

How Patient are you? June 12, 2016

Our generation is one that seeks instant gratification for what we want.

Who doesn't look for the shortest line in the check-out counters at a shopping center? I have at times moved from one line to another only to find that the longer ones moved faster than my hopping from one to another. It is frustrating to get in a short line only to find out that there are problems with an item and the clerk is waiting for a manager who then has to go and find the item on the rack to check a price and usually there is more than one problem so the wait is prolonged. Meanwhile the longer lines are moving right along smoothly and if I had only been patient I would have been on my way much quicker than trying to find a short cut. Some things in life require patience and hard work to get the desired outcome. Weeds grow without effort on our part; roses need constant attention.

How many young people rush into relationships because they don't want to take the time to court, find out facts about the family that they are considering being a part of, won't consider the option of waiting for marriage for sexual gratification, and end up in either moving on to new partners or if the marriage takes place, in a divorce court within a few years or sooner? Patience is a virtue and cultivating a relationship with God takes time and diligence in seeking to gain the benefits and wisdom that He offers to those who desire to know Him and to follow his example.

In Isaiah 40:27, the prophet spoke about the people of Israel making comments that God was not paying attention to them and He didn't care if they were treated unjustly. He asked them how they could say that when The LORD is the eternal God, Creator of the earth. He never gets weary or tired; His wisdom cannot be measured. He gives strength to those who are weary. Even young people get tired, then stumble and fall. "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as an eagle; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (KJV)

If you look at the examples of people who refused to trust in the Lord and went ahead depending on their own understanding without consulting the Lord, you will find many instances where the people suffered severe consequences by not consulting the Lord on various matters.

In Joshua chapter 9, word of the Israelites conquering city after city spread throughout the nearby regions. God had given the army of Israel victory after victory and the inhabitants of the regions whereby Joshua was planning attacks were frightened. The Gibeonites decided that they would have to win the battle another way rather than fighting for they would not win at warfare. They disguised their identity by wearing old worn out sandals, they saddled their donkeys with worn out bags and found some well-worn wineskins that had cracked and had been sewn back together. They even used some

dry and crumbly bread to help convince the Israelite leaders that they were from a far away country and had come to make a peace treaty with Joshua. At first the Israelites were a bit skeptical so they told the tricksters that they would not make a peace treaty with them because they didn't know but what they might be nearby people who they were planning to attack. The Gibeonites answered that if they could obtain a peace treaty from the Israelites, they would be servants to them. The Israelite leaders asked them where they had come from and the men answered that they came from a far country and upon saying this; they produced the evidence of the worn out items and the moldy bread claiming that everything had been new when they began their journey. They claimed that they had heard the news of how God was handing over the lands to the Israelites and they just wanted to be friends with them. They claimed that their people sent them on a journey to make peace with Joshua so that no harm would ever come to them. They were willing to be servants to the Israelites in exchange for sparing their lives. In verse 14, the leaders of Israel tried some of the food and sure enough the expiration date had long ago expired.

They didn't ask the Lord if they should make a peace treaty with these people; they just took a vote among themselves and decided that there would be no harm done by accommodating these people who were asking for such a small favor. It was probably a boost in the arm to hear all the success stories that these men relayed about the victories that had been won and how that these people wanted to make friends with them.

So Joshua made a peace treaty with the men and promised that their people would be spared from fighting battles with them. Israel's leaders promised that they would not break the peace treaty and everyone seemed to be happy with the outcome. Two days later, the Israelites discovered that these men actually were the neighbors that they had planned on attacking in the near future. The Israelites complained about Joshua and the leaders who had made this agreement, but it was too late to back out of the covenant. The leaders reminded them that they had promised not to destroy them and God would punish the Israelites if they went back on their word. Joshua confronted them and asked why they used trickery and they replied that they knew the commandment of the Lord was to destroy the inhabitants and they wanted their lives to be spared so they thought up a scheme to bring about a peace treaty. Joshua decided that the inhabitants of those areas would be woodcutters and water carriers for the priests of Israel and much aggravation was caused by these heathen people who tricked Joshua into signing an agreement that wasn't what God had commanded the Israelites to do.

