

You Wait, You Win

By Joey Borja

We were weary after a daylong excursion. We were hoping for a quick, easy trip on our way home and looked forward to a good night's rest. It was then that we encountered a traffic build-up at the toll. Seeing that an adjacent lane was moving a little faster, our driver quickly maneuvered into it. Then we were stuck. After 10 minutes of waiting, we found out that the other lanes were moving and we were not! Sadly, moving to that lane wasn't the right decision. It was motivated by impatience.

That story illustrates what Rev Kenneth Hagin, Jr, one of the respected pastors in America, means when he says, "I believe that impatience is probably the number one reason that prayers go unanswered."

He continues, "Patience is the power to endure without complaining." But it can also refer to "the ability to wait for benefits." It is this second definition we want to look at.

It's not pleasant or comfortable to wait. That's especially true if, as a Christian, you are believing God for an answer to prayer or a blessing for your life. Yes, Christians do pray for things they desire to come to pass, yet they often try to make something happen on their own.

An example from the Bible is when the Israelites faced so many enemies that it seemed impossible for them to survive.

The Philistines also assembled for battle, with three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and foot soldiers as numerous as the sands of the seashore. Moving up against Israel, they encamped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven. Some Israelites, aware of the danger and of the difficult situation, hid themselves in caves, in thickets, among rocks, in caverns and in cisterns, and other Hebrews passed over the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. (*1 Samuel 13:5-7a*)

When was the last time you faced overwhelming, even crushing odds? There is pressure on every side. It's going to be a disaster this time and God isn't responding. Has He forgotten you? It's better to quit and get out now while there's time.

The Israelites felt exactly the same way. King Saul felt he had to do something.

Saul, however, held out at Gilgal, although all his followers were seized with fear. He waited seven days — the time Samuel had determined. When Samuel did not arrive at Gilgal, the men began to slip away from Saul. He then said, "*Bring me the holocaust and peace offerings,*" and he offered up the holocausts. He had just finished this offering when Samuel arrived. Saul went out to greet him, and Samuel asked him, "*What have you done?*" Saul replied: "*When I*

saw that the men were slipping away from me, since you had not come by the specified time, and with the Philistines assembled at Michmash, I said to myself, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not yet sought the Lord's blessing.' So in my anxiety I offered up the holocaust." (1 Samuel 13:7b-9)

Some Christians are like Saul. They think, "We can't just sit and wait for calamity to come. Somebody's got to move." This is where we can learn several lessons on patience.

1. Patience requires walking by faith, not by sight.

Notice Saul's reply to Samuel. "When I saw that the men were slipping away from me..." He also saw that Samuel had not made an appearance. Finally, he saw the vast number of the enemy arrayed against him. Saul was walking by sight. He forgot that God was on his side, and that God's power and support were available to him. Saul was desperate but his eyes were on his dwindling resources not on the God that could not be defeated. He focused on what the enemy might do and not what God said He would do.

"The Lord, your God, will deliver them up to you and will rout them utterly until they are annihilated. He will deliver their kings into your hand, that you may make their names perish from under the heavens. No man will be able to stand against you, till you have put an end to them." (Deuteronomy 7:23-24)

The Bible says we are to "walk by faith, not by sight or appearance" (2 Corinthians 5:7, AMP). Don't look at the circumstances; look at God's Word.

2. To be patient, you need to be calm.

Notice again Saul's answer: "So in my anxiety I offered up the holocaust." Calmness is the opposite of anxiety. When a person is anxious about a situation, he can become agitated and exasperated. His mind is constantly working, trying to figure out what to do. But the Word of God commands us, "Dismiss all anxiety from your minds" (Philippians 4:6).

How do you do that? By saying it. Say, "I resist anxiety! I refuse to be anxious!" And don't forget to do it in Jesus' name.

3. Patience calls for obedience.

Saul was at the end of his rope. He had his back to the wall and was close to despairing. Rather than wait for a priest, he himself offered the holocaust. This violated Mosaic Law. Under great stress, he took matters into his own hands and disobeyed God.

Saul should have claimed God's promise that says,

“For if you are careful to observe all these commandments, I enjoin on you, loving the Lord, you God, and following his ways exactly, and holding fast to him, the Lord will drive all these nations out of your way, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves.” (Deuteronomy 11:22)

When faced with a crucial decision, make sure that you are not driven by impatience to do what is not in accord with God’s command.

4. Patience promises victory.

Look at what Samuel declared to Saul: “You have been foolish! Had you kept the command the Lord your God gave you, the Lord would now establish your kingship in Israel as lasting.”

If Saul hadn’t given in to impatience, if he had remained steadfast, his reign would have been life-long and enduring. That meant that Saul would have withstood the Philistines and driven them back. He could have stood his ground and not be overcome. He could have won as the Lord promised.

Friend, you may be in a situation that requires you to wait patiently. You still don’t see a way out. In fact, all hell may be about to break loose in your family, your finances, your relationships, your career or even your ministry. But remember, God wants to establish you (and your kingship in Christ) as lasting. He doesn’t want you defeated. He wants you to be a winner.

Learn from what the Bible is saying. Walk by faith, not by sight. Look to the Word. Continue to believe and confess God’s promises. Don’t be anxious so you can think clearly. Obey God’s Word uncompromisingly.

Finally, receive what God says belongs to you — victory.

“Be patient and you will finally win.” (Proverbs 25:15, TLB)

Joey Borja is a Teacher of the Word in Elim Communities.