

Jesus Calls Us To Maturity, Not Perfection

CHAPTER 8

WAITING UPON THE LORD MATURES US

"Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." Psalm 25:1-5

There are no "fast food" service lines on the road to maturity. We must *wait* upon the Lord as He seeks to mold us in His likeness.

Waiting is not man's *long suit of clothes*. Adam's curiosity and unwilling to wait upon the Lord caused him and us to be shut out of the Garden of Eden. And, each of us has taken our turn at the *apple tree* in the Garden of temptation. Still it must be declared that wisdom decrees when we wait upon the Lord we receive Heaven's best. Waiting is

a great tool which builds maturity into the fiber of our character.

Conversely, failure to "wait upon the Lord" is an indication of *lack of faith, doubt, presumption, overconfidence*, and too much *leaning on our own understanding*.

There is no theological treatise about "waiting," or special Hebrew or Greek word meaning attached to the word "wait". Actual-verbal waiting is the great need. So, this chapter will primarily be a composite of God's promises about waiting and examples of how those who waited were blessed.

What does "waiting" mean?

Waiting means pausing for a short or a long period of time in seeking God's will/answer. God works for those who w-a-i-t for Him

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him." Isaiah 64:4 (NKJ)

We were in the midst of a long drought on the Sunday I preached at the Protection, Kansas Christian Church. My subject was "Practicing the Presence of God in the Present Tense" -- in everything give thanks..." I Thessalonians 5:18 At the conclusion of the message I challenged the people asking if they would be willing to practice the presence of the Lord in the present tense by thanking Him for the drought which had been ongoing since Labor Day. 90% raised their hands. So, we waited upon the Lord praising Him for the drought, then thanked Him for the moisture which by faith we affirmed He would send. Three days later, on January 30, we were in the midst of moisture --ice-sleet/snow/rain.

We waited upon the Lord in praise and He worked for us, which is what Habakkuk did-- 3:17-19, Paul did--2 Cor. 12:7-10, Job did--Job 1:19-21, and Jesus did!

Roger Day, Minister at Highmore, South Dakota, expresses the need of allowing the Lord to mature us in our waiting.

"But oh my dear children! I feel as if I am going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives." Galatians 4:19 NLT

"We talk much about growing up in our faith. We know that as Christians it is important to become more and more like Christ. We read books, we pray, we strain, we go to conferences, and do all that we can imagine attempting to accomplish this feat. And, let's face it, we are often discouraged and feel like it will never happen. Many people just give up trying to grow and hope they can hang on.

"In this scripture, Paul gives us a little light from the Holy Spirit. He says he is laboring until Christ is fully developed in us. We are a dwelling place for Him. He is the one that is developing Himself in us. We need only be a place where He can develop. We are referred to as the body of Christ. We are the tents where He dwells. Perhaps a picture would be to compare us to the church building where we meet. It does not change unless we do something to it. The walls, carpet, size and etc. stay the same unless we do something in it to change it. The same can be said of us. We cannot change ourselves; waiting on Christ changes us.

"Now don't think that we do not play a role in the change. We have to be willing to be changed by waiting. As in the picture of the building, it never rebels. It is there in the same place. The doors will open. If you want to paint the walls, or tear out a wall, or stick more rooms in it, it will not complain; it is simply the building ready to be used.

"The same then goes for us. Our human attempts at goodness may be better than nothing, but they will never be what they could be if we wait on Christ to develop and work through us. It truly is a place of rest that God is calling us

to. He realizes that we are not able in our own strength to do anything, but with Christ all things are possible.

"That is why the Bible tells us to present ourselves as living sacrifices and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:1,2) So many Christians have worn themselves out trying to find a pose that looks most like Jesus, when all the time they needed to simply wait on Him to develop in them. I would say every person desiring to grow in faith has done this at one time or another. But in another place the Spirit has said I have died and yet I live, but it is no longer me who lives but Christ lives in me.

"You see we don't form Him, if we do, then we try to transform Him into our image of how we want Him to be in us. The way God has planned is that He transforms us into the way He wants to be in us. We all have certain gifts that He will use, but it is He and not us who can best use them.

"So remember, you do not develop Him, He develops, and you become more like Him as you wait. You need only to be a willing habitation of the Holy Spirit of God."

Roger Day - Highmore, SD

GOD TAKES CARES OF US WHEN WE WAIT

"Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him." Isaiah 30:18

I suggest this is the theme of the entire Bible-- God Cares for us when we wait upon Him. For forty years I have found "waiting upon the Lord" in trust, prayer and praise to be my most valuable living

asset.

