



Big companies and Doctors have what we call WAITING ROOM. They call the room where people sit prior to their appointments, "Waiting rooms." Have you ever been in a hurry only to find that everyone else is not? Have you ever found yourself needing to get in and out of a store only to find yourself stuck in a line? Or how about this, have you ever been in a hurry and God was not?

One of the most difficult things to do in life is to sit in God's waiting room. This is when we want something to change, like our job, a relationship, a family emergency or illness, and it's totally out of our control. And so what we need is to learn to keep faith while we're waiting upon the Lord.

Solomon makes this incredible statement in Ecclesiastes 3:1a, "For everything there is a season (NLT)." He gives various examples, like a time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to gain and a time to lose, and then he goes on to say in Ecclesiastes 3:11, "Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." (NLT)

Solomon is saying that God does everything right on time, right when it's supposed to happen. Our problem is that we don't understand what He's doing or why. Isaiah 55:8-9 - ¹⁸ "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. ⁹ For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (NLT)

So what happens is we spend time in God's waiting room. Let us look at the life of Abraham. Abraham was given a promise of becoming a great nation, but he had to wait 25 years for his first kid. What did Abraham do while he waited? What do we need to do while we wait? I'd like to look at and discuss with you six phases which faith moves, and these are not rigid and inflexible, but rather they are fluid and we flow in and out of each phase as God works His faith within our lives.

Desire

Genesis 12:2 - "I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others (NLT)." Abraham was around 75 years old when God gave to him this promise, this dream, that he would become a great nation. Why was it a dream? Because at this point Abraham had no children. God's promise is His desire for us. It's God's way of blessing us so that we can be a blessing to others. And so my question to you is what is God's desire for your life? After the dream comes...

Decision

Genesis 12:4a - "So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed... (NLT)" Abraham was instructed by God to leave Haran. I don't want you to take it lightly. We're talking here of Abraham's home, family, and friends. Then, he has to go to a place he knew nothing about. He had never been there. He didn't take a holiday or vacation to Canaan to get an idea about the land God is talking about. God said go and Abraham went. When God gives us His desire, He actually challenges us to act on it. It's a starting point. We have to decide whether or not we're going to act upon it or not. Having God's DESIRE without making a DECISION to act on it will just remain a DREAM. Also, every promise of God has an element of risk attached to it requiring a step of faith to achieve it.

Delay

After the decision comes a delay. Genesis 16:1a - "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar (NLT)."

Ten years have passed and still they had no children to fulfill God's promise. Abraham is just hanging out in God's waiting room. During these times of waiting, we're tempted to DOUBT and take a DETOUR. This is exactly what happened. Sarai used the cultural norms to that society and offered to Abraham her maidservant, Hagar, knowing that the child born would be theirs. God's promises or desires are rarely fulfilled immediately. There is always a time gap between the dream and its reality, and that's because God wants to grow our faith. Tell the person beside you, "You have to grow up."

Difficulty

Genesis 17:17 - Problems develop while we wait. It's where things go from bad to worse. Not only had Sarah been barren all these years, but now she's too old to have kids. But with God's promise comes God's fulfillment. Abraham and Sarah had a boy and name him "Isaac," or "laughter." Now at this point, we're tempted to think that the process is over. Probably, it's what Abraham thought as well until the next phase.

Dead End

Genesis 22:1-2 - ¹ "Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am." ² "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you (NLT)."" This was God's test of faith. Abraham had received what he had desired, a son, but now he was being asked to offer him as a sacrifice to God. God allows our dreams to seemingly die as a test of our faith. The test comes in how we'll react. Will we doubt God's love, wisdom, and purpose? Will we be angry at Him? But in reality, God is actually getting us ready for the last and final phase.

Deliverance

Genesis 22:12-13 - ¹² "Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son." ¹³ Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son (NLT)." Just so we get this straight, God is going to take us through these phases many times as we continue to seek and build His kingdom. The reason: So that we can keep growing our faith. In fact, each one of us are in one of these phases right now. To get us through these phases while in God's waiting room, there are several things that come out of what the Apostle Paul said about Abraham in his letter to the Roman church.

ROMANS 4

1. Focus on God's Ability

Our life's situation may be out of our control, but it isn't out of God's control. The key is to focus not on what we can't do, but what God can do. Paul is saying that God can either bring to life what has died, or He can create something new out of nothing. God can give life to a career, marriage, or a dream. He can bring life to something that looks and feels like it's dead. Jesus said in Luke 18:27b, "...What is impossible for people is possible with God (NLT)." Abraham DID NOT put his faith in HIMSELF or in the power of POSITIVE THINKING. Instead, He believed in God.

2. Fully Faith on God

Nothing is more reliable than God's word. It was Abraham's reliance on God's word, God's promise that kept him going when he more than likely wanted to give up. This is why we need to read and study God's word, so that when the trials and tests come, when difficult times come our way, when hope seems dead, we can still keep our faith and hold on to God's word. God specializes in turning dead situations and resurrecting what looks hopeless. Abraham became the father of many nations just as God promised. A promise is only as good as the one making the promise. And since God made the promise, the promise will come about. The next thing that we do while in God's waiting room...

3. Face the Facts

Abraham recognized they were past their childbearing years. To have a child at their age was a medical impossibility. Abraham doesn't deny these facts; instead he faces the facts with faith. Faith doesn't pretend a problem doesn't exist. Faith is facing the facts without being discouraged by them. Faith is knowing the problem but believing God is working out His good through it.

4. Face God's Answer

Notice he brought glory to God before the answered prayer, before the promise was achieved. When we thank God for something after it happens, that's gratitude, but when we thank God before it happens that's faith. When Jesus went to Lazarus' tomb, His purpose was to raise him from the dead, but before He commanded Lazarus to come forth Jesus prayed in John 11:41b-42, ⁴¹ "...Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."