

# WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



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We did it! We made it through 2020! It seems so many people have waited for this moment—passing the finish line of a horrible year in hopes of a better one. How does it feel to finally be here after waiting so long? Are you filled

with hope in the New Year or is there still some dread for the waiting that is to come?

Isn't waiting exhausting—especially considering all that we have waited for in the past year? We waited for the two weeks of quarantine to be over last spring ... a wait that never seemed to fully end. There was a reprieve from waiting when businesses began reopening—but with the caveat of masks. At that point, we added new waits—we were waiting for a Covid cure, a Covid vaccine and we could not wait for the masks to go away.

Entering the autumn months came more waiting—the waiting to find out who the next president would be—a wait charged with opinions and tension with more weeks of waiting to know the outcome. Also, in late fall came more shutdowns and waits as Covid cases rose and decisions were made with new restrictions and waits—we needed to wait to have gatherings with friends, wait to reunite with our loved ones for the holidays, wait to dine in restaurants and visit other small businesses, wait for the promised vaccine, and each and every one of us had additional waits that I have not mentioned here.

How heavy has the weight been on your shoulders as you have waited? How have you handled it all? Did you flourish or did you wither?

I was trying hard to flourish during the waits but as the waits extended and more waits were added, I felt myself withering in many areas of my life. At that point, I was determined to find a way to flourish.

With prayer and a great desire to “wait well”, I happened upon a book. By “happened upon” I mean, the book happened to be upon my kitchen counter. I picked it up and read the description. It was intriguing and seemed like an answer to prayer. So, I began thumbing through it. Some of the words I found boldly within had my eyes popping out of my head a bit, yet I was still intrigued.

Has this ever happened to you? An answer to prayer that came about in a strange way you could have not imagined? Did you go with it or pooh-pooh it away?

With the poo-poo language within that book, pooh-poohing it away was my first thought. Instead, I investigated. Who in my family was reading it? Was the challenge the author spoke about something they were considering doing? Were there good ideas despite the words I would have to bleep out as I read it? Was the book a good use of my time and were there principles that would help me “wait well” as I had originally thought? Would pausing in my wait to read such a book bring about the reset I was looking for?

Come to find out, my husband, Jeremy learned about the book from a colleague and he was planning to embark on the challenge spoken about. With his buy in, it interested me even more—so I read it.

As I read between the harsh bleepity-bleep-bleep words, there were things that made sense to me. I even started to feel that although the author uses strong language, I believe through his words he passionately opens the door to many that might not otherwise listen. I could also see that he has overcome incredible obstacles and used his life to empower people to make life-giving and life-sustaining changes. As I soaked in his words and what was entailed in his challenge, I had an exciting feeling that it was exactly the reset I had been looking for with specific rules to follow (I am a rule keeper!) that would help

me on many levels and ultimately allow me to “wait well”.

In general, waiting well with patience and taking pauses in life is not something many of us are good at. As the circumstances of the last year have evolved, waiting well has seemed almost out of the question. Our already busy lives became even more full as we added in time-stealing things like mindlessly scrolling through social media and getting wrapped up in news reports concerning Covid, politics, riots, etc. Our angst increased every time we got sucked into the overwhelming information—whether true or false.

I speak from experience. As I was withering I could feel the reason—I was allowing these things—things I have no control over, to super charge my feelings. And though I was putting much good into my mind, I would still become overwhelmed with the little bits of bad things that came. I was feeding these emotions with food (namely sweets), I was not making time for exercise, I was watching the scale creep up as the so-called “Covid pounds” started sticking to my hips, and I was not fully seeking Christ in every area of my life.

I am one who proclaims “God is in control!” with all my heart. But there were things I was doing (and not doing!) and things that I was allowing that did not sync with this proclamation. I certainly had lost self-control, I certainly spent more time scrolling through media than I was spending with God, and I was certainly not trusting God by waiting well. And in not waiting well, it almost seemed like my hope was not coming from God, it was coming from things of this world.

I needed a reset! I also needed to find out how, in my already busy life, I would add the time that would allow me to reset with the expectations of the challenge. What I learned is, we have time for what we make time for. Read that again. I would need to get up earlier some days, go to bed later some days, take out unimportant things, and limit time consuming things that did not bring goodness.

What do you make time for? Do you make time for life-giving things that will better you? Do you ever waste time and find you spent time doing things that were not worthwhile or healthy? Do you ever lose track of time and miss important things? When this happens are there other time-consuming things that come about that make your life more difficult?

Do you remember Ms. T that I spoke about last month? As a hotshot driver, she certainly did not have time to wait for the replacement of the engine of her broken down diesel truck—but she had no choice because it was inoperable. After replacing her engine in record time, we got Ms. T back on the road as quickly as possible to resume her busy schedule of hauling and delivering heavy freight all over the country.