Every night with my head on my pillow, I wait upon the Lord by praying--- *"Lord, cover this house, its contents, Imalee and I, the garage and all the Faith Alive stuff, our Suburban and Trailer, the trees, flowers, grass, birds and animals with your blood. Also, do the same for our neighbors, the Bryants, Gaudino, Wilsons and the widow Mary. And, Jesus, please assign special angels to guard us all through this night: Amen."*

So, on Sunday night September 3, 2000 a fierce wind storm struck Arkansas City accompanied by thunder and lighting, power lines fell, tree limbs were ripped off, b-u-t at our house and block not one twig was touched. How can it be? What else can I say other then. Hallelujah for the Lord's Blood and Angels applied because of *waiting in prayer!*

The next day all day long Labor Day all over town the tree saws whizzed and folk pulled limbs out of the street but not on our street. We rejoiced in His peace and power!

Surely one of the things that warms the heart of any mother and father is when their children emulate the same attributes.

Our fourth child--Rebecca--to our delight illustrates that simple concept with her life story:

Something old but forever new and true is this song title--"God will Take Care of Me". With strong tenacity Rebecca (Johnson) Moller affirms---"**God will Take Care of Me**".

* Her husband, Robert Doyen, takes her out to dinner and together they buy new furniture for the first time in their marriage, then he announces that he wants a divorce. : Rebecca's response--"**God will Take Care of Me and Katie!**"

* Rebecca needed gall bladder surgery in February of 1999.
: Her retort--"**God will Take Care of Me!**"

* Katie goes to the E.R. and **God took care of Katie!**"

* Then, in October of that same year Rebecca sustained a heart attack which required six : hospital stays in eight months for the doctors to get it properly repaired. She remonstrated---"**God will Take Care of Me and Katie!**"

* Now, two months after the last hospitalization with heart trouble, she has triple major surgery . And her oft affirmation of faith-- "**God will Take Care of Me" He did!** The Grace Christian Church and Cox family extended a monetary hand!

* Katie goes to the E.R. with asthma attack!" **God was able!**

* In March of this year, an eighteen wheeled truck-trailer tries to run over her mid size Saturn car. Her back and shoulder are seriously injured. So, she says--"**God will : Take Care of Me!**"

* No job with Exxon Mobil for six weeks because of a company policy that does not allow her to work due to doctor prescribed pain medication. Salary stops and her car is repossessed, but Rebecca still waited on God--"**God will Take Care of Me.**"

* Her rental landlord served her with an eviction notice--"Pay up \$750. or move." Rebecca asserts--"**I wait and God will Take Care of Me" He did!** Her lawyer firm advances her \$1,000. on the basis of winning her lawsuit against the : trucker's insurance company! By faith !

* Now, time ticks by...another month approaches...bills due--Laywer says no more advances unless she has surgery. This is

the week (April 23rd.) for the surgery experts to decide. Still, she affirms--"**By faith I wait, God will Take Care of Me!**"

* A Court notice from State of Texas arrives in the mail over the weekend stating that she must appear in court as a witness in a criminal case of the State of Texas vss the truck driver which tried to run over her car. So, faith goes on--"**By faith God will take care of me,**" she affirms.

* **God still takes care of Rebecca and Katie!** She won the lawsuit and now has a handsome responsible Christian husband--Lynn Moller.

As told to her Father, Willbur Johnson

This old hymn of the Faith--"**God Will Take Care of You**" -reminds us in a beautiful way of this truism.

Vs. 1Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.**

Vs. 2Thro' days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.**

Vs. 3All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you.**

Vs. 4No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you,
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.**

**Chorus:: God will take care of you, Thro' ev'ry day,
O'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will
take care of you.**

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WAITING UPON GOD BRINGS GOD'S BEST

**"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the
desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust
also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the LORD,
and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him
who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth
wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.**

**For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the
LORD, they shall inherit the earth."**

Psalm 37:4-9 (KJV)

In visiting Molech in the Holy Land near Jerusalem, an ancient place of human sacrifice, this hard question probed my mind--how could a loving God permit such a place of punishment and destruction? The most logical answer to that question takes us full circle back to child sacrifice and why and why *waiting* upon God is so very important.

Abraham indicates in every way possible that he believes Isaac will somehow be spared (if even by being brought back to life); and

possibly God never intended to let Abraham go through with the killing. It was a test of Abraham's commitment to God and his willingness to *wait* in implicit faith.

I'm not thinking here merely of those who laid their sons and daughters on the red-hot arms of Molech while the drums drowned out the children's terrified screams. Instead, I am thinking of the rather more disturbing story of God calling Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar. Because of the surprise ending when God stops Abraham at the last minute—we tend to forget the events leading up to the knife in Abraham's hand, poised to do that which we would quickly condemn the pagan for doing.

