

## God's Timing - Lesson Outline

The first thing we need to understand is that God's timing is different than ours.

Turn to the book of [Isaiah, Chapter 55](#).

In it God is explaining some of the things He has done for man.

He is encouraging man to turn from his evil ways and to seek after Him.

Look at [verses 8 and 9](#). This is God speaking -

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (NIV)*

God's way of doing things is much different than our ways.

That includes His timing.

Consider [2 Peter 3:8-9](#) -

*8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (NIV)*

As Creator of the Universe, God created time so He is not bound by it.

Instead He works on a higher level.

He doesn't get hung up on it like we do.

Based on [verse 8](#) I would say time doesn't work for Him the way it does for us.

When we are having a slow day at work we often say, "this day is taking forever to go by!" but I don't think that's what this verse means.

I think it means they are literally interchangeable.

God is not slack concerning His promises.

In the verses above this passage, Peter is talking about people he calls scoffers who will doubt whether Jesus is coming back.

He is reminding them that Jesus is patient and is giving many a chance to come to repentance.

I think His integrity regarding keeping His promise about Christ coming back mentioned here applies to all His promises.

If He made a promise, you can bank on it.

Just because He hasn't answered yet, doesn't mean He won't and it doesn't mean He can't.

His supposed slowness is really just Him doing it in His time frame, not ours.

A word of caution - When we think He is not doing it in the right time frame, we might be trying to hold God to our standards.

That's backwards.

We are bound by His time frame.

He is never bound by ours.

It's okay to explain there is a time frame involved, such as needing money to pay a utility bill that will be due on a specific date, but understand that does not mean He must respond immediately..

It means you have discussed the entire situation with Him and are now putting it all in His hands to handle.

If He chooses not to answer your prayer, trust that He has a good reason.

We are supposed to, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* - [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) (NIV)

I like how the [KJV](#) says [verse 6](#):

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

This means we trust His timing and the way He does things, even when we don't understand.

Instead, we submit ourselves to Him, trust Him to do it right.

When we do this, He directs our paths and makes them straight.

Because we are only humans we cannot understand the ways of God.

We understand some, but not all. Or many, really.

This means that sometimes when we ask God for something, we don't always understand why it takes a very long time for Him to answer our prayer.

This does not mean He has not heard us.

[1 John 5:14](#) tells us He hears every single one of our prayers.

It says:

*14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: (NIV)*

[Psalm 34:17](#) tells us - *The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. (NIV)*

What do we do when we aren't getting an answer?

We do 2 things.

We wait!

We keep praying!

No matter how long it takes.

If it takes 20 or 30 years, it takes 20 or 30 years.

Remember - prayer requests are not about our selfish desires.

Yes, we pray about things we need, and even about what we want.

But, our will and wants are secondary to God's

We are praying about things according to God's will.

This means we want things to go the way God wants them to go.

If we are praying for things to go the way God wants them, we should want the timing to go the way God wants it to go, too.

Even if it's vastly different than ours.

Even if we don't understand why He's taking so long to answer.

Part of having faith that God will answer our prayers is having faith He will do it at just the right time in just the right way.

The truth is, things won't happen until God decides it's time so instead of wasting your time worrying, instead trust His timing.

Sometimes, when it is taking much longer than we want, we just have to grab hold of our faith and hang on while we wait.

An encouraging passage comes from [Psalm 27:12-14](#)

It says -

*I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (NIV)*

Don't be tempted to get ahead of God!

Wait for Him to act.

If you act, you might mess it up and it might make it take longer.

There are many examples in Scripture of people getting ahead of God and messing things up.

Here's one of them:

In [Genesis Chapter 15](#), God promised Abram He would have a child.

His wife, Sarai (later renamed Sarah) got tired of waiting for a child so she sent her husband, Abram (later renamed Abraham) in to her handmaid, Hagar. ([chapter 16](#))

Hagar conceived and bore Ishmael.

Lots of hard and unhappy things came about as a result of that.

Hagar taunted Sarai because she was pregnant but Sarai was barren.

(Producing children was a very important thing back then. Barren women were looked down on and often treated unkindly)

Sarai got mad at Abram for getting Hagar pregnant, even though it was her idea.

Sarai treated Hagar so badly she ran away.

There was a lot more drama created by this situation.

Don't make the mistake Sarah did!

If God is calling you to wait, then you wait!

Be patient and trust that He knows what He's doing and that when the time is right, He will make it happen.

(And just so you know, several years later, in [Genesis chapter 21](#), God does bless Sarah with a child.)

If you are still praying about something with no answer, there is a reason why it hasn't happened yet.

Here are a few possibilities.

Which one applies to your situation may vary and they may vary in amounts, but these are some of the general possibilities..

He is still working behind the scenes, lining things up.

We may not always see that He is working, but He is.

He knows you need to be ready so He is working on you.

He wants to grow you more before it happens.

He wants to shape you so you will be in the proper mental, physical, spiritual, and/or emotional place to be ready.

He wants to grow other people it involves before it happens.

He wants to shape them so they will be in the proper mental, physical, spiritual, and/or emotional place to be ready..

He's waiting on you to do your part.

For example

If you are praying to lose weight, you need to start exercising.

You need to work on a healthier diet.

You can't just sit on the couch eating cookies all day and expect the weight to disappear!

Sometimes He's waiting on you to do something specific.

He might be waiting on you to obey Him concerning something He's spoken to you about.

He might be calling you to believe He can and will

Doubting He can or will can hinder our prayers and delay the answer.

Understand that sometimes we may never have the privilege of seeing the prayer answered.

That's okay. What's important is that God take care of it, not that we see it.

If you are in A Season of Waiting

Understand this is not idle time where you just sit and wait.

It's a time of preparation

You can spend this time working-

On yourself

Prayerfully submitting bad habits to the Lord

On your faith

Praying extra about the situation

Praying extra about you and what you need to improve on so you will be ready when the answer comes

Taking the necessary steps to put yourself where you need to be for it to happen (going to school, looking for a new job, apartment, putting back extra money, etc.)

You can also spend this time studying Scripture

Whether we are in a season of waiting or just going along in life, we are supposed to be reading Scripture, praying, and growing.

This doesn't change or stop just because we are waiting on something to happen or change.

The truth is, we are almost constantly waiting on things to happen.

If we stopped trying just because we were waiting on something to happen, our lives would come to a stand still!

As hard as it may sometimes be, I want to encourage you to trust God's timing and to wait well.

Remember, if God is waiting, there is a reason.

He is working it out for your good and His glory, so just be patient, rest in Him, and trust that not only does

He know what He's doing, His timing is perfect.

[Psalm 62:5](#) - *Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him.*

Rest in the sufficiency of His grace and trust that He will make it happen when it's time.

He's an on-time God!

This week's homework -

Read [Isaiah 40:28-31](#)

Examine your life. Are you waiting on a situation to change or be resolved?

Are you fully trusting God to take care of it and sort it out for you?

Is there something in your life you should submit to Him and ask Him to change?

This week's memory verse:

[Romans 8:28](#)

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NIV)*