

the rock

WAITING
FOR
GOD'S
ANSWER





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Waiting isn't exactly a fun way to spend your time, but when it comes to prayer, it's worth the wait for God's answers.

TARON'S STORY

When Taron's dad lost his job at the automobile plant, it turned Taron's world upside down.

First, it meant leaving his home in Detroit. He didn't mind that too much because it was getting tough to walk the streets in his neighborhood. But he would miss his friends. They had been friends since they met at the day-care program at church. He and Jeffrey were even going to start on the varsity basketball team together this year, something they had dreamed about since fifth grade. And now this had to happen!

And worst of all, he was going to have to leave Cherisse. It had taken him a long time to get up the nerve to talk to her . . . and now finally they were friends!

"I prayed that my dad would find another job in Detroit so I could stay with my friends and Cherisse, but

I knew he couldn't find one that would pay him what he was used to making.

"Then I prayed that the plant would open up again, but I knew that wouldn't happen.

"Later I just prayed that dad would find a job. He finally got an offer, but it was down South! I said forget it! God isn't listening to me . . . no sense in getting my hopes up."

It's easy to get so frustrated about a problem that we stop praying about it. But 1 Thessalonians 5:7 urges us to keep praying. And in Luke 11:5-13, Jesus confirms the fact that God wants us to be bold and persistent when we pray. He also reassures us that God answers prayer.

NEVAEH'S STORY

Nevaeh, an eighth grader who lives in an older neighborhood with few kids and teens, had an experience similar to Taron's. She, too, was forced to shift schools.

"When they told me last summer that my school was closing due to low enrollment, and I had to go to a new school, I was scared to death. I wasn't used to a lot of people in my school. I'm shy and don't make friends easily so I thought I'd get lost in the crowd. Although I didn't see God working right away, I did make new friends."

Nevaeh, the youngest of five children, also talked about a quick response she received from God when her grandfather unexpectedly passed away the same summer.

"I worried about my grandmother. I had never thought about my grandparents dying until I was older and married or something. Grandpa was only sick about a day before he died, which surprised everybody. I worried that Grandpa would be lonely and that we'd all really miss him. He was always around, letting Junior pop his suspenders while he told us jokes and stories about Mom when she was a little girl. Suddenly he wasn't there anymore. I asked God to help us get back to normal real quick, and we did!"

THE PROBLEM OF WAITING

Often the more serious the problem, like a death in the family or a divorce, the faster the Lord seems to respond to our distress. But what about those times that He doesn't seem to be there at all?

"When things got really bad," says Taron, "I could always go talk to my dad or Reverend Davis at the youth group

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LOVE

FROM EGYPT

WITH
MOSES

There are rumors of trouble among the Israelite slaves in Egypt. News services have sent their best reporters to investigate.

Based on Exodus chapter 5, how would these people answer these questions?



Mr. Moses, there are reports that you told Pharaoh that you want to lead the Israelites into the wilderness. How did Pharaoh respond to your statement?

Why do you think he reacted that way?

Mr. Pharaoh, sir, I understand you just had a visit from the Israelite leader, Moses. What do you plan to do about the Israelites?



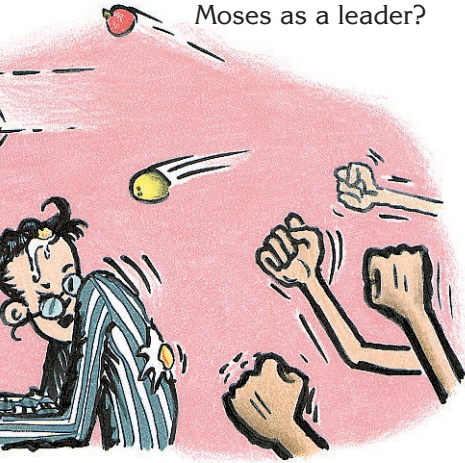
Shawn Finley

bible study

Hey Israelites, how do you think Moses handled the meeting with Pharaoh?

What happened to your lives since Moses talked with Pharaoh?