What can this possibly mean but that God could never have imagined people whose sensitivities were so callous as to be untouched by the cries of pain of their own children? That, apparently, was the very reason God chose child sacrifice as the ultimate test of Abraham's willing to *wait* in faith. No other test would ask so much dependence upon God's providence. To his eternal credit, Abraham's faith did not disappoint. "God will provide," was Abraham's answer to Isaac when he asked his father about the sacrificial lamb. And to this day, Moses wrote of that incident-- *"it is said, 'in the mountain God will provide 'if we will wait in faith.*

Some seed thoughts from "Meeting God in Holy Places" by F. LaGard Smith, Pgs 34-36

"Waiting on the Lord" for directions is an every day matter so well illustrated by Joyce Sturdy of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

"I have been intending to write with an item of waiting on God for instruction. I have thought back many times

when Roy had to take early retirement and we advertised our home in Minneola with a realtor. We didn't even have any one interested, so we took that as our answer that we were to stay in Minneola. Two years later after Les got hurt and we were with him in OKC so much, we decided to put a sign out in our front yard and wait upon God again to see what we should do. During this time we got word that my sister's husband was in MD Anderson Hospital undergoing some tests for cancer so we went to be with them, not really praying about the sign in the front yard. We got home from Houston after finding out my sister's husband did have cancer and would have to return to MD Anderson Hospital in 3 weeks. We went home and the next morning there was an 83 year old lady knocking on our door wondering where we had been--she was wanting to buy our house. Before she even looked through all the house she said: "I really like it--you will sell it to me won't you?" We wanted her to realize how much yard there was and wondered if she would be able to take care of it without wearing her out, she still wanted to buy it. Then we had to begin looking in OKC for something to buy and couldn't find anything so Roy was looking in the Buyers Guide (a small paper sent out in the mail) and located these manufactured homes. We called and went to see them and fell in love with the one we purchased.

"Now we must wait on the Lord for a church home we visited several churches and found each one reaching out to us with so much Christian love it still felt like we were at home. It has been nearly 14 years since we made that big move and we have always felt it was God's answer to our waiting on Him"

Good night, Joyce

GOD PROVIDES WHEN WE WAIT UPON HIM

"These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; you open Your hand, they are filled with good." Psalm 104:27,28

The Bible is replete with living examples of God providing for all who waited upon Him. From His providing Abraham and Isaac a lamb for a sacrifice (Genesis 22:8), water from the Rock and Manna and Quail in the Wilderness (Exodus 16:15, 17:6), on to the Widow of Zarephath where He supplied a never empty meal barrel and cruse of oil (I Kings 17:13-16), and not to forget when five loaves and two fish were enough to feed the multitude with twelve baskets of leftovers (Matthew 14:17-20). And that grand promise to all who will wait upon Him--"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

So it was with my friends of fifty plus years--Chuck and Anita Thomas:

"Living by Faith In January of 1952, we moved to Oklahoma City, OK, where I enrolled in Midwest Christian College. Our Sunday School Class, at Cincinnati Avenue Christian Church in Tulsa, OK, helped us make the move. Sandy was our only child at that time. I worked at a number of odd jobs, while attending classes. I was invited to help start a new congregation in Washita, OK. just out of Anadarko, OK. There was not church in the small community and the Community Center for the local Power Plant was available to hold meetings. We started meeting

for church services, but had little or no space for Sunday School. We soon were able to gain access to the old school building, which had an abundance of class rooms as well as the gym for the worship time. It was necessary for us to leave Oklahoma City at about 6:00 a.m. in order to get to Washita for the services. On one Sunday morning Anita prepared the last bit of rice and toast for our breakfast. There no more food in the house. I discovered that we had enough gas to get us to Washita, but not enough for the return trip. We prayed for safety for travel and a safe return and traveled to the services at Washita. The small group of about 40 to 50 people had been taking a "love offering" for us each Sunday. The offering ran from \$2.00 to \$20.00 each week. After the services, the folk asked us if they could take us out to eat in Anadarko. They paid for our meal, filled the gas tank, and gave us \$25.00 in cash. We praised the Lord all the way home. When we arrive in Oklahoma City, the lights were on in the living room. My heart skipped a beat and I wondered if someone had broken into our apartment. We rushed into the house and could barely get in the front door. There were boxes of groceries all over the living room floor and the land lady was waiting for us with an envelop with \$250.00 from our Sunday School class back in Tulsa. Not only did the Lord provide transportation money, but he filled our pantry to overflowing.

"This is only one of a whole volume of events in our service to the Lord. We once made a trip to Family Week in the Kiamichi Mountains, one summer, with a limited amount of food, and 35 cents. We were gone for two weeks

and returned home with over \$35.00, winter coats for all four children and hearts full of love for the Lord."

Your brother, because of Christ, Chuck Thomas

Waiting on the Lord brings Strength and Healing

Next to Psalm 23 and John 14, Isaiah 40:31 is an all time favorite.

