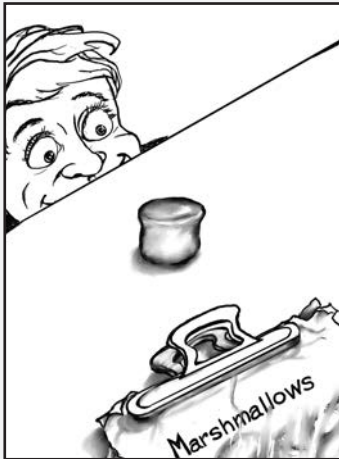


Learning to Wait



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 3



The children who waited to get the extra marshmallow became better students.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Romans 15:4, 5; Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7; Romans 5:3–5; Romans 5:6; Galatians 4:4; Daniel 9:24–27; 1 Samuel 26:12–25; 1 Samuel 16:1–13; 1 Samuel 23:17; 1 Samuel 24:20; 1 Kings 19:1–9; 1 Kings 18; Genesis 16:1–3; Numbers 20:10–12; Judges 14:1–3; Matthew 20:20, 21; Luke 9:52–56; Acts 9:1; Psalm 37:4; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Corinthians 10:13.

MEMORY VERSE: “But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is . . . being patient” (Galatians 5:22, NIV).

SCIENTISTS did an experiment with four-year-old children and marshmallows, a sweet fluffy, white candy. The scientists gave each child one marshmallow. If the children waited until the scientists came back from an errand, then they would get an extra marshmallow. What happened? Some of the kids stuffed their marshmallows into their mouths as soon as the scientists left. Other children waited until the scientists came back.

The scientists studied the children until their teenage years. The children who waited to get the extra marshmallows became better students. They also had more success in life. Why? Because they knew they needed to be patient. They learned how to wait. No wonder the Lord tells us to learn to be patient!

This week, we'll look at one of the hardest tests of all in life: learning to be patient during difficult tests and hard times.

OUR PATIENT GOD (Romans 15:4, 5)

Read Romans 15:4, 5. What Bible truth do these verses teach us?

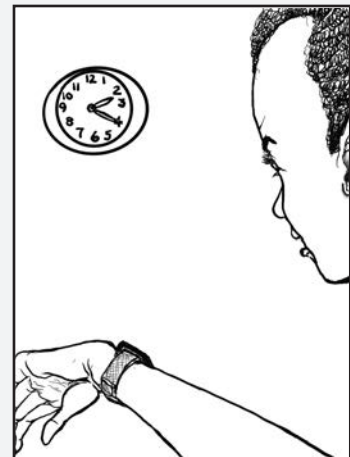
Most of us are not very patient about waiting for the things that we really want. We also don't like to wait for things we've been promised and don't have. We often are only happy when we get what we've been waiting for. But we often don't get what we want when we want it. So, we often feel upset and angry. When we feel this way, we will have trouble feeling at peace with God or trusting in Him.

Waiting can be painful. One of the words in the sentence "be willing to wait" (NLV) in Psalm 37:7 comes from a Hebrew word that can be written as "to feel much pain," "to shake," "to be hurt," "to be sad." Learning to be patient is not easy. Sometimes the experience of learning to be patient can make us feel as if we are taking the hardest test in our life.

Read Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7; and Romans 5:3–5. What do these verses tell us? What does our being patient lead to?

While we wait, we can do one of two things. We can think about the things we are waiting for. Or we can think about the One who holds those things in His hands. What makes our waiting a success? Does waiting a long time make us better? No, it is trust. If we trust the Lord, then we will put our lives in His hands. If we give our lives to Jesus, then we can trust that He will do what's best for us **when** it is best for us, no matter how hard it is for us to believe.

What things are you waiting for? How long have you been waiting? How can you learn to give everything to God and trust in Him? Pray and ask God to give you a heart filled with patient faith and trust in Him.



What makes our waiting a success? Is it how long we must wait?

THE RIGHT TIME (Romans 5:6)

Read Romans 5:6 and Galatians 4:4. What do these things tell us about when God will do things?

