

# Waiting for His Working - Hebrews 6:15

by Jon Courson

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*God makes us wait for His promises to produce endurance, perfect blessing, and to prepare us for eternity.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 12

**Topics:** "Faith And Patience", "Gods Timing"

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## Description

Jon Courson preaches about the importance of patiently enduring in faith while waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled, using the story of Abraham as an illustration. Despite the gap of time between the promise and its performance, Abraham obtained the promise by patiently enduring for 25 years. The sermon emphasizes that God's timing is perfect and that there are reasons why He asks us to wait, including producing endurance, perfecting blessings, and preparing us for eternity.

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## Transcript

Paul and Penny stand before the pastor, after anticipating this day for months. They promise they'll be faithful and true in sickness, or in health, riches or rags, until death separates them. But five years later, Paul comes home and says, 'I'm out of here, Penny. You no longer meet my needs. You no longer captivate my heart.' And he walks away from the promises he made, leaving his wife and family behind.

The Bible you hold in your hands is packed full of promises -- more than 4,000 in number. Many of you have promise boxes sitting on your kitchen table or promise books stuffed in your back pocket. But today, there are those in our midst who would say, 'My heart is broken because I don't think the Lord has kept His promise to me. I claimed the promise. I prayed it in. I wrote it on a 3x5 card and stuck it on my mirror. But nothing happened.'

Maybe, like Penny, you're in that place today. If so, Hebrews chapter 6 is a highly important text for you to consider. If you're not, certainly you're living near or linked to those who wonder why things don't work like Scripture promises.

In verse 12, we are exhorted to follow those who went before us and obtained the promise by faith. The author of Hebrews uses one man specifically as an illustration -- Abraham, the father of faith. After Abraham patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

What promise? You know the story . . . Abraham was 75 years old when, in Genesis 12, he was told to leave his home and father to go to a new land, where God would give him offspring as the stars overhead.

This must have blown Abraham's mind, for he and his wife Sarah had no children at that time. Off he goes on his journey, this father of faith, and sure enough, God gave him a son from whom an entire nation was born. But it didn't happen immediately. In fact, it took 25 years.

And in this there is a hugely important spiritual principle which needs to be part of your life: There is very often a gap of time between the promise and the performance of the promise. In Abraham's case, the gap of time was 25 years. We read that after Abraham patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

I love the New Testament because it is so wonderfully gracious in that it never once mentions the sins or failings of the Old Testament saints. And that's the way God looks at me and you under the New Covenant. 'Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more,' He says, (Hebrews 8:12). If you only read the New Testament account of Abraham, you wouldn't know the rest of the story.

For while it is true that Abraham patiently endured and obtained the promise, it is also true that when he was in his mid-80's, Sarah said, 'I know God promised you we would produce a nation. But let's be reasonable. Ten years have come and gone since we heard from Him -- and nothing's happened. I'm long past the age of child-bearing, so have relations with my handmaid, and the child produced will count as ours.' Abraham agreed to Sarah's suggestion, and a baby named Ishmael was the result. Ishmael was not the promised child -- but rather an attempt by Abraham and Sarah to try to help God fulfill His promise.

And as is always the case whenever we try to help God out, Ishmael only made matters worse, for Ishmael became the father of the Arab nation. The promised son, Isaac, would come through Sarah 13 years after Ishmael was born.

'This raises an interesting question,' you say. 'What kind of father would give a promise to his kids and then wait 25 years to fulfill it? Why does God make us wait?' Following are three reasons why God our Father tells us to patiently endure:

#### To Produce Endurance

Jeremiah was getting a bit weary of the ministry to which God called him. 'When are You going to come through, Lord?' he wondered. And God answered him by saying, 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan.' Jeremiah 12:5

In other words, 'You may think it's tough now, Jeremiah, but I know what's ahead. There are some real difficulties coming your way, some tremendous challenges heading in your direction.'

Jesus made it clear that it rains on the just and the unjust alike (Matthew 5:45). Everyone goes through storms, folks. I don't care how spiritual you might be, you're going to go through storms. Because of the fallen condition of the world in which we live, death and disease, poverty, tragedy, and heartache abound.

Consequently, God says, 'Due to the repercussions of the fall of this planet, due to the repercussions of the depravity of the race, storms are coming.' 'Change the weather,' we say. 'No,' says God, 'I'm going to change you -- through the trials you're going through right now, through the promises you're claiming but have not yet seen come to fruition.'