**"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
Isaiah 40:31**

When I am willing to wait upon the Lord in time and prayer with faith to claim this blessed promise I have found strength, help and healing as have countless others like my friend Murl Winters..

"This year on September 20 my Mother, Carolyn Mather Winters, turned 95. She has learned to wait upon the Lord for His blessings. Some 47 years before she went to the altar in the Fifth and Peoria Assembly of God in Tulsa, OK. She had been to the Hertzler Clinic in Halstead, KS, also known as the Little Mayo's of the West. After many days of testing they told her there was nothing they could do for her. She had chronic leukemia. Having been sent home to die, she and my Dad were desperate to find hope. Our family was active in the local Methodist Church but had never thought of God being willing to heal anybody in the

present times. "Through a series of events they became aware of the testimony of others and finally went to the church in Tulsa after calling and asking the pastor, "Do you pray for the sick?" My Dad's testimony was that when she went up for prayer her breath smelled of sickness and her eyes had a sick look. After prayer she had neither although she felt nothing. He did not tell her what he had noticed but waited until they had driven back to our home in Kansas and then heard her exclaim that she could see a difference in the mirror! She gradually gained strength and later after graduating from Southwestern Bible Institute (now Southwestern Assemblies of God University) they both entered the ministry.

My Mother still enjoys praying for the sick and telling people about her Savior, Jesus Christ. Her address: Carolyn M. Winters, Maranatha Village Lodge Room 209, 233 E. Norton Road, Springfield, MO 65803

"Actually our family was doubly blessed because not too many months after my Mother was healed, my Dad was prayed for in a Foursquare Gospel Church in Parsons, KS and was healed of a badly enlarged heart. He was later used to pray for a number of people in various places as they testified and ministered."

by Murl Winters

Assistant Library Director Evangel University Library
1111 N. Glenstone Ave. Springfield, MO

Linda Dellenbach of Abbyville, Kansas was blessed with healing as she waits upon the Lord for all that He can give. She articulates it like this:

"In September when I was diagnosed with cancer I was just ready to start reading Job (I'm reading through the Bible). I was reluctant to start reading there as it seemed like downer to me, but Josh, our son, said he would read through Job with me which gave me a boost and I started.

"As usual, God knew what He was doing! The main blessings I received were:

I. God is all wise and powerful. But sometimes we don't have a clue why He's doing what He's doing."

Psalm 20:7 "Some trust in chariots (chemotherapy) and some in horses (radiation), but we will trust in the Lord our God." (Italics, my application)

"Right now as I write, I am sitting at the Pratt hospital taking #6 of 8 chemotherapy treatments. I will only have two more and that seems reason to celebrate to me! Approximately one month after the last "chemo" which is scheduled for April fifth, radiation should start That will take a little over 7 weeks of 5 times a week and most that will be in Dodge City and then finish out with more intense 'zapping' at Hutchinson.

"I deeply appreciate the medical advances. One of those the Zofran they have given me before each 'chemo'. I have had no nausea . Dr. Jennings, our Oncologist, is very up on the latest and best treatment for breast cancer and has been in charge from the lumpectomy through the 'chemo and radiation. We have appreciated and felt good about his very personable and knowledgeable staff of nurses from the beginning. However our ultimate trust is and has to be in God who is really choreographing the life dance which I am in.

*2. We need to be careful not to jump to conclusions why

some one is suffering. Instead we need to listen to God for sensitivity on how to comfort that person.

"3. God is really all we have. Wait and keep focused on Him!

Now I am reading through Psalms and its also been exactly what I need. It is a great book of praise to God, encouragement that God is with us, and the battle and victory are His. At first cancer thoughts invaded my thoughts continuously. That was good though, as it forced me to pump God thoughts and scriptures in my mind in order to survive without major fear.

"I have had a relatively easy time and I praise God for one little blessing that was big to me. Charity, God and I found a wig in which I feel comfortable. I know-vanity, vanity". Smile! It is even equipped with a cowlick which I choose to see as an extra authentic touch. ...

"This letter is two fold ~ I want to glorify the Lord, and I want to specifically thank you for your prayers and caring acts. I know you have prayed for me. I can feel it. You know the song "Onward Christian Soldiers"? I see the Church of God being that army marching out to war on my behalf against cancer through prayer and encouragement.

"I will close this thought and Scripture ."*May God arise and his enemies be scattered—*" Psalm 68:17 and "*The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands.*" Psalm 68:17. Because you belong to Him, your enemies are His enemies. So whatever manifested or sneaky enemies you are up against right now may they be scattered and soundly defeated in your life.