In these verses, Paul tells us that Jesus came to die for us at just the right time. But Paul does not tell us **why** it was the right time. It's very easy to read Romans 5:6 and Galatians 4:4 and wonder, "Why did Jesus wait for thousands of years to come to this earth to fight against sin? Didn't everyone in heaven understand that sin was a very bad thing long before Jesus came here?" We also may ask why Jesus waits to come the second time. We also may ask, "Why does the Lord wait so long to answer my prayers?"

Think about the 70-week time message about the future in Daniel 9:24–27. This special time message shows us that Jesus is the Savior. How long were the 70 weeks in real time? What does this answer tell you about why we must learn to wait for God to do things when He is ready, even if we must wait a long time?



"Why does the Lord wait so long to answer my prayers?"

There are many important reasons why we must wait for God to do things when He is ready. We will look at six spiritual reasons. (1) Waiting can help us remove our attention from "things" and put it back on God Himself. (2) Waiting allows us to understand better what is in our hearts. (3) Waiting teaches us to be patient. (4) Waiting helps us to grow stronger in faith. (5) Waiting gives God time to do other things for us that He promised. (6) We may never know the reason we must wait. So, we must learn to live by faith. Can you think of any other reasons for why we must sometimes wait?

What Bible examples can you find of times when God does things only when He's ready? What can you learn from these examples that will help you trust that God will do things for you at the right time? (Think about Abraham and Sarah and the promise of a son.) Is there something you want so much, and you've prayed about it a long time? Ask yourself, "Am I doing anything to cause a delay to my prayer being answered?" If yes, what do you feel you are doing to cause the delay?

DAVID: AN EXAMPLE OF WAITING (1 Samuel 26:12–25)

In 1 Samuel 16:1–13, Samuel puts oil on David when he is a boy to show that David will be Israel's future king. But David must wait a long time before he becomes king. David must have felt, at times, that he was suffering a lot by having to wait for so long.

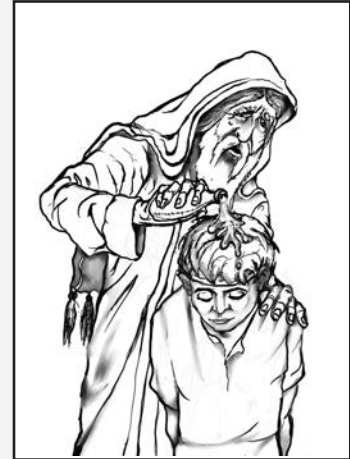
Look at some of David's experiences before he became king. First, David is asked to play music to help King Saul feel better (1 Samuel 16). Later, David becomes Israel's hero when he kills Goliath (1 Samuel 17). David also spends many years running away from King Saul, who tries to kill him. Both Saul and his son Jonathan know that David will be the next king (1 Samuel 23:17; 1 Samuel 24:20). David doesn't do anything to make himself king. When Saul tries to kill David, David cuts a piece of cloth off the king's clothes. Then David feels bad about what he did. He wishes he never did it (1 Samuel 24:5–7). Again, when Saul tries to kill David, David gets another chance to kill Saul. But David refuses to kill him (1 Samuel 26:7–11).

Why does David refuse to kill Saul? What does David's decision teach us about the way God works out His plans for our lives? Read 1 Samuel 26:1–11 for the answers.

How does David's decision not to kill Saul change Saul's heart? What does this story teach us about why we should be patient and wait for God to work in our lives when He is ready? Read 1 Samuel 26:12–25 for the answers.

David's story about becoming king teaches us this Bible truth: don't grab what God hasn't given you. Wait. God's gifts are always best when we wait for Him to give them to us. Maybe we will need to wait for a very long time. A bean sprout can grow fast, in just a few hours. But an oak tree will take many years to grow. When the strong winds come, the tree will not blow over or break.

David had many good reasons to kill Saul. (Samuel told David he was going to be Israel's future king. Also, King Saul was very evil.) But David does not kill Saul. David's behavior shows his faith in God. What does his example teach you about why you must be patient?