If someone had told me twenty years ago the things that would come down in my life, I would have said, 'I can't deal with that. I won't be a part of that. No way.' But my Father has been so good, so faithful to

prepare me all along the way through difficulties and challenges. Yes, there were promises -- but yet there were gaps between the promise and performance which tested my faith -- not because God was cruel to me, but because He cared about me. 'I'm training you for what I see is coming down the path,' He said. 'It's all part of the plan, son.'

### To Perfect Blessing

'I'm going to do exceeding abundantly above all you could ask or even think,' the Lord says (Ephesians 3:20) -- 'but it's going to take time.'

Due to his allergies, when Peter John was a baby, he required a special formula. On one of the very rare occasions I was up at night with him, he started crying as I impatiently heated his bottle. I can remember saying, 'Calm down, buddy. It's coming. You won't want it cold.' But you know what? He continued to howl because he couldn't understand what I was saying.

And the Lord whispered in my ear that night, 'Jon, that's you. I'm cooking something up; I'm getting something ready. But you're crying, 'Where is it?' because you don't understand the language of faith.'

And that's all of us. 'Wah, wah,' we cry. 'It's been 25 days or 2 years or 15 years. Where's the promise?' And all along the Father is saying, 'I'm getting it ready. I'm going to do something better than you could even imagine. But it's going to take some time.' Zacharias and Elizabeth were well beyond the years of bearing children. No doubt they had stopped asking for children decades ago. But God heard and knew He wanted not only to give them a baby, but He wanted to give them the greatest prophet who had ever lived, one who would prepare the hearts of Israel for the coming of His Son (Luke 1:16).

The same is true for you and me today. God says, 'I want to do things beyond anything you could dream or imagine. So hang on, folks, the bottle's getting warm.'

I have discovered that the longer God takes to fulfill a promise in my life, oftentimes the better it will be. 'I want a man who loves God passionately,' she says. 'Doesn't God say to delight in Him and He'll give us the desire of our hearts? Well, I'm praying for a man who loves God . . . who's 6'4", dark hair, big smile, good business head, who loves to talk about the Lord, who cares about people, a good athlete with a great sense of humor, who's sensitive and considerate, who has eyes only for me. That's what I want.' So the Lord begins shaping and developing her to make her the woman who would be attractive to such a man.

But what do we say? 'I've waited two months,' as we head off to the bar to scope out the situation. And we wonder why we end up with Tex. After Abraham patiently endured, he obtained the promise. We know the inside story. He wasn't patiently enduring perfectly. But he learned his lesson, and the promise eventually came his way.

### To Prepare Us

The language of eternity is faith. When the Lord has us ruling and reigning at His side, under His command, doing His bidding -- whatever that means in the ages to come -- He's going to need men and women like you who are not second-guessing, not doubting, not faltering.

Jesus taught about the faithful in this life who will be rulers over five and ten cities in the Kingdom (Luke 19). In other words, Jesus is saying there is a destiny far beyond what any of us know or can imagine

awaiting us in the next zillion years to come. And the language which must be fluently spoken by us if we are going to be ambassadors for Him in the realms and regions beyond is the language of faith.

She was the best teacher I ever had. We walked in to our Sophomore Spanish class and Senorita Thomas greeted us that first day saying, 'Listen, carefully. These are the last words of English you're going to hear this entire year in this class.' And that was it. From then on, everything she spoke was Spanish. It was miserable initially. But it forced us to think in a way we never would have had we been able to fall back on English.

And that's what the Father's doing. 'Kids,' He says, 'the only way you'll be prepared for what's coming is if I force you to learn the language of faith now because that's the language you'll be speaking for the next billion years to come.'

If I were God, you know what I'd do? Once a year, I'd go to every church and appear with a great display of power and fire and smoke. That would probably get everyone by for a year or so. But God knows such a thing would actually undo what He's desiring to do -- for the growth of faith would be retarded. We would depend on what we could see physically or hear audibly -- and consequently, we would not be fluent in the language of eternity.

All the promises will come about in due season. In the meantime, precious people, realize God's heating the bottle. Understand that He's forcing you to develop a whole new way of thinking and living. And remember Scripture says it was after he patiently endured that Abraham obtained the promise.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jon-courson/waiting-for-his-working-hebrews-615/>

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