

Daily devotional, February 26, 2021 Patience Really is a Virtue

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Psalm 27:14 (NIV)

It seems like waiting is never easy. As I thought about that concept, I was reminded of the little girl, Veruca in Willy Wonka’s Chocolate factory who says, “I want it now!” referring to a certain confection which is withheld by Mr. Wonka. Her father, who has no idea how to teach a child patience, instantly reaches for his checkbook. “Name your price,” he says to Mr. Wonka, who refuses to sell the desired piece of candy. As a result, Veruca proceeds to throw a serious tantrum.

Our present culture is hell-bent toward speed. We never seem to go fast enough for the people in the car behind us. We finish other people’s sentences. Goods and services are produced so quickly nowadays that by and large the quality has suffered greatly compared to the past. Products just do not last as long anymore, mostly due to poor quality of materials, and the rushed process of supplying them. And things that fly off an assembly line don’t have the personal touch of hand-made goods. But if the wait is too long, our thought pattern is, to move on.

We are impatient people. We expect a rapid response, a quick fix, a fast delivery. If we have to wait more than a few minutes on the phone, we hang up. If the red light doesn’t turn green pretty soon, we’re grumbling. If our head cold doesn’t go away in one day, we’re going to go to work anyway. And on and on it goes. Our unwillingness to wait has become legendary in our society.

When God announced to Abram that He would make a great nation from him, and that the world would be blessed by Abram’s lineage, I wonder what Abram thought in terms of a date? When could he mark it in his calendar? How patient was he with God’s word?

The first of several portions of God’s promise to Abram would be fulfilled when he had his first son. After about ten years of waiting, Abram had had enough. We know Abram believed God, but he was not perfect. At this point he felt it was up to him to make things happen. Since his wife was barren, they agreed to their own plan to “help” God get it done. Abram had relations with Sarai’s handmaid, Hagar, and Ishmael was born. Problem solved, right? Wrong.

When Isaac did appear through Sarai in God’s planned timing, the fruit of that impatient decision started a contentious relationship between Isaac and his brother Ishmael and his descendants that continues to this day. When we are willing to wait for something it’s because we believe it will actually occur, and it is valuable enough for us to yield, especially when it is out of our control.

Lord, help me to trust in your plan and to let go of the urge to control my own life. Because you are all good, all wise and all loving, I can put my trust fully in you. Help me to wait with hope and eager expectation, knowing that you are always with me and working my situation out for good. Lord, help me to trust in your plan and to let go of the urge to control my own life. Because you are all good, all wise and all loving, I can put my trust fully in you. In Christ’s name, I pray. Amen.