In the book of Esther, there is a beautiful story of Esther, a Jewish queen who God used to bring salvation to his people. Esther was adopted by her cousin, Mordecai, a Jew who served in the king's court. The king had a banquet and called for Queen Vashti to make an appearance so he could show her off before the people. The queen decided against

showing up and it caused the king to be ashamed. Therefore she was banished from the palace and another queen was chosen. Esther was an obedient, humble girl who took counsel from her cousin and who also listened to those who were in charge of the contestants. Because of her submission to authority she ultimately was chosen to be crowned queen. Esther had been told to keep silent about the fact that she was a Jew and she listened to the counsel of her cousin. In the palace there was a man named Haman, a self-centered and conceited advisor who was the king's right hand man. Haman was so high minded that he desired everyone to bow to him whenever those in lower positions were in his presence. Mordecai, the Jew, refused to bow before him for he worshipped God only. Because of this Haman spoke to the king and lied about the Jews saying that they refused to obey the king's orders. A decree was sent out over the land that the Jews were to be killed and their property was to be seized on a certain day. Haman was overjoyed that his wishes would be carried out and he personally wanted to hang Mordecai so he had a 75 foot tower built and he made plans to ask the king to hang Mordecai on it.

Mordecai sent a messenger to Esther explaining the decree concerning the destruction of her people and asking Esther to go to the king and beg for mercy for the Jews. When the messenger delivered the message from her cousin, Esther told him that there was a law that anyone who approached the king without being summoned was in danger of being put to death. She had not been summoned for the last 30 days and if she did what he had asked of her, her life was in danger unless the king held out the golden scepter to her. Mordecai sent back word to her that her life would not be spared just because she was the queen. She must do something to save her people and perhaps God had ordained her to be queen for such a time as this.

Esther sent word for all the Jews to petition God for her through praying and fasting for three days and she and her servants would do the same. After that time, she would go to the king and if she perished, then she perished. Mordecai did what Esther asked him to and she and her servants also spent the time before the Lord asking for help.

She then made a plan. After 3 days, she dressed in her royal robes and went before the king and he held out the golden scepter to her. He asked what she wanted from him for he would give her half of his kingdom if she desired it. She simply asked that the king and Haman attend a dinner that she would prepare for them later that day. The king sent for Haman and they attended the dinner with Queen Esther. The king asked again what she was requesting from him. She simply asked that if he really cared for her and was willing to listen to her request, she would like the king and Haman to come again the next day to another dinner and she would tell the king what was on her heart at that time. Haman was feeling great as he left the palace yet when he saw Mordecai he cringed and only

The keys to having your prayers answered are found in the word of God. The keys are there to open the door (Jesus Christ) to the throne of God. We must come in the way that is shown by Jesus Christ. We must go through the door which is Jesus Christ. If anyone tries to climb in any other way, he is like a thief and a robber. John 10:1.

Satan hates it when people find the keys in Scripture to having their prayers answered. You only find them as you search for them, ask God to reveal them to you and knock on the door of heaven through Jesus Christ. Satan doesn't care if people have religion; in fact he is happy with that for he sends out wolves in sheep's clothing to deceive people and to destroy their faith. What he hates is when we put on the whole armor of God, we forsake our sins and die out to the carnal nature and yield the members of our bodies wholly and completely to the LORD! When people recognize his tricks of lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of Life and they say "Get behind me Satan for it is written", he has to flee. That doesn't make him happy! It brings victory in our lives and glory to Jesus Christ. I pray that Christians everywhere will get serious with living a clean and holy life.

