

Waiting / Joseph

Tita: Do you like waiting? I used to think that having to wait was a waste of time. I felt impatient and frustrated.

Tammy: We're together again on Women of Hope, I'm Tammy.

Carol: And I'm Carol. Tita's here with us today. It's good to have you...

Tita: Thanks I love being here with you.

Carol: Tita, you said you used to think that waiting was a waste of time...

Tita: Well, when I was at school, I would get home and instead of going to play straight away I would sit down and do my homework immediately. I would only be happy to go and play after I'd finished my homework.

Tammy: Oh – I wish my children were like that! I always had to remind them to do their homework.

Tita: If the teachers gave us a project to do together as a team with other people, I didn't like it when they left their part of the work until the last minute. I would get impatient and frustrated. So I would do the work for them, then it would all be done on time.

Carol: The others must have loved that!

Tita: They did! They still got a good mark even though they didn't do the work. As a young person I used to think, 'Why wait for them if I can do it?'

Carol: If you *used* to think waiting was a waste of time, did something make you change your mind?

Tita: Yes, I soon learned that in life I *couldn't* always make things happen quickly. There will always be things that are out of our control. For example, if you go to a doctor and they have to do some tests to find out why you're sick. No matter how impatient or worried you may be, you still have to wait for the test results.

If you're in a car or a bus and there's a traffic jam, you may feel angry and frustrated but you still have to wait until it clears.

If you want to buy something at a shop and they haven't got it, you have to wait until they order it, and then you can come back and buy it.

I wonder what you might be waiting for? Perhaps you've been trying to get a job for a while and still haven't found one so you're waiting. You might be feeling very discouraged.

Or maybe you would love to get married but you haven't found that special person. And while you're waiting most of your friends are getting married and some are having children already and you're still waiting...

Or could it be that you are *already* married and you've been trying to have a baby but it hasn't happened and you're waiting, and waiting and nothing seems to happen...?

Waiting seems to be a part of life whether we like it or not and it's not always easy. It's even harder when we're waiting and we have *no idea* what's going to happen. Uncertainty makes waiting even harder.

Tammy: On Women of Hope today we're talking about waiting. I wonder what you might be waiting for? We all have to wait for things don't we? And at times in our lives it can be very hard to wait, especially when we're not sure what's coming next – or what the answer will be to an important question. Or whether we will ever get the answer.

Tita: But can you think about times in our lives when we don't mind waiting?

Carol: Well, if I'm making a nice loaf of bread, I have to wait for the dough to rise. I know the bread won't be any good if I don't wait. And then I know it will take a while for the bread to bake in the oven. I don't mind waiting until it's ready because I know how much I'll enjoy it when it's ready. I'd rather wait than eat bread that still has uncooked dough in the middle!

Tammy: I can think of another time I'd be happy to wait... If I was building a house I would want to wait for the concrete in the foundations to dry properly before they started building the walls – wouldn't you?

Tita: At times like this we're happy to wait because we know that the final result will be worth waiting for.

I remember when I was pregnant with my first child. In the beginning of the pregnancy I was so excited! I used to say, 'I can't wait to see this baby and find out if it's a boy or a girl'. During the last months of the pregnancy when my belly was getting so huge that I felt very uncomfortable, I said to my mother one day, 'Oh, I wish this baby would be born today, this waiting is too much and I'm very uncomfortable'.

My mum quickly answered, 'So you'd be happy to have a premature baby...a baby that's not yet ready to be born? ...Just because you don't want to wait a bit more?'

Wow, when she said that I realized that NO! I did *not* want my baby to be born before the right time so I needed to be patient and wait for my baby to reach full term. This kind of waiting has a real purpose doesn't it? It allows the baby to grow and be ready to be able to breathe properly...and all his body parts to be formed well so he can have a healthy life.

Friend, I don't know how *you* feel about waiting but I *do* know now, from what I've learned, that our *attitude* as we wait is very important.

Getting angry, frustrated or irritated as we wait doesn't help the situation to get resolved any quicker. It only makes us stressed and unhappy. Sometimes we even end up being physically sick due to the stress in our bodies.

If you struggle with waiting, would it help you to know that the waiting might have a really good purpose? Learning to have the right attitude as we wait can help us all to become better people. Did you know that?

When I discovered this I changed my mind - and now I can accept the waiting times so much better because I know they can make me a better person.

Now you might be thinking, '*What is she talking about?* How can waiting make me a better person?' Well, let me explain what I mean, after this song...

Carol: I enjoyed that song – did you? It tells us...

Tita's here with us again today on Women of Hope and she's going to tell us how she found that waiting could make her a better person.

Tita: How would you feel if I told you that during a time of waiting you could learn to be more loving... more kind... more gentle... or more patient? Do you know that waiting can help you to

have more self-control? It can even help you in the end to experience joy and peace...as you see the reason for having to wait so long for something.

I'm sure you'd agree with me that developing all those qualities in your character are much better than becoming angry, impatient and frustrated. But how do we learn to do this?

As I said earlier, I was a very impatient young person but when I began learning about God and started reading God's word, the Bible I read stories about many people who learned to be patient.

I read stories about the people of Israel who lived thousands of years ago. Many of them had to go through long times of waiting. Just like you and me, they didn't like waiting – and sometimes they got impatient and angry. But as I read these stories I realized that God allowed those times in their lives. Through those times of waiting they learned to be more patient and more caring. And they also learned powerful lessons about how to trust God during those times of uncertainty.

