

WAITING AND STOPPING

Psalms 37:34 ... "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt you to inherit the land..."

We are all called to serve God by sharing Christ with others. No one is exempted from that requirement. Most people minister to others one-on-one in the workplace, in their village, or social club. Others are called to serve God fulltime as pastors, Bible teachers, and missionaries. All are instructed to share and some are called to serve fulltime. Serving God fulltime is not something you can decide to do on your own without God's blessing.

There is a principle that is very important for all of us to learn. That is the distinction between waiting and stopping. There are many verses and teachings in the Bible related to "waiting upon the Lord." It simply means that when God appoints you to do something special for him – such as pastoring or being a missionary – you must not run ahead of him and make your own plans.

God has his own time in which he wants you to accomplish your calling. If you become impatient waiting for God to get things moving, you will make countless mistakes and find yourself all alone in your own plan. Your plan will likely fail, leaving you miserable, discouraged, and depressed. You may even blame God for your failure, neglecting the fact that God was not ready for you to move ahead. When you move down the path God makes for you, pass through the doors he opens, and progress at the pace he ordains, you will find God to be your capable partner; you will enjoy his blessings and provisions.

However, some people consider the instruction to wait upon the Lord to be an instruction to stop serving Him. That is just as bad as moving ahead of him. If God tells you to wait for further instructions or open doors for the special ministry that he has appointed you to, he does not intend for you to stop serving him. You still have the same general assignment that all believers are given: To share Christ with others. You must persevere in that assignment to satisfy God that he can trust you with the bigger assignment.

Our verse today tells us to "wait on the Lord," but the next part is even more revealing. It tells us to "keep his way." Even if God calls you to a special ministry, you must keep his way by fulfilling the basic requirement that all believers have in common, to serve God one-on-one. The verse goes on to say that if we wait for the guidance of God and continue serving him while waiting, we will be exalted by God. It is not only pastors and missionaries who will inherit the land, but every believer who serves God as God instructs us. Do not confuse waiting with stopping. You must continue ministering while you wait.

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