P. S. I'm done with my treatment now and the nurse just told me how well I have done with Chemotherapy. She said Dr.

Jennings remarked that I've done better with 'chemo' than anyone he's ever had as a patient. That's your prayers and the faithfulness of God!!!! Thanks again" - *Linda Dellenbach*

Linda and her husband, Keith, have been special friends of our since 1974 when they ministered at Greensburg, Kansas, and we were down the road at Minneola. We have been blessed in getting to share two Faith Alive Revivals where they ministered and Keith and Linda have given special application to the faith alive Bible principles.

Sometimes Long term waiting is essential

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning-- yes, more than those who watch for the morning." Psalm 130:5,6 - (NKJ)

Abraham and Sarah waited many decades for a son to be born. At last when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 God arranged for the birth of Isaac.

Hannah waited for many barren years before Samuel was born (I Samuel 1).

The Nation of Israel waited four hundred and thirty to be delivered from Egypt. (Exodus 12:40)

A weary world waited for centuries but, "when the fullness of time was come God sent forth His Son..." Galatians 4:4

Jackie Cloutman of Minnesota reveals the value of "waiting."

"Four years ago, while employed at the Mississippi State University Library, I lost the diamond out of my wedding ring set. The staff at my work place and my family knew of the loss and helped me search. And I prayed, asking the Lord to let the stone be found or provide for a new one in

His way and time.

"An unsaved friend at the library, David, told me he didn't believe in prayer and after a few days of watching for my diamond and stating that the Lord was going to help me, David challenged my belief saying it proved that prayer does not work. I would never agree with him. And shortly afterwards, our family moved to Minnesota for a job opportunity for my husband.

"Here is how the Lord worked it out:

"Today, I have a more beautiful diamond than before crowned into my wedding ring set and our daughter Veronica was blessed in her singing ministry!!

"Veronica sings with the Celebrant Singers who present gospel music concerts in the states and featuring ministry in foreign countries. The Lord and family and friends provide her finances for these trips.

"This past summer, while ministering in Central Park, New York City, a young man offered Veronica a beautiful diamond engagement ring saying he didn't want it anymore. This gift from the young man became a gift for Veronica's finances as my husband and I gave travel money to her in exchange for the ring which we then had crowned into my wedding set!

"What a glorious way to replace my diamond! Plus, the disappointed young man found a way to give up his pain making an offering to God's kingdom!

"My friend David was wrong about prayer. My God works everything together for good for those who love God and are the called according to His purposes!!!"

*Mrs. (Don) *Jackie Cloutman - Minnesota- 11/4/2000*

(*) We have known Don and Jackie Cloutman for 41+ years. They have been special friends in our Faith Alive Ministry as printers, encouragers, gift, and prayer supporters.

Often our human nature asks "WHY must we wait for long periods of time." The Israelites had to spend 40 years in the Wilderness to prepare themselves for the Promised Land.

"When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea." Exodus 13:17-18 (NIV)

The concept that the *Promised Land* is always near, yet on the other hand, God leads us around by the desert road, has surfaced often across the years when my life seemed to offer so much of the dry desert, and long winding roads along with a few dead end ones. Yet, as Israel journeyed, and I have found it so, the Way is paved with many an oasis --a crossing place through the Red Seas of life, quail and manna when needed, water from the rocks, seen and unseen angels assisting, His guiding presence in a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day to point the Way, and always knowing that just over the next sand hill, deep valley or high mountain there will be the sight of the 'ole Jordan River, and when I get there, Joshua (Jesus) will lead the procession down to the waters and we will cross over on dry land to that beautiful Land of milk and honey. Then, the trumpets will sound and we will shout with all the saints of the ages that the walls have all fallen down forever and forever.

As the song says--

"It pays to serve Jesus everyday, it pays every step of the way...

**Though the pathway to glory may sometimes be drear,
You can be happy each step of the way."**

FRANK FREED served America during the 2nd. World War in the European theater. He tells of his patrol of five men being behind German lines when the Germans decided to advance. Soon his patrol found themselves deep in enemy territory and became caught in the line of fire of American artillery. Three of his patrol, including his Captain and Lieutenant, were killed outright, and the fourth man was knocked unconscious. Frank's right arm was blown off above the wrist and the explosion twisted his leg so that his foot faced in the wrong direction. During this time he waited upon God aware that He was in charge. He began crawling toward the American lines passing German soldiers who saw him but did not shoot. Finally arriving at the American line he was picked up by a field ambulance and transported to a hospital.

Now, 54 years later on May 25, 1997, he told the above story on the "Hour of Power" TV program, and shared this poem which he wrote as an introduction to his book -- Breaking Free when I feel Trapped

BREAKING FREE

I feel trapped in all the choices I wish I hadn't made.
Still trapped in painful events where too long I have stayed.