thought of murdering the man who refused to bow to him but he didn't say anything to Mordecai. He bragged to his family about all that he was gaining in the eyes of the king and he was the only one invited to the dinner that Queen Esther had that day. Yet the Lord troubled the king that night and he couldn't sleep. He had a servant read a book of records to him and in the book, he was reminded that Mordecai had saved his life and he had not honored him for the deed. Haman had entered the palace intending to ask the king to allow him to hang Mordecai on the tower he had built. As he was waiting, the king asked who was outside his room and upon learning that it was Haman; he asked that he be brought into the room. Without asking Haman what his purpose was in coming to the palace, the king proceeded to ask what should be done for a person the king desired to honor. Haman, thinking that the king was speaking about him, said that the person should wear a nice robe of the king and to be put on one of the king's horses with a fancy headdress and someone should lead them through the streets shouting, "This is a man that the king wishes to honor." The king told him to do all of those things for Mordecai, the Jew who was at the palace gate. Haman was devastated but he obeyed the king's command. After the deed was done, he dropped Mordecai off at the palace gate and hung his head in shame and hurried home. When he got home and reported what had taken place, his wife told him that his troubles were just beginning. She warned him that he would be a ruined man. As she was still speaking, the king's servants came and quickly took Haman to the dinner that Esther had prepared.

While they were dining the king once again asked Esther what her request was and he was willing to give her even half of his kingdom. She replied simply, "Your Majesty, if you really care for me and are willing to help, you can save me and my people. That is what I really want because a reward has been offered to anyone who kills my people. Your Majesty, if we were merely going to be sold as slaves, I would not have bothered you."

The king asked who would dare to do such a thing. The queen answered that the evil Haman had plotted the scheme against the Jews. Haman was terrified as he looked first at the king and then at Esther. The king was so angry that he left the dinner and went outside to the garden. Haman realized that the king had already decided his fate and he begged Esther to spare his life. Esther had reclined and Haman knelt to beg for his life just as the king reentered the room. He accused Haman of trying to attack the queen in his own palace. His servants came in and informed the king that Haman had built a 75 foot tower that he intended to hang Mordecai on even though Mordecai had been the one who saved the king's life. The king ordered Haman to be hung on his own gallows. All of Haman's possessions were given to Esther and when the king learned that Mordecai was the queen's cousin, he was given a high position in the palace. The decree was altered so

the Jews would be able to defend themselves, but no one attacked them. God had given Esther the wisdom and knowledge of how to accomplish his plan when she waited on him. By waiting on God's time, wonderful blessings are bestowed on his people. Mary and Martha saw their brother, Lazarus brought back to life after being in the tomb for four days. This miracle was far above the request that had been made for Jesus to come and heal him. Many people believed on Jesus Christ because of this event. The disciples were told to wait for the Holy Spirit in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. They obeyed and the Holy Spirit filled them with power and holy boldness and the tongues that they spoke glorified God so that Jews from all different regions recognized that something marvelous and outstanding had taken place for they heard Jews from Jerusalem speak in their native languages. Our timing is not God's timing and our thoughts are not his thoughts and our ways are not his ways. Isaiah 55:8

Waiting on the Lord doesn't mean that we passively sit by and wait for him to bring a miracle into our lives. It means trusting and believing that God will move on our behalf and often times, He uses people to bring about results for his glory.

Slothful people who waste their resources and then find themselves in financial distress or in other stressful situations cannot expect God to shower down financial blessings or get them out of messes that they have deliberately got themselves into. God's word states that we will reap what we sow. God doesn't overlook people's bad habits. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:13, it admonishes you to do everything you can to stand and God will see that you stand firm. We are to put the whole armor of God on, we are to pray and make our requests to God and then listen to his voice and He will guide our footsteps. He doesn't rescue us from laziness, foolish choices that we make without asking for guidance, or deliver us from disobedience to his known will for our lives. Sometimes like Joshua learned, it is much better to ask for guidance before the decision is made rather than trying to get delivered from our foolish choices after the deed is done.

With every temptation, he makes a way of escape. 1 Corinthians 10:13. If you move ahead of God, there will be consequences. God is merciful and He will hear the sincere prayer from a heart, but it is wise to consult him before we make decisions. I have learned the hard way that my life goes better if I ask his will before I jump to act on a situation. Time and energy has been wasted when I've tried to handle situations on my own and the outcome was not always favorable or to my liking. When God guides and directs, things happen that totally amazes me and God gets the praise and glory of acting on our behalf. We ask God to bless America, yet the formula is there to get God to act on our requests. "If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray; and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14.