Samuel puts oil on David when he is a boy to show that David will be Israel's future king.

ELIJAH: A LESSON ABOUT NOT RUSHING (1 Kings 19:1–9)



“Elijah went into a cave and spent the night”
(1 Kings 19:9, ERV).

The big contest between God and Baal happened on top of the high hill named Mount Carmel. Now it was over (1 Kings 18). Fire came down from heaven. All the people announced that the Lord was the true God. Elijah commanded the people to kill all who worshiped Baal. The Baal worshipers included false teachers and priests, or spiritual leaders. Elijah showed the people that God was all-powerful and the only One they should worship. After all these things, you’d think that Elijah is very strong in faith, right? But Elijah hears something that scares him so much that he wants to die. Read the rest of the story in 1 Kings 19:1–9. What does Elijah do next? He runs. “Elijah went into a cave and spent the night. Then the LORD said to him, ‘Elijah, why are you here?’ ” (1 Kings 19:9, ERV). God’s question shows us that Elijah is in the wrong place. Fear will do that to us.

After God’s powerful miracle on top of Mount Carmel, Elijah should be filled with faith and trust. But he isn’t. He runs in fear for his life. What lesson can we learn from this bad example?

Elijah’s story shows us an important spiritual truth. When we rush, we can very easily end up in the wrong place. Elijah’s fear caused him to get so upset that he ran a long way to the desert. Elijah wished he never was born. Fear is only one thing that can cause us to run away from God’s plan for us. What are some other things that make us run away?

Read these verses: Genesis 16:1–3; Numbers 20:10–12; Judges 14:1–3; Matthew 20:20, 21; Luke 9:52–56; and Acts 9:1. What things caused the people in these verses to run away from God’s plan for their lives?

Often, anger causes us to hurry to get what we want. We may run ahead of God and find ourselves in a place where He didn’t lead us. So, we must learn to trust God and have faith in His mercy. Our God is good. He loves us and wants what’s best for us. His plan for our lives doesn’t happen overnight. Faith is a gift. We must take care of this precious gift.

“BE HAPPY IN THE LORD” (Psalm 37:4, NLV)

“Enjoy serving the LORD, and he will give you whatever you ask for” (Psalm 37:4, ERV).

Psalm 37:4 is a wonderful promise. Try to make a picture in your mind of getting everything you always wanted. There is a secret to getting everything you want. You must be happy in the Lord. What does it mean to be happy in the Lord and to enjoy serving Him?

Read Psalm 37:1–11. The reason that David wrote Psalm 37 is a little surprising. David writes about being around people who work against God and against him. When people work against us, we may get angry. Or we may want to prove we are right and that they are wrong. But David gives us different advice.

Read the verses below. In each of the verses, what does David tell God’s people to do?

Psalm 37:1 _____

Psalm 37:5 _____

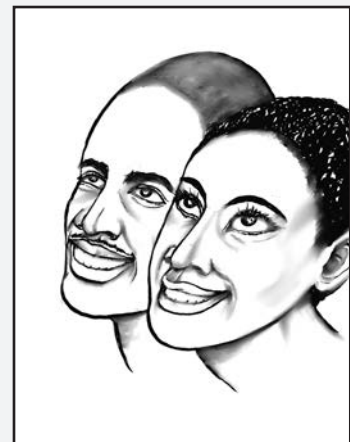
Psalm 37:7 _____

Psalm 37:8 _____

Now read Psalm 37:4 again. How do the verses you just read above help you understand David when he tells us to “be happy in the Lord” (Psalm 37:4, NLV)?

As we see in the verses above, David tells us again and again, in different ways to trust God. Trust God to act. Don’t let your troubles upset you because God is your God. Right now, He works for you. You don’t have to try to hurry and fix things yourself. Your Father in heaven is in control. Trust Him. Trust Him completely.