I feel trapped in fear of all things that never came to be.

And trapped in angry feelings that I allowed to savage me.

Trapped in frantic secrets that I won't share.
Still trapped in dark and gloomy thoughts which lead me to despair.

I feel trapped up until now by all the things above,
But now I know my way out is to speak the truth in love.
by Frank Freed of California

Persistent Every day waiting ought to be the norm.

Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him." Isaiah 30:18

Kay Messer of Soldier, Kansas shares how the grace of God blesses her in the living present.

"Over the years I have read about, heard about, talked about, sang about God's grace. It is a theological principal on which all believers have some sort of understanding. God's grace is what I believe that God has done for YOU.....when I reach a point in my understanding of what God has done in regard to ME...it becomes the "amazing grace" that John Bunyan wrote about. God's grace has been extended to all mankind...but when it encompasses me...meets me as I walk this path of life.

In regard to God's grace at the time of dad's death.....I found it to be a sustaining grace that was the catalyst for strength and energy to handle the struggles, decisions, etc. that were coming from many directions.

I had strength of my own but needed the "strength of His Grace" to provide the sustaining power that was needed in the days, weeks, and months to come. Had I not been a believer I could not have made it through every encounter on my "own strength"....there are countless other people who do....but I would not have had the experience of this facet of God's love for me. Grace was very real for me at the time of Loren's birth.....I had no strength of my own in this encounter with God's grace I could actually feel the life flowing out of my body as the scripture "the life is in the blood" went through my mind. I knew that because of the hemorrhaging and loss of blood my life was gradually ebbing from me and there was nothing I could do about it. It was out of my hands. There was nothing in my "own strength" that I could do. Can't say that it was some sort of an "out of body" type of experience, but I was totally engulfed with a "sense" of overwhelming peace that no matter what the outcome-- life or death-- I was experiencing the grace of an amazing God and it was all in His hands, not in mine. All I could do was experience this facet of God's love for me. So, God's grace becomes "amazing grace".....when it covers me from life to death...from my strength to sustaining strength.....in all ways it is all sufficient.....flows through me in my struggles and washes over my sins it becomes "amazing" grace." *Kay Messer*

Howard and Kay Messer are 40+ year friends of ours blessing us with prayers, encouraging words and gifts days without end.

The late Buck Weaver of Topeka, Kansas shares a simple testimony how waiting upon the Lord to say "Help" brings great blessings.

"Ever since I was about three or four years old for some reason I became afraid of the dark. The unusual aspect of this situations was the years went by it didn't get better. I was ashamed of myself and therefore would not mention the situation to anyone. Years later my folks moved from the farm to Higginsville, Missouri. We attended church there. Dessa Coggins was leader and teacher of the young people there. She was well liked and coaxed her students to become Christians. M.L.Anson and I were baptized a year or so later. I was about 16 years old.

"When I was 17 I lived with my parents at the old Confederate Soldiers Home located 2.5 miles north of town. I was on the high school football team and every school day walked out to the football field for practice then back to the school to change my clothes. The road had hardly any traffic. But here I am on the football team and afraid of the dark. What was I afraid of? Mostly it was the sounds of the night that I couldn't identify. I suffered through several trips, then came the trip home that changed my life. As I walked along, the thought came to me to ASK FOR HELP. I had tried everything else. I simply waited upon Jesus and asked Him to remove my fear of the dark. I took a few more steps and realized that I was enjoying the walk. Even the night noises became something which I enjoyed.

It was hard for me to believe, as previously I was afraid something would fall on me out of the trees, and now the trees became beautiful. I had prayed and God changed my

life -changed my fear of the dark to many enjoyable things. At the time I was walking along the East side of the 90 acre Park which was a part of the Confederate Home property.

I had avoided the Park in the dark, but now I ran into it to enjoy a small lake which previously I had enjoyed only In the daytime. Many are the times I have thanked the Lord Jesus for that night when He took away my fear of all darkness.

"Since that time I started to work as a fireman and later a locomotive engineer for Santa Fe. I put in many years in the switch yards on the, you guessed it, the night shift, I'm a very happy person in His walk because I acknowledged Jesus. He goes on before me and with His help I follow."

**Buford Weaver, Topeka, Kansas*

(*) I first met the delightful-dedicated "Buck" and Helen Weaver when preaching a Faith Alive Revival at Perry, Kansas.

Linda Gooch of Hugoton, Kansas shares these special words about waiting on the Lord day by day.

"I grew up in the Nazarene Church going to church every time the doors were open. We went to all the revival services, you name it and we were there. During college I attended Mid America Nazarene University. I was saved when I was about 8 years old and I was baptized April 15, 1972 on a Easter Sunday.

"In 1979, I married a man of my dreams and I had two wonderful children.

