God doesn't ask us to grasp His providential power; He only asks us to trust it. While God may be silent, we must not demand an answer. God's omnipotence does not obligate Him to answer our "why's." Job never received a why; he received a sermon on God's power. We may never get closure, an answer, or a reason, but we still must trust that God has everything under control (James 5:7-11).

The Doctor is qualified to craft a plan for you. Just wait on Him; He is working hard for your benefit.

Believing is not Seeing.

We cannot see anything that happens behind the walls of the front desk. This does not mean the Doctor is sitting idly. Most only believe if they see, few believe without having to see. Christians with spiritual vision are uplifted in Scripture (1 Peter 1:8).

We walk by faith without having to see (2 Corinthians 5:7). We can have true vision without knowing about God's detailed plan for our future. This attitude manifests a trusting heart. When the Hebrew Christians were undergoing persecution, the author reminded them that they would achieve their desired result, even though they could not see (Hebrews 10:36-38). It was their faith that would keep them spiritually alive. We cannot let a lack of sight lead to a lack of vision.

We Will Be Thankful That We Waited.

Waiting is hard but when the Doctor calls us back, we become excited. God promises to grant our requests and moaning's, but in His time. His omniscience makes us appreciate His gifts, for we can be assured that when they are given to us, it is the appropriate time. Why can we be thankful God waited to grant us our requests?

- Perhaps we were not mature at the present time.
- Maybe God saved us from heartache by having us wait.
- It could have been that good things may have happened, but by waiting, God wanted us to have something even better.
- Possibly, God knew we would be harmed spiritually by granting our requests at the present time.

We can be thankful God controls the clock and knows all things.

Isaiah wrote "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). When we wait on God there is:

Refreshment. Isaiah said they would "renew their strength." Waiting on God causes us to be dependent upon Him. During the waiting period, we become stronger because we learn to lean on the One who has all strength (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Resolution. Cameras with higher resolution create better vision. Waiting on God leads to better visional resolution. Isaiah said, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles." Eagles fly high and therefore can see with clearer. Often, it is not until later that we understand why God waited to answer our prayers. We often must be removed far from situations to ultimately understand God's plan in them (Genesis 45:5-9; 50:20). [8] God provides us with better vision when we wait. When we look at past situations with divine glasses we can understand God's plan.

Resilience. Isaiah said these people would "run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." After we wait, we learn from the past and when we walk through shadows and valleys, we can run with confidence, walk with certainty, and endure until the end.

Refusal to wait makes ourselves the timekeepers instead of the One who made time. We take the place of God instead of praying for His will to be done (Matthew 6:10). God is waiting on you to wait on Him effectively. How is your waiting room visit going?

Endnotes

[1]Title comes from: https://www.bufordcoc.com/waiting-on-god/
[2]https://patientpoint.com/blog/average-patient-wait-time-today/
[3]Michael Hodgin, 1001 Humourous Illustrations For Public Speaking, Zondervan, 1994, p. 256.
[4]https://libertycofc.org/practicing-patience/
[5]https://churchofchristarticles.com/decisions-mistakes/
[6]https://pastorlife.com/in-gods-waiting-room/
[7]https://hotsermons.com/sermon-illustrations/sermon-illustrations-patience.html
[8]Kerry Duke, Branson Lectureship, 2026.



SITTING IN GOD'S WAITING ROOM

NOAH OLSON

Waiting rooms[1] are not the most enjoyable places to be. Chairs, old magazines, small televisions, and maybe a snack machine or two, one might consider a waiting room an open prison for patients. Have you ever waited a long time in a waiting room? One study in 2024 of 11,000 patients noted that the average wait time in a medical waiting room was 13 minutes[2]--but we know many wait for much longer than that. We wait for surgery, appointments, checkups, and procedures until the doctor comes and tells us its time. God has His own waiting room, and we are sitting in it right now.

As God's people, we find ourselves with questions about life, ponderings about the future, and meditations about what is happening now. We anxiously await answers from God but cannot find them until He steps into the waiting room to bring us back. It is therefore up to us to learn how to wait effectively. Here are four reminders when you find yourself sitting in God's waiting room.

