

The Lure of Instant Gratification

News flash: We live in a world of instant gratification.

- You can place an order with Amazon and have it the next day—and in some cases, the same day.
- The Disney parks offer the Disney Genie+ program which gives you shorter lines. Do more in less time—if you're willing to pay.
- We'd rather pay for 1 gig of Internet speed rather than 500Mbps because it's twice as fast, although for most of us there is no discernable difference.
- The wide range of instant and microwavable foods available on aisle 17 at the supermarket is a clear indication that we want our food without a wait.

I'll admit I like things quickly. I've caught myself warming up a Pop Tart in the microwave—it only takes ten seconds—and wishing the microwave would hurry up.

Unfortunately, instant gratification has its downside:

- We make a large purchase with a credit card rather than wait and save up the cash.
- We grab a quick not-so-healthy snack rather than take the time to eat a well-balanced meal.
- We binge watch another episode rather than get a good night's sleep.
- We hit the snooze alarm *again* rather than give ourselves time to eat breakfast or spend time in God's Word.

The pull of instant gratification can get us in hot water. When temptation to sin comes calling and offers you something now—something pleasurable *now!*—we too quickly give in rather than abstain and wait.

But waiting is a word our culture frowns upon. Services and products are continually popping up trying to eliminate the prospect of having to wait for something. But waiting has its benefits.

- Waiting develops discipline in our lives.
- Waiting can reduce stress.
- Waiting can result in better decision making.

When temptation calls, instead of giving in to the pull of instant gratification, wait—and wait in a very specific way:

Wait on the Lord.

Waiting on the Lord is frequently heard in Scripture.

“Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!” (Ps. 27:14 NKJV).

“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass” (Ps. 37:7 NKJV).

“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 NKJV).

Some translations use the verbiage of trusting or hoping in the Lord, verbs that accurately reflect what it means to wait on the Lord. When temptation calls, we wait on the Lord. We look to Him instead of gazing at the temptation. We wait, choosing to trust in Him instead of trusting in any momentary pleasure sin may offer.

But waiting is not a passive activity. Waiting is not sitting idly by, twiddling our thumbs and staring at the ceiling. Waiting should be active. Consider a waiter in a restaurant. Why is he called a waiter? Because he waits!

We're used to waiters who are waiting on several tables at once but forget Waffle House for a moment and picture a seriously high-priced restaurant. One of those where the menus have no prices. (“If you have to ask, you can't afford it.”) My wife's small company had a Christmas dinner in such a place. We had one waiter, and he had one table: ours. He stood by, ever ready to step up if it looked like we needed something. He served us with undivided attention. (It was a great experience, but I'm glad my wife's boss picked up the bill.)

When we wait upon God, we do not stand by passively. We serve Him. Serving is a part of waiting. We see a need and we step in. We serve God by serving those around us. And when we're busy serving the Lord, we don't have time to chase a temptation.

What we experience as we wait on the Lord is far better than anything temptation and sin has to offer.

“The Lord *is* good to those who wait for Him, To the soul *who* seeks Him” (Lam 3:25 NKJV).