Fast forward a month—in this amount of time Ms. T managed to put over 14,000 miles on her diesel truck in her hauling efforts! That's a lot of hauling ... especially during the holidays. I am sure Ms. T blessed many as she delivered items to expecting recipients. However, during her busy schedule, it seems Ms. T faltered. She was either so busy that she kept delaying the needed oil changes for her diesel truck or she lost track of time and didn't pay attention to when it needed to be done. In this stretched out delay or oversight, something catastrophic happened. Her new used, beautifully running engine became damaged.

As you know, all engines need to have oil replaced at recommended intervals—not only in time but also in miles. Failing to replace the oil with new oil on schedule can lead to problems because the intricate parts of the engine are no longer properly protected. The oil change intervals for the oil you choose are required based on data and experience. It's not just a number that is thrown out to get you back into the shop. Oil breaks down and becomes less healthy due to a variety of factors including



mileage put on your vehicle, time or age of the oil, external conditions (such as extremes in weather), and load (extra weight on the engine when towing).

In Ms. T's case, we are unsure of the weather conditions she experienced but we do know that due to mileage, load and the type of oil used, her oil should have been changed at least twice since leaving our shop. Because it was not, internal components were damaged and she found herself stuck once again.

My friends, on-time oil changes are not something to put off. In Ms. T's case, the cost of not doing this is very stressful and expensive. Had she taken the time to keep her truck healthy, this would not have happened.

Do you take time for oil changes? With fewer people driving or at least driving less in this last year, likely you are not putting on 14,000 miles/month like Ms. T. However, I wonder if you have considered the time aspect of the oil in your engine? Oil breaks down over time whether or not you drive the mileage indicated on your little oil change sticker. That less than healthy oil cannot do its job well in protecting your engine well. Therefore, I wonder, might it be time to make time for an oil change in your vehicle?

What other things is it time to take time for? Are you taking time to add or subtract things that help you flourish, or are you withering?

In the span of my 75-day challenge I:

Read books I would never have read  
Ate foods I would never have eaten  
Drank gallons of water I would never have drank  
Lifted weights I would never have lifted  
Walked miles I would never have walked  
Learned things I would never have learned  
Created habits I would never have created  
Spent hours with God I would never have spent  
Listened to podcasts I would have never listened to  
Grown in ways I would never have grown

Ultimately, this reset taught me how to wait well. I even found that I had time to add other things to my days that were life-giving like reading/listening to the Bible more and spending more time in prayer. I learned that when we fill ourselves up to the brim with God and other excellent things, we feel incredible and something amazing happens—we are able to serve others in ways we never have before. We stop being so worried about the future, we stop getting wrapped up in things we cannot change, we start to fully flourish as we put all our hope in Christ, and we

start to spread that hope better as we are practicing what we preach.

In all of your waiting, have you also been waiting for hope? Hope in the day when masks will be a thing of the past, hope that a cure/vaccine will be available to all, hope that a President will make things better, hope in all things for a flourishing New Year?

I have recently heard hope spoken of in ways I never have in the past during our wait: When a woman walked into the Covid vaccine clinic and proclaimed “this is what hope looks like!”. When people add the hashtag “#shotofhope” to their post after receiving the vaccine. When people refer to the hope that they now have in the change of presidency. Or when others are settling into the wait for there to possibly be hope again in four years with a different president.

Friends, our hope is not in this world—things that change and wither. Our unshakable hope, a hope that flourishes as we embrace it, is in Jesus Christ. He is working in the wait. He does not waste the wait. But he sometimes allows the wait while He is working in us so that we can flourish and show our hope to others.

In full disclosure, I failed the challenge. On day 71 of 75, I forgot one simple rule. I was extremely disappointed that I was so close to the end and I dropped the ball so completely.

But looking back, I wonder if I really failed. In rereading my list of accomplishments and where the journey took me, I may have failed by forgetting to do one rule on one day, but I choose to use the F.A.I.L. acronym: First Attempt In Learning.

I started the challenge again two weeks ago and I am full of hope—hope that I will finish well, hope that I will have more opportunities to learn and better myself, hope that the betterment will flow out of me to others, and the best hope of all—the hope that is renewed daily in my time with Jesus.

I wonder, do you need a reset? Do you want to learn how to “wait well”? Are you ready to change the only thing you have control over—yourself? Do you want to see how pouring goodness into yourself allows you to flourish and overflow with goodness to others? Do you want to discover true hope in 2021?

If your answers to these questions are yes, then I invite you to join me—join me on the 75 Hard challenge—or maybe even just portions of it, join me in putting good things into your body and mind, join me in pausing for oil changes, and join me in diving deep into God's Word where you will discover the One and Only Hope.

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