being here, friend. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre