

DEBBIE BARR

The Mystery of Waiting

How God Works While We Wait





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God's Mysterious Ways

To know God's timing, we must wait for him to reveal it to us. If we're not really that interested in knowing God or his plan for us, he won't force it upon us. He will gladly reveal it, however, to anyone who is sincerely seeking him and his direction for their life. We'll be frustrated though if we expect him to respond on our timetable. He will answer us just as he does all other things: when the time is right.

Isaiah 55:8 tells us that God's thoughts and ways are nothing like ours; they are higher and wiser. We easily accept this as fact because, after all, he is God, right? But because his ways are so far beyond anything we can even imagine, they often don't make sense to us. And when those higher, wiser ways make us wait, we're often surprised, and maybe a little irritated too: what is he *doing*?

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,"
says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond
anything you could imagine."

ISAIAH 55:8 NLT

We naturally expect God to respond in ways that seem rational and reasonable to us. While he does sometimes do that, other times, to our great consternation, he does not. What we forget is that God knows what we do not know. He knows what the future holds, and because his love for us is as perfect as his timing, he will always do what's best for us if it is different than what we have asked for. When his answers don't match our expectations, we're often perplexed. No wonder Paul wrote, "How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!" (Romans 11:33 NLT).

We might be somewhat less perplexed by God's higher, wiser answers if we begin to expect him to respond in ways that surprise us.

Sometimes God answers in ways we could never have imagined.

For example, who would ever have thought that God would accomplish our salvation in the way he did? Jesus left the perfection of heaven and humbled himself to take on human flesh, entering the world as a helpless newborn baby. The circumstances were supernatural: he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin teenage girl. He grew up in submission to human parents. He walked the earth

for only thirty-three years and died a horrible death by crucifixion to be the human sacrifice for the sins of the world.

If you or I had designed the plan of salvation, we would never have done it this way. This is why the song “A Strange Way to Save the World” resonates so deeply with many of us. (Find links to this amazing song in the resources in the back of this book.) We wait upon the very same God! Why should we be surprised if he chooses to answer our prayers in ways we could never have imagined?

Sometimes God answers so subtly that his handiwork may only be realized in hindsight.

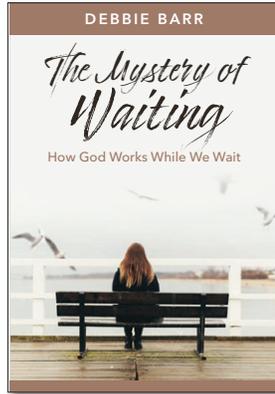
Many of God’s answers occur “as”—that is, *as* we are living life normally and *as* we are just doing what we know to do while waiting on God. “As” is how the miracle occurred in Matthew, chapter 15. There was a problem: too many people and a pitifully small amount of food to share. But *as* the disciples were distributing the seven loaves of bread and few small fish that Jesus had blessed, these meager resources multiplied to feed four thousand men and their families. The miraculous unfolded as the humblest of foods—bread and fish—were simply torn into pieces and given away. We serve the same God! He still

delights in sometimes breaking in on our everyday lives in unexpected ways *as* we're just doing normal things while waiting for his answers. Sometimes we don't realize until we look back later that the Lord's fingerprints are all over the unexpected thing that happened and met our need.



Sometimes God answers at unexpected times.

As we read in Ecclesiastes, there is a “right time” for everything, and God alone is the sovereign scheduler of events. Our challenge is trusting that God will move in our personal circumstances at the right time and also bring about the answers to our prayers at the right time. God’s timing is a mystery: sometimes God answers before the “amen” is even spoken, as with George Mueller on board the steam ship; other times, the answer comes months or years later when we least expect it.



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The Mystery of Waiting

How God Works While We Wait

Why does God make us wait? Why, when it would be so easy for God to just say “yes” to our prayers, does he instead so often say “wait”? The Bible tells us that waiting is a part of God’s plan for our lives. But why? It can all feel like a bit of a mystery.

Drawing from biblical teachings, author Debbie Barr provides tools to help you discover what God might be teaching you about his timing and his plan for your life. You’ll see how the experience of waiting upon the Lord can be a catalyst for amazing growth and healing. Whenever you are in a period of waiting, know that God is still working in you and your circumstances.

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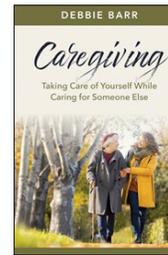


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Overwhelmed

Do you have too many tasks on your to-do list but not enough bandwidth to complete them? When we are stressed-out and running on empty, we are driven by what’s urgent instead of what’s really important. Life robs us of joy and keeps us from the good works that God prepared in advance for us (Ephesians 2:10). Are you ready to discover your true purpose and trade overwhelm for peace?

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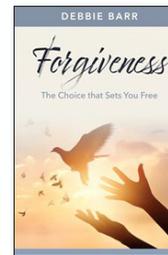


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Caregiving

Caregiving is draining—emotionally and physically. From changing bandages and diapers, to managing medical appointments and picking up prescriptions, caregiving can feel like an endless journey. But here’s the great news: the caregiving experience doesn’t have to be like that. When caregiving tasks are shared and caregivers understand how to take good care of themselves too, the whole experience can be much brighter for everyone.

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Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult things you may ever have to seek or find. It’s also one of the most important and rewarding things you can do. Packed with practical advice, helpful visuals, scannable outlines, and encouraging Scriptures, *Forgiveness* is an all-in-one resource to get you started on your forgiveness journey today!

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