

EXCERPT FROM
WILLING TO WAIT

INTRODUCTION:
THE WAITING PROCESS

In our everyday lives, we probably spend more than 70% of our time waiting on something or someone. Waiting is so engrained in most of our routine activities. We wait in traffic and in line at the store, the bank, the airport, and the restaurant. Regardless of how long it takes, we usually wait in those instances because we feel it's necessary to get the things we want. Although we may be accustomed to having to wait for these things, we usually dread having to actually do it. However, it's not the waiting itself that bothers us, but the uncertainty about the length of the wait.

Since we live in a "microwave" society, we usually don't want to wait any longer than necessary for anything. We want everything right now and have quick access to things we used to have to wait much longer to get. When we relied on 35mm cameras, we had to wait at least two days to get the film developed before seeing the photos. Now with the hi-tech digital cameras, we can see the photo image instantly and get prints on the same day. Many retailers also offer "fast-service" options to cater to those of us who lack the will power to wait. That's why we see the one-hour photo labs, the same-day dry cleaners, and the express mail services on every corner. We are even willing to pay extra for these types of "rush" services to get what we want faster. As a result, most of us get very impatient and frustrated when we feel that we have to wait too long for something.

When it comes to us having to wait, the key question is, "How long is too long?" The obvious answer is, "It depends on the circumstances." I recall going to my favorite restaurant, Pappadeaux, on a Friday night. When I saw the line of people in front of me, I knew there was going to be a long wait for a table. My first question to the hostess was, "How long is the wait?" She responded, "It's about two hours. Should I put your name on the waiting list?" My face told it all because I thought it was ridiculous to wait that long at any restaurant. I really had a taste for my favorite dish, but I was not willing to wait that long for it. I politely told the hostess, "No, thank you," and left the restaurant. I drove around for over an hour trying to find another restaurant with a shorter wait. When I started running out of options, I stopped at the next restaurant that I saw. Once I finally got seated there, I realized that more than two hours had already passed. If I had been willing to wait at Pappadeaux for the same amount of time or less, I could have been enjoying my food by then. Instead, I was frustrated because I settled for a place where the food and service was not good, and I couldn't find anything on the menu that I wanted. I learned a valuable lesson about waiting on that night. Either I could choose to wait on the front end, or I would be forced to wait on the back end. Since I would eventually have to wait anyway, I might as well wait to get what I really wanted. Likewise, we also have to be willing to wait on God's promises for however long it takes, rather than settling for less than His best for us.

Have you been waiting a long time for God to fulfill His promises for your life? I'm not talking about waiting for a few days or weeks, but for months or years. You may have been waiting more than ten years for a God-sent mate, a financial miracle, a new house, or divine healing. When you pray and seek God about your particular situation, He can give you one of three responses: "yes," "no," or "wait." You have no problem

when His answer is, "Yes, you can have it," and you would even prefer a "no" over a "wait." If God gives you a "yes," then you have a green light to move forward with His guidance. If His answer is "no," then you have a red light and need to stop immediately. However, when God tells you to "wait," you don't have a yellow light to just slow down and proceed with caution. His "wait" actually means that you must do nothing until He gives you further instructions. You don't like when God says, "wait," because you want to know a specific time for receiving your promise. Interestingly, you may choose to wait on the daily, routine things such as your job, money, clothes or food, but you don't want to wait at all on God's promises.

If you're in fact waiting on God for something, then that means you're stuck between the prophecy and the promise. God has already revealed the promise to you, but you're waiting on its fulfillment. You may be in a spiritual holding pattern, and your plane is circling the area waiting for clearance to land from the Master traffic controller (God). God told you He would give you the house, the car, the mate...BUT WAIT! However, you may often throw a spiritual temper tantrum and begin to question God's timing. If the truth were told, God hasn't released the promise because you're not ready to handle it yet. Regardless of what you're waiting for, you must fully understand the purpose of God's waiting process.

God uses the waiting process to prepare you for the blessings He has in store for you. Maybe you need to work on your attitude, deal with your insecurities, be healed emotionally, or be delivered from fear. Whatever your "issue" is and however long it takes, you must embrace the waiting process and trust God's divine timing. If He gives you the promise now, it would literally overwhelm you. The hard part is not getting the promise, but rather whether you will be able to keep it. God wants you to have "fruit" that remains. You have

to trust that God knows the appointed time to release His best for you. All you need to do is hold on until your change comes. God has always been trustworthy and faithful and will never leave or forsake you. Like the old folks used to say, "He may not come when you want Him, but He is always on time."

The four essential steps in the waiting process for God's promises include: 1) the revelation of the promise, 2) the preparation for the promise, 3) the realization of the promise, and 4) the manifestation of the promise. A summary of these steps can be found in the following Table 1. In each step of the process, God plays a key part, but we also have a big role to play. In step one, God reveals the promise to us; and we have to believe the promise, stand on His Word, and walk in His will. In step two, God teaches us how to wait on Him; and we have to get ready for the promise, embrace our process, and allow patience to work in us. In step three, God shows us what to do while we wait; and we have to see our promise as a reality, walk into it by faith, and recover all that we've lost. In the last step, God uses His divine timing to manifest our promise; and we have to know such timing, praise Him in advance, and be ready to receive the promise.

Waiting is not a one-time thing, but rather a continuous cycle that occurs every time we wait on God's promises. Once God fulfills our specific promise, the waiting process for that promise ends. However, after we've received what we were waiting for, we will begin the waiting process again for something else. We have to go through the four steps of the waiting process each time, but the length of our waiting period will vary depending on God's purposes and how well we cooperate with Him. For example, we may wait for the raise on our job, then for the new house, then for the new furniture, then for the new car, then for the mate, and then for the children. The waiting process keeps

starting all over again and goes on indefinitely. After we realize that waiting is a major part of receiving God's promises, we will learn to enjoy our waiting experience and appreciate all of the benefits that come along with it.

Even after we know the significance of waiting on God, some things are harder to wait for than others. One critical area where we usually get discouraged and fail to wait on God is for a mate. If you are single and desire to be married, you may be struggling with waiting on God for a mate. However, you are definitely not alone. After talking to many single and married individuals, it was shocking that an overwhelming number of them admitted never even consulting God about a mate. And those that did seek God, they consciously didn't wait on Him for the "right" mate. Those who failed to wait on God are still wishing that they had. Whether you are single or married, it is crucial that you understand the importance of waiting on God in this area.

In *Willing to Wait*, the general discussion on the waiting process is divided into four parts: Part I deals with how and why God reveals the promise to us; Part II addresses how God uses waiting to prepare us for the promise; Part III identifies what we should do while we're waiting on the promise; and Part IV talks about how to recognize God's divine timing for releasing the promise. Part V candidly deals with how to effectively wait on God for a "promised" mate and the detrimental consequences of not waiting.