We Are Patients, Not Physicians.

"A friend of the great preacher Phillip Brooks, called on him and found him impatiently pacing the floor. His friend asked what the trouble was. Dr. Brooks exclaimed, 'The trouble is that I am in a hurry, and God is not!'"[3]

Patience is a forgotten virtue. We want fast food, direct flights, same day shipping, and only outpatient services. We cannot imagine putting off something tomorrow that can only be done tomorrow. We even want patience today. Have you ever prayed "Lord, give me patience, and give it to me now?"[4]

It is not wrong to inquire, but it is wrong to rush. It is when we hasten answers to our questions that we begin to experience distress. It is like a parent who tries to put adult pants on his child. The child will stumble and fall because he is too small right now to handle them. One day he will be ready—but not today.

Someone said that "haste makes waste."[5] The Bible is filled with declarations and illustrations about rashness. Hasty spirits lead to folly (Proverbs 14:29). Timothy was told not to be rash in making judgements (1 Timothy 5:22). James urged men to think before they speak (James 1:19). Some in Scripture failed to be good waiting room patients:

- Abraham rushed God's seed plan (Genesis 16).
- Esau chose temporal pleasure over futural, greater success (Genesis 25:29-34; Hebrews 12:15-16).
- Achan stole the treasures for now, when he could have obtained them later (Joshua 7-8).

Mahatma Ghandi said, "To lose patience is to lose the battle." Augustine scribed, "Patience is the companion of wisdom." Impatience may be one of our biggest enemies.

It is painful to wait but we must endure. It takes courage to wait (Psalm 27:14). It takes endurance to walk even though we cannot see. Jeremiah pictured a young man carrying a yoke for a time (Lamentations 3:27-32). Although he was in pain now, God was working him through this for a better future.

We must realize our limitations while sitting in the waiting room. Jackie Kay observed:

- You can't see what is going on in the waiting room.
- You do not understand all that is going on in the waiting room
- You can't control what is going on in the waiting room.
- You can't dictate the timing in the waiting room.
- The waiting room is usually not a very comfortable place
- The waiting room is often a place of worry and anxiety.[6]

Since we are patients, we need to act like them. We need to wait until the doctor brings us back, else we rush something that was never intended to be. In a world of constant gratification, God sits in Heaven and slows down the world just a bit. If He waited four thousand years to bring about His Son to save the world, we can wait a few years on His plan for us.[7]

We believe we know what is best for us, but God knows what is best for us. David recognized that "my times are in thy hand" (Psalm 31:15). Remembering that God is the director, the time keeper, and the physician will help us remember to trust Him and not ourselves (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon asked, "Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Proverbs 20:24). We cannot because we are just patients.

The Doctor is Busy Preparing Your Room.

As we sit in the waiting room, we cannot forget that the Doctor is working for us. Waiting on God demands that we remember:

His eternality (Psalm 90:2). God can see what we cannot and is fully aware of tomorrow's outcomes. What God could do today, He may wait until tomorrow for He knows tomorrow will be better for us. God is running the clock and the clock will strike twelve when He deems it wise. We are not qualified to know this clock (Acts 1:7).

His faithfulness. It is impossible for God to tell a lie (1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). It is not about truth but about time; it is about when God will act, not if. When God's "slowness," might bring into question His faithfulness, we must remind ourselves that while we are waiting, God is preparing (cf. Romans 8:28). Jeremiah wrote, "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD" (Lamentations 3:25-26).

His omnipotence (Genesis 18:14; Numbers 11:23; Job 42:3; Jeremiah 32:17). God's resources outdo any Amazon warehouse. We cannot forget that God does the impossible (Matthew 19:26). His work is beyond our comprehension (Psalm 145:3; 147:5). Consider these possible divine actions:

- God might be working on something now that will impact you 25 years later.
- God might be doing something now in one part of the world, of which you are unaware, that is impacting you now.
- God might have placed you in the situation you are in now, so as to give you experience for later (Romans 5:2-3; cf. 1 Peter 1:7).
- God may cause you to meet individuals that will teach you for futural betterment.