

## Radical #2 Radical Waiting

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You can be radical for many reasons; radical means either getting down to the core of something or extreme. You can be a radical (extreme) fan of a football team. Discipleship means following Jesus and it can be extreme as Jesus said **“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”** Your agenda is submitted under Jesus’s way. Also, you have to do this every day which is also extreme: the essence of following Jesus. Last week I asked, “What are you avoiding?” when we talked about radical courage.

This week I have two questions to ponder:

What are you waiting for?

Whom are you waiting on?

As parents we are always waiting: Every-day waiting can be in the doctors, at stoplights, for a spouse to get ready, for a kid to get out of the bathroom. But there are bigger things to wait for: a spouse, a job, money, depression to go away, an ailment to go away. Waiting can be daily and ordinary and it can also be big and dramatic.



At 5 years old, I was waiting to blow out my candles on my birthday. I think I’m a pretty good waiter; I was good at waiting for the things I wanted. At age 5, I wanted a Playmobil and I had to save up my allowance for a long time (3-4 months?) to save up \$7 in 1977. Every few days I would ask my mom if there was enough and we would count the money in the jar. I would go to the mall and sit in front of the Playmobils at the

toy store by myself and try to decide which one I would get. I would wonder and imagine: I anticipated something really good to happen. I was good at waiting. I was a radical waiter. However, I am not as good at this as an adult.

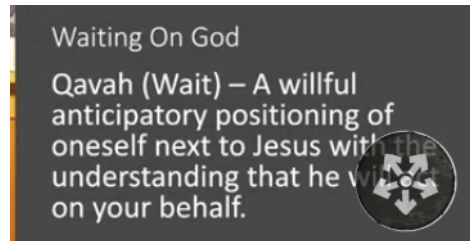


Isaiah, an OT prophet who writes a lot about the coming of Jesus, says:

### **Isaiah 64:4:**

**Since ancient times no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.**

We have not seen any god who acts on behalf of those who wait on him. In 2020 when things were crazy, I decided to look at one of my brother's songs called *Wait and See*. I developed an idea of what waiting means. The Hebrew word is QAVAH. In English, waiting is passive but in Hebrew it is very active. Here is my definition:



This literally means to bind yourself to something: hitching your wagon to Jesus and getting in his space, knowing he will act on your behalf. If we place ourselves next to God and wait on him, he will act.

Today, I want to offer you some ways to do this.

1. **A practice for everyday waiting:** We are always waiting for something to happen. Let's turn this into something radical, something you can do while you are waiting every day.

### **Psalm 131:1-3**

**1** My heart is not proud, Lord,  
my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters  
or things too wonderful for me.

“My heart” means the thoughts you have and the emotions you feel. These emotions and thoughts are not proud or about taking control of things, frantically trying to fix things.

This is the first invitation: *what am I thinking or feeling?* Are these driving me to be in control? This is pride: you stoking your emotions to produce more frantic feelings.

Second, having haughty eyes means thinking “I am better than others; I know better than them.” It's diminishing the value of others. As you sit waiting, asking these questions is a good practice. Where are my thoughts and emotions? How am I viewing the people around me? Am I diminishing them to gain a sense of power for myself?

“Not concerning myself with great matters” is about my tendency to be a military general and tell God how to do things. Psalm 131 says I understand who I am.

Asking the above questions is a good way to do everyday radical waiting.

**2** But I have calmed and quieted myself,  
I am like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child I am content.

Calmed, quiet: long before neuroscience, the Bible is taking us out of fight or flight. Lately, I have been around a lot of babies who are fussy: the parents think they need to eat. If they don't get these, they fuss. But a child who is weaned understands meal schedules and that they can wait. Unweaned children have a nervous system that is constantly bouncing up and down, not knowing if they will get fed. A weaned child is content and trusts *the parent* to pursue the things that will make him/her happy.

My application: Is my parent (God) in control of my contentment or am I? Am I fighting or flighting? The invitation is a picture of contentment and of a quiet self standing next to God.