I strayed away from God -- looking at possessions, other things. Things that I try to forget and try to forgive myself for what I've done.

We were divorced in 1990 and it has been a struggle ever since, with the guilt and everything that went on.

I remarried in 1991 and I have a little blessing who is 3 years old. Believe me, I wasn't too excited about having a little one, after my other two children were in college right now. But the Lord truly forgives and forgets when we wait upon Him -- He has told me *that's why I died for you my child. You can lay those guilt feelings, bitterness, anger all at my feet, because I did this for you and I love you.* Grace, grace marvelous grace!

"Over the past few months, I've been so hungry for more of God. I've been praying *Lord I surrender my life to you totally and completely.* The Holy Spirit has completely enveloped me and I have had such a deep peace that I can't hardly express it. The Lord is truly wonderful...faithful and true. His grace does cover over a multitude of sin even when we don't deserve it. The Lord has given me such an excitement about sharing the word, and has given several opportunities for sharing what the Lord has done for me to others. Right now, my daughter, and son-in-law have totally surrendered there everything to God! What a blessing! My oldest son is studying music/youth ministry, To God be the Glory!

"I still have struggles, with myself, feelings of inadequacy, but when I wait upon Him, He gives me a hope and a future. He has picked up the broken pieces of my life and is arranging them to be the perfect vessel that He wants them to be.

I can't write this without having a lot of tears, but the Lord

truly does Love each one of us and it doesn't matter what we have done -- He doesn't want anyone to perish.

I beseech you therefore brethren, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, this is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1,2"

For Christ - Linda Gooch

Hugoton (Kansas) First Christian Church - Secretary

Living by Faith ought to be the norm

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17

This simple yet profound concept of waiting upon God in living by faith is the very concept which awakened Martin Luther to a new life and eventually The Reformation.

Martin Luther had been living by sight, by words, penances, and ritual. Upon reading Romans 1:17 "*The just shall live by faith.*" he started a whole new life which eventually culminated in The Reformation.

Missionaries to Tibet-Burma, J. Russel Morse & Gertrude Morse, found waiting upon God in daily faith was a necessity.

They tell of many beautiful stories how the Holy Spirit led others through them to wait upon the Lord in living by faith. Their son, Eugene Morse, records in the February, 1974 Reader's Digest one of those stories titled--"Home to Hidden Valley."

Simply he said---The Communists were coming into the area to harass and capture the Christians. Bro. J. Russell Morse challenged

the people:

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him." 2 Corinthians 2:14 The people responded and at midnight after prayer, five thousand started an impossible journey of many miles out of Tibet, around India and into Burma. Brother Morse supposed some would be lost along the way. The perilous path took them through lion country, deadly snakes, and much of the mountain trail required sliding sideways single file. There were many children and mothers with small babies plus elderly folk. They pushed on through wind, rain and mud and after many days arrived safely without the loss of one high in the Himalayan Mountains in a place called "Hidden Valley."

The experiences of the Morse family should not be unusual but the norm for our living, and would be if only we would wait and pray.

In silent times and night time HE provides

"The Lord provides for those he loves, while they are asleep."

Psalm 127:2b (TEV)

Sometimes He supplies as He did this very week with the arrival of a \$500. check from a couple in a far away place. We have never heard of or met these folks, but marvel as we wait and pray while His hand opens to supply.

We may plan, suppose and wonder how needs will be met and directions provided. More often these hoped for blessings are met in ways beyond our imagination.

Saturday, January 20, 2001 was the day to have the oil and grease changed in our Suburban. I checked in and included a yearly

expensive venture for us of a new air cleaner and wiper blades on the list.

While waiting I rambled through the automotive Department of Wal-Mart. In a passing moment I noted a display which appeared to be advertising fire extinguishers. Not finding the tire pressure gauge I was seeking, I walked by the "fire extinguisher" display again, and noted the live tongues of fire seemed to be producing heat. Looking closely I saw the flames were real and a real fire was starting. I summoned a clerk, who in turn called "CODE 3" and stock people appeared from everywhere with extinguishers. The fire was very real and the store Manager said "In just a matter of moments this would have been a bomb as the flames caused high pressure automotive cans to explode. Our automotive bill that day was "on the house."

We parked our Suburban at the Tulsa, Oklahoma airport while visiting our son, Galen and family in Ohio. When we returned, the right rear bumper was bent back into the fender well. Allstate Insurance had a firm make an estimate of \$859.00. We had it repaired at a less expensive firm for \$232.00. An Allstate sent an inspector, Dennis, a fine Christian Brother with whom we shared one of our books--Faith Alive, and got an invitation to speak at their Church Senior Citizen group in Wichita.

Then, *out of the blue* with no explanation, Imalee's medi-gap insurance company sent us a check for \$400. We rejoice and pressed on knowing that the Lord was supplying.