Let me tell you a true story from God's word of a young man called Joseph, he was one of the youngest of 12 brothers. (Genesis 39) Their father was Jacob – also known as 'Israel'. So these were the first of the 'children of Israel'.

Tita: Joseph was one of his father's favourites. This made his older brothers very jealous. They finally decided to get rid of him. So one day when he'd gone out to the fields where they were taking care of the flocks, they sold him to a group of merchants. These people took him to the foreign land of Egypt.

There, Joseph began working for a very rich and powerful man named Potiphar, who put him in charge of managing his household. Joseph was a very good and honest worker. But one day Potiphar's wife demanded that Joseph sleep with her. Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

As he tried to get away she grabbed his coat and accused him of trying to rape her. This was not true but of course Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's made-up story about how Joseph had treated her and he threw Joseph into prison.

Tammy: Joseph was in prison for a long time. Can you guess how long?...

Well, let me tell you, he was there for 13 years. That's a very long time...especially when he had not done anything wrong.

Carol: He could have become really angry and bitter. After all, he was innocent! He could have spent all his time trying to get justice. But he didn't!

Tita: Remember what I said before about our attitude while we're waiting? Joseph had the right attitude...instead of being bitter and angry, he had a positive attitude. God's word, the Bible goes on to say, 'But the Lord was with Joseph and he granted Joseph favour with the chief jailer. Before long, the jailer put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The chief jailer had no more worries after that, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him, making everything run smoothly and successfully.' (Genesis 39:21-23)

This tells me that Joseph's heart was kept steady during this time of hardship and unfairness. Instead of feeling bitter and angry, he learned to be very patient and responsible... I'm sure that there were many times when he might have felt angry at the unfairness of his situation, but he must have learned to control those feelings. He remained honest, reliable and hardworking and others in the prison trusted him.

What do you think Joseph's secret was?

Yes, he trusted God to help him. Did you notice that his circumstances did not change for 13 years? How would you feel in the same situation? Maybe you *are* in the same situation.

Tammy: I think I would find it very hard to have a positive attitude. It's so easy to stay angry and bitter especially when something is so unfair...even for a short time. But for 13 years!!

Tita: I'm sure I would too. Joseph remained in prison but what changed was his heart...not his circumstances. God helped him not to become bitter, angry and resentful but to have a caring attitude... He took care of others and showed great self-control and patience as he waited.

Joseph waited patiently for those 13 years of total uncertainty. He did not know if he was *ever* going to get out of prison! But he finally did. The ruler at that time, called Pharaoh, was very impressed with Joseph. Let me tell you what God's word says about it...

(Genesis 41:39-44) 'Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "...clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne will have a rank higher than yours. I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his own hand and placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in fine linen clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. He said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh but no one will lift a hand or a foot in the entire land of Egypt without your approval." ... Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving in the court of Pharaoh.

Carol: So if Joseph was in prison for 13 years, he must have been about 17 when he went into prison – just a young boy with his life ahead of him. But after waiting all those years, what an unexpected end to his waiting!

On Women of Hope we've just heard the story of Joseph, who was put in prison for something he had not done. Can you imagine how he would have felt? Maybe you've had things done to you, or said about you, that were not true and you've struggled for many years with feelings of anger and bitterness.

Maybe you've been waiting for a long time for justice to be done...or for something to happen – and you wonder if it will *ever* happen.

Tita: Friend, God does not have favourites, God loves all of us and if he was able to change Joseph's heart and make him a better person through the process of waiting he can do that for you and me.

I can tell you that God has given me many waiting times in my life. Just like with Joseph, most of the time he has not changed my difficult circumstances...but slowly but surely he has changed me. I have had to go through some tough times...waiting - with no idea what the end result will be. And I can honestly tell you that if you're willing to allow God to work in your life, you can experience a change in your heart. You can learn patience and learn to trust God, just like Joseph did, and just as I have done. If God could change me, he can change you too.

I am *much* more patient now and I accept the waiting times because I know it will *not* be a waste of time. It is actually during the waiting that God is busy working in me to make me a better person. And just like in Joseph's story, after a long waiting time God has often surprised me with the answer to my waiting.

And let me assure you of something: God's plans have always ended up being much better than anything I could have planned or imagined.

Tammy: Imagine Joseph's surprise when he finally got out of prison and Pharaoh made him his second in command – after all those years of waiting.

Tita: None of us can control what happens in our lives, but we *do* have a *choice* when it comes to going through rough experiences of waiting and uncertainty. Do we do it alone or do we invite God to be part of our lives? Do we allow him to help us through, and make us a better person as a result?

Would you like his help? Are you struggling with uncertainty? Are you tired of waiting?

Well dear friend if you want to invite God into your life please pray this simple prayer with me...

Father God, Thank you for what we've heard today about waiting. You know what I've been waiting for all this time. I want you to be a part of my life and to change my heart. Please forgive me for being angry and bitter. Please change my heart and help me to learn what you have to teach me. I pray in the name of your son, Jesus, who came to take away my burden of sin. Amen.

Tammy: It's time for us to go now. I hope you've enjoyed our time together. We look forward to being together again soon.

Carol: We would love to hear from you...to hear about your times of waiting. Or if you have a question we will do our best to answer it.

Goodbye and God bless you.

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