What do you think of Moses as a leader?



Mr. Slave Driver, sir, how has your life changed since Pharaoh and Moses talked?

How do you feel about this situation?



Today's Scripture *Exodus 5:1-2, 22-23*

¹Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'"

²Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

²²Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? ²³Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

Exodus 6:1-6

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

²God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant."

⁶"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'"

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meetings. They always said that God has a plan . . . that He will put me right where I'm supposed to be."

The Bible talks a lot about God's faithful people waiting patiently for deliverance. The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him (Lam. 3:25-26). The psalms are rich with references to steadfastness in awaiting God's grace. No less than twelve psalms talk about waiting on God . . . that God will not fail (Ps. 40, 130).

I learned that God hears us.

God has plans for all of us. But sometimes having the patience to wait for such plans to be fulfilled is harder than having the faith to believe they exist.

Also, God tests us in different ways. During those times, it is all too easy to question how God is dealing with us. Questioning the wisdom of the Almighty—like giving up on prayer—is another easy sin to fall into. Remember, God expects us to trust Him, not judge Him.

As Nevaeh says, "By praying a lot I learned that God hears me even though He might not answer as fast as I'd like Him to."

"Most of my friends didn't understand," adds Taron. "Most of them said stuff like, 'Oh, your dad will find a job here.' But I knew differently.

"The other thing I knew was that God would give me new friends wherever my dad found a job."

Finally, keep in mind that waiting for God when we pray is merely practice for the most awesome and hopeful wait of all—God's ultimate triumph, our resurrection and eternal life (Rom. 8:23-25).

Have you ever been upset about how God was dealing with you and your problems? When did you discover that He knew best?

What kinds of things do you find yourself praying about? Have you ever given up because you thought God didn't hear you or wasn't responding the way you thought He should?



SAND DUNES

WORD SEARCH

The Israelites were probably tired of looking at the sand dunes of Egypt. For a break, they might have welcomed a word search as much as they would have welcomed an oasis. Read across, down, diagonally, and backward to find 24 key words from the story in Exodus 5 and 6:1-6. Circle the words as you find them.

L A A R O N D R O W S A B I
C A S R E V I R D E V A L S
C O V E N A N T C P Y D E R
F G H I H A N D O H O Z C A
H C N E T S I J U A K B A E
L A B O R S K L N R E R N L
S T U B B L E M T A L I A I
N Q T P Y G E F R O O C A T
G O D M I G H T Y H R K N E
O P N E M E R O F M O S E S
Q W A R T S G R O A N I N G

AARON
BRICKS
CANAAN
COUNTRY
COVENANT
EGYPT
FESTIVAL

GOD
GROANING
HAND
ISRAELITES
LABOR
LAZY
MIGHTY

MOSES
PHARAOH
QUOTA
SLAVE DRIVERS
STRAW
STUBBLE
SWORD

YOKE



every
day
devos

HURRY UP
HURRY UP
HURRY UP

When it comes to getting answers to our prayers, we want the green light, not the red. But sometimes God says "Wait."

HURRY
HURRY
HURRY
HURRY

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.
Psalm 27:14

&
WAIT
WAIT
WAIT

MONDAY Have you been praying about something that seems absolutely impossible to wait on? Read Psalm 27:14. For you, what's most difficult about waiting? How can you take heart while waiting?

TUESDAY Read Galatians 4:4. What does this verse say about God's timing? Do you think you can trust God's timing when it comes to your prayer requests?

WEDNESDAY Waiting for an answer to prayer doesn't necessarily mean you should be passive. Read Isaiah 26:8. What does this verse suggest you do while you wait?

THURSDAY If you have a Bible with a concordance, look up the word *wait*. Look up a few of the verses listed after it. What advice do they give?

FRIDAY Read about people in the Bible who had to wait on God—Abraham, David, Mary, or Paul. What did they do while they waited?

SATURDAY Wait, hope, trust—three actions that are hard to do. Use these three words when you write out a prayer request to the Lord.

