

Delight In The Delay

By Brooke Janes
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Six years ago I found myself at a crossroads: I was either about to get engaged to the man I had given five-and-a-half years of my life to, or I was going to obey God and walk away. God had been extending an invitation to step away from that relationship for quite some time, but I continually gave a polite decline. "No thanks, we'll make this work. Thanks for checking in though, God!"

Over and over again, He extended that invitation. In my heart, I knew what needed to be done, but I recognized that by accepting this invitation, I would be stepping into unknown territory. And that thought was terrifying. I knew that my carefully crafted answer to the question of where I see myself in five years would crumble into a million pieces.

In John 10, Jesus says that His sheep know His voice and they follow Him. I heard His voice loud and clear, but I was not following. It wasn't until a friend of mine said, "Delayed obedience is still disobedience," that it all clicked for me. I was actively disobeying by not accepting His invitation. He had better plans, but I was holding on to what felt comfortable. I was miserable, but I had created a cozy space in that misery.

After years of running away, I made a choice. I accepted the invitation and stepped into the unknown. When the words "I can't do this anymore," left my mouth and marked the end of that relationship, it felt as if a thousand pound weight had fallen off of me. I had been carrying something that wasn't mine to carry. When I finally surrendered, I allowed Jesus to take all of that from me. I felt free.

During the weeks that followed, I had heard many similar stories of "I remember God shutting the door with my ex. Two weeks later, my now husband came into the picture. Don't worry girl, your man is just around the corner." I'm here to say that after six years, I have discovered that my husband must be coming around a corner that is placed in a far away country, and he's surely moving at a turtle speed. Can anyone relate?

All jokes aside, I'm thankful that my husband didn't walk around the corner two weeks later. He would have found a very confused and broken girl. My past relationship had twisted my view of what love looked like and caused me to question my worth. I had no idea who I was. I had been trying to find my identity in a man that continued to break my heart, rather than looking to the One who holds and heals my heart. I was always trying to prove that I was good enough, rather than listening to the voice of my Father telling me that I am more than enough.

I believe the Lord has had me in this "single season" the past few years to teach me who I am, to show me my value, and to allow Him to pursue me. I had a moment during prayer a while back where the Lord told me, "Before you can ever be one with anyone else, you must first learn to be one with me." I am pressing into this gift of time He has given me, allowing His presence to fill the space of the inbetween, learning how to hear His voice louder than any other. Though I long to be a wife, and I eagerly wait for the day I get to say, "I do," the Lord is teaching me how to be a bride - how to be HIS bride. I don't want to rush this moment. I don't want to miss Him in the process as I try to hurry and escape the waiting.

I don't know where you find yourself on this journey, but if God has you waiting, don't resist. Press into this gift of time that He has given to you. He wastes nothing. If you find yourself in this in-between space, there must be purpose. That doesn't mean there won't be pain and longing. I was recently steaming tablecloths for my sister-in-law's baby shower, and out of nowhere tears welled up in my eyes and I said, "This isn't fair, God. How many more bridal and baby showers do I have to help set up before it's my turn?" I sat there for a moment allowing myself to feel all the emotions, and then thanked God for the opportunity to celebrate with so many wonderful people in my life. I began praising God that when it is my turn, I'll have an army of people to celebrate with me. Romans 12:15 (NKJV) says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." I have rejoiced with many friends as they have stepped foot into their promised land, and I have friends who have cried with me in the waiting.

The best piece of advice that I can offer - besides growing in your relationship with God - is to find your people. Build relationships with people you can do life with, rejoicing and weeping all the same. Surround yourself with people who will lead you closer to the feet of Jesus. Get past surface level relationships and find those you can safely be vulnerable with. One of the greatest treasures I have found the past few years have been the friendships. Recently my roommates and I decided to start waking up every Tuesday morning to do our quiet time together. One thing we are specifically praying for on these mornings is our future husbands. These are the kind of friends that you want in your corner.

Several years ago, I also started writing letters and prayers for my future husband. I have a "husband box" that holds gifts that I have bought him, letters about how life is for me currently, and dreams that I have for our future. I have written prayers for wherever he is right now, and for the life we will one day share together. Something about that little box gives me hope in the waiting. I'm excited to one day be able to give him this gift.

Waiting isn't passive, it's active. How you wait matters. I challenge you to ask God, "How can I grow while I wait? What can I do in the meantime to prepare for what's ahead