

Life Strategy #2

Delayed by Design

As we continue our study on life strategies, we need to look at the reality that **God, by design, will cause us to be delayed.** Delays in receiving that which we are waiting on Him to provide, or perhaps delays that will postpone our arrival at the destination we have been moving towards. However, when we speak of delays, we are viewing them in the context of our own perspective. We are comparing them in terms of our own timetable. This is a very important point because **God is never late.** When he is the author of delays in our lives, you can rest assured that everything will be on time and all will be as it should be. Why then does He design delays in our lives?

Delays test our obedience and prepare us for things to come, by building our faith, and trust in our God. Exodus 13:17 tells us, “When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them (directly), though that way was shorter. For God said “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt’.” God intentionally delayed their arrival to the promise land in order to see if they would lose faith in Him and want to return to Egypt if they had to face war. We then read in Deuteronomy 1:26,28, “...God led you through the wilderness for forty years...testing you to find out how you would respond and if you would obey Him.” Here, we find that God’s delays are to test us to see how we will respond even though we may not know why we are delayed. **Will we continue to obey Him even though we are delayed for reasons unknown to us?**

God is looking for people who can stand in the face of adversity and say “My trust is in the Lord”. He is looking for people who, when things are not going as planned, will say, “My hope is in the Lord.” God is looking for people who—when things seem to be falling apart at the seams, and they are going down and not up, going out and not in, wandering and not winning—will say “Though He slay me yet will I serve Him.” It doesn’t matter where you are in your spiritual walk with God, you will be tested in this way. You may be well prepared for the task at hand, your walk may be strong and your relationship deep, but you will find yourself from time to time in your Christian journey being tested by delays.

The following Key points were taken from a sermon by Rick Warren, senior Pastor of Saddleback Church. In the years since I heard it, it has been of great help to me when I’ve gone through times of testing from delays. My prayer is that it will help you as well.

WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING

1 **DON'T Fear (fear prolongs delays)**

“...They would not enter the land. They said... ‘We are afraid... the people there are stronger and taller than we are...’” Deut. 1:26, 28 (GN)

INSTEAD Focus On God’s Presence

“Fear not for I am with you. Do not be dismayed. I am your God. I will strengthen you and I will help you...and uphold you...” Isaiah 41:10 (LB)

2 **DON'T Fret (worry)**

“Don’t fret and worry - it only leads to harm.” Psalm 37: 8 (LB)

“Impatience will get you into trouble.” Proverbs 19:2 (GN)

INSTEAD Trust In God’s Timing

“Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him to act Psalm...” 37:7 (LB)

“. . . He does everything just right and on time . . .” Eccl 3:11 (NCV)

3 **DON'T BE Faint (discouraged)**

“All the Israelites grumbled against Moses... ‘If only we had died in Egypt! ...We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt’.”Numbers 14:2-4 (NIV)

INSTEAD Be Persistent And Pray

“Let us never grow tired of doing what is right, for if we do not faint, we’ll reap a harvest at the right time.” Galatians 6:9 (Mof)

“You need to pray continually and not lose heart.” Luke 18:1 (JB)

4 **4. DON'T Forget God’s Faithfulness**

“They forgot the many times God showed them His love, and they rebelled...at the Red Sea. But He saved them as He promised...But they quickly forgot again! They wouldn’t wait for God to act...” Psalm 106:7-8(GN), 13 (LB)

INSTEAD Remember God's Promises & Faithfulness

"I will bless the Lord and not forget the great things He does for me." Psalm 103:2 (LB)

"The Lord is not being slow to carry out His promises...but He is being patient with you." 2 Peter 3:3-8 (JB)

"These things won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be over due a single day!"
Habakkuk2:3 (LB)

Additional Scriptures

"God is not a man that He should lie; He doesn't change His mind like humans do. Has He ever promised, without doing what He said?"

Numbers 23:19 (LB)

"Because he loves me", says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him (emphasis mine).

Psalm 91:14-15 (NIV)

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23