### **3 Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.**

(Israel=church) The Hebrew word for hope is “pova,” an active word translated “dad is coming home.” You are a weaned child next to mom knowing that dad is coming home. You can see mom standing at the door, dad coming home from the fields, and the kids are standing, looking for his arrival. This is saying to anticipate God.

#### **Waiting like a kid with adult skills**

I was recently in a house full of kids waiting for their mother: Their questions were all about “When is lunch? When can I get a drink? When...when...when.?” They were waiting on the parent to do something. We are to be like this and use adult skills, ask the adult questions. It's a waiting in life for the things that you long for and don't have, things you need healing for, things you are angry or hopeless about. Waiting for serious things needs a serious conversation with God. For example, the Old Testament Habakkuk feels free to ask God serious questions.

The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received:

#### **Habakkuk 1: 2-3**

**2** How long, Lord, must I call for help,  
but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you, “Violence!”  
but you do not save?

**3** Why do you make me look at injustice?  
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me;  
there is strife, and conflict abounds.

First, you must be willing to ask the hard questions in the middle of events: “When will I get a spouse? When will my children come to You? When are You going to do these things?” Radical waiting involves asking hard questions.

Second, you have to be willing to listen.

### Habakkuk 2

1 I will stand at my watch  
and station myself on the ramparts;  
I will look to see what he will say to me,  
and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

This idea of standing and waiting for an answer is found often in the OT. If you are going to ask the hard questions, you have to practice radical waiting for ordinary things. Anxiety, contempt, and distractions will hinder you from hearing God. You must have a calm nervous system to stand on the ramparts and listen/wait on God.

Habakkuk gets an answer:

2 Then the Lord replied:  
“Write down the revelation  
and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald may run with it.

Be willing to write things down!

3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time;  
it speaks of the end and will not prove false.  
Though it linger, wait for it;  
it will certainly come and will not delay.

This is one of Eric's favorite verses! You have to write down what you hear and hold on to it and walk with it. I didn't know signs and symptoms would be prevalent in 2023! When you are waiting not radically (which means you are haughty, not listening, telling God what to do) *you see symptoms and not signs*. You hear “this will never happen.” You are blind to the signs that are all around you that Jesus is working. However, when you write things down, you expect God to act and you anticipate God to act because he has spoken to you. I think I'm good at asking God questions and journaling and waiting. When I write things down, I watch for God to do them.

You will find out that the answers you get are not always what you want.

### II Cor 12: 7b-10

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's

power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul uses Satan but it includes any kind of torment you experience. I think Paul asked a whole bunch "take this away" requests on three occasions. The answer he got is the answer to all of your questions: "My grace is sufficient for you." In everything brutal, this is true. God will act on behalf on those who wait. God gave us Emmanuel at Christmas: A sign! His grace is sufficient if you are willing to wait on him. In his weakness, the strength of God is revealed. Paul looks for opportunities for his weakness to be demonstrated. We don't know what Paul's weakness was: Was he blind? Wounded, arthritic? But he went around looking for opportunities and there was delighted in his hardships. This is mind-blowing because he was in a place to anticipate God.

The invitation to you this week and for the rest of your life:

Begin to be a radical waiter. It starts with me waiting for an everyday thing and recognizing this is an opportunity for radical waiting. You will have courage to look for the signs in the complicated things! It will hold you up and bear you up because you are made strong in your weakness. Become a radical wait-er (not a servant in a restaurant).

Questions:

What does it mean to boast about your weakness? To talk about my brokenness and the actual brokenness that I have no choice about. Like if I got cancer, this would not be my choice. But I can see that God intervenes despite this affliction. This is Jesus in the middle of my pain and suffering. It's in my repentance from sin and how I've received forgiveness.

What does "though it linger" and "it will not delay" seem like a contraction? What I've told you will not delay; the process is going on without delay even though your experience seems like its' lingering.

Waiting is like the picture of a dog: he's waiting for his master; he knows the master is good and will give him what he needs.