Some may say--"*Well, these kind of things happen to you all the time.*"

No, first time for a sequence of events like these but the bottom line is: **HE DOES SUPPLY I-F WE WAIT IN FAITH!**

Imagine that you are in a little boat near a sandy beach. You throw out an anchor and pull on the rope until you feel the sandy shore slide underneath. Then you step out onto the shore. What have you done? Have you moved the shore to the boat? No, you've moved the boat to the shore.

That's what real waiting in prayer is ... not moving God to you in order to get something, but moving yourself closer to God in order to become something. Now you are close enough to listen to what He wants to say to you.

Too many people think of waiting and prayer as a panic-stricken plea to God, the all-powerful doctor, to get an immediate solution to their problem. Two-way prayer-waiting is much more. It involves listening to God as much as it does talking to God. God told the prophet Jeremiah, "Call to me and I will answer you." That's two-way prayer.

IN CONCLUSION

We need to keep in mind the following truths as we seek to mature:

1. WE WILL RECEIVE A BODY: You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period you're around. So, learn to like it and mature it.

2. WE WILL RECEIVE LESSONS: You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called life.

Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. Learn the lessons and you will mature.

3. THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, ONLY LESSONS: Maturity is a process of trial and error, experimentation. The "Failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately matures us.

4. A LESSON IS REPEATED UNTIL LEARNED: A lesson will be presented to us in various forms until we have learned it. When you have learned it, you are maturing and can go on to the next lesson.

5. LEARNING LESSONS DOES NOT END: Maturity goes on to the end: There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons.

6. "THERE" IS NO BETTER THAN "HERE": When our "There" has become a "Here", we will simply obtain another "There" that will, again, look better than "Here"--that is a part of maturing.

7. OTHERS ARE MERELY MIRRORS OF US: You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something you love or hate about yourself. So, as we mature we will come to love all people.

8. WHAT WE MAKE OF OUR LIFE IS UP TO US: We have all the tools and resources we need. What we do with them is up to us. This will be maturity. The choice is ours.

9. OUR ANSWERS LIE INSIDE US: Our answers to life's

questions lie inside **and above** us. All we need to do is look up, listen, trust and follow Him.

10. WE WILL FORGET ALL OF THIS and what we have spoken of in these chapters unless we consistently stay focused on the reality that **Jesus is our goal and the contents of life our tools to mature us.**

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:3-6 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

by Chuck Thomas - Tulsa, Oklahoma

Chapter 8 - "WAITING ON THE LORD!"

- 1. What did Adam's curiosity and unwillingness to wait upon the Lord cause?**

- 2. God works for those who do what?**

- 3. What does Paul say the Holy Spirit is laboring in for?**
- 4. What is the theme of the entire Bible?**
- 5. In Psalm 37:4, we are told to delight ourselves in the Lord; and he shall give what?**
- 6. When Isaac asked his father about the sacrificial lamb, what was Abraham's answer?**
- 7. What is the grand promise to all who will wait upon Him?**
- 8. What does waiting on the Lord bring?**
- 9. Linda Dellenbach says, "God is all wise and powerful. But sometimes we....." Don't have what?**
- 10. Linda Dellenbach also said, We need to be careful not**

**to jump to conclusions why some one is suffering.
Instead....." What do we need to do?**

11. Sometimes long term waiting is what?

12. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?

13. How old was Sarah when Isaac was born?

**14. Why did the Israelites have to spend 40 years in the
Wilderness?**

**15. Exodus 13:17-18 says that God did not lead the people
on the road through the Philistine country, though that
was shorter. Why did he do this?**

16. What should the norm be for the Christian?

17. What should also be the norm for the Christian?

18. Psalm 127:2b tells us what?

19. What is real waiting in prayer?

20. What is "two-way" prayer-waiting?



SUGGESTED ANSWERS **to Discussion Questions**

Chapter 1 - "MATURITY, NOT PERFECTION"

1. In Hebrews 6:1-That they should grow up from a state of childhood to the fullness of the stature of the mature man in Christ.
2. Six
3. Foundation-principles. --- Repentance from dead work. Faith towards God. The doctrine of baptisms. Laying on of hands. The resurrection of the dead. Eternal judgment.
4. Imaginative treatment that seeks to show an author's or artist's conception of perfection.
5. To be concerned with acts in accordance with actual facts, rather than ideals, feelings and imagined perfection.
6. zeal gone to seed.
7. To be concerned with acts in accordance with actual facts rather than ideals, feelings and imagined perfection.
8. People and their needs.
9. Complete, fully grown, mature.
10. Focus on the doctrinal error of others with no attention given to our own need for correction/growth.
11. Embezzler.