To be happy in God means that we have perfect trust in God. Nothing can upset us or destroy our peace. God is here and at work for us. So, we can smile. We can praise Him, because no one is smarter than our God! When we can learn to trust God this much, then we really will get what we wish for. We will get what our loving Father wants to give us. He will give it to us at the best time, too.



**We can smile.
We can praise Him,
because no one is smarter
than our God!**

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Anointing of David,” pages 637–642, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“I don’t know what God wants me to learn from my suffering. But God knows what is best. I will give Him my body, my spirit, and my life. He is the One who made me. He will never disappoint me. ‘But I am not ashamed, because I know the one [God] I have put my trust in. And I am sure that he is able to protect what I have put into his care until that Day [the Second Coming]’ (2 Timothy 1:12, [ERV]). What if we train ourselves to show more faith, love, and to be more patient? Then we will have more perfect trust in our Father in heaven. I know we will have more peace and joy, day by day, in all our tests in this life.

“The Lord is not pleased when we worry so much that we let go of our faith in Jesus. We need to learn to watch and wait in quiet hope for Him. We keep looking for some sign as proof of our faith. We think that we must feel very deeply to show that we have faith. But faith is not a feeling.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 242, adapted.



“We need to learn to watch and wait in quiet hope for Him.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Jesus does not give us any test that is so hard that we will fail (1 Corinthians 10:13). How can knowing this Bible truth help us while we wait for Him to keep His promises?
- ② Ask people in class to share their personal stories about what it means to patiently wait. What were their fears and joys as they waited? How did they stay strong in faith? What promises helped them at that time?
- ③ What can you do as a church or a class to help other people in their suffering as they wait for God to help them?
- ④ What part does prayer have in making us patient? Find someone who will pray with you. Ask God to send the Holy Spirit to help you to become more patient.

PART 11: THE FINAL ATTACK

Two weeks before Father's baptism, he got angry for no reason after a Bible study with some friends in his home. Father announced he was going to sleep that night in the living room. The night was darker than normal. Then the electricity went off in the neighborhood. All the houses and streets were very dark.

At about 1:00 A.M., Junior woke up. He heard someone screaming that Father wasn't going to be baptized. Junior felt scared. He didn't know what to do. So, he stayed in his room and waited. He heard someone say again that Father wasn't going to be baptized.

Then someone entered Junior's room. Father stood there.

"Please, Son, pray with me," Father said. "The evil spirits are attacking me again."

Soon, Mother came into Junior's room. "What are you two doing?" When she heard the screams coming from the living room, she knelt and prayed. Now she invited Father and Junior to join her in asking Jesus to chase away the evil spirits.

After several minutes of prayer in the dark room, Mother said that they should step outside in the moonlight.

When they stepped outside, Father said he was thirsty. Junior volunteered to go back inside and get Father a glass of water. In the kitchen, Junior saw strange spots on the floor. He asked Mother to come look at them. Junior asked, "What are they?" Mother looked at the floor. "That's hair!" she said.

Back outside, Junior and Mother looked carefully at Father. Hair was missing from his head. He looked as if someone had torn out chunks of his hair.

Father felt the bald spots on top of his head. "I'll need to shave my head," he said. "I don't care if I'm bald."

On Sabbath morning, Father was very weak after the nighttime attack by the evil spirits. He felt as if someone had beaten him up. Father decided to stay at home that Sabbath and pray.

After Mother and Junior left for church, Father prayed, "Jesus, don't let the evil spirits control my body. Please be close to me. I don't want to be filled with demons anymore."

Father opened his Bible and read Psalm 37:5, "Depend on the LORD. Trust in him, and he will help you" (ERV).

Father understood that Jesus was talking to him from the Bible. Jesus told Father not to be afraid. Jesus was going to keep him safe. Evil spirits never filled Father again after that Friday night. But Father continued to hear them talk.

Your 13th Sabbath Offering will help build eight churches in South America. Four of these churches will be built in Brazil, where Father (Eduardo Ferreira dos Santos) and his family live.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Father opened his Bible and read Psalm 37:5, "Depend on the LORD. Trust in him, and he will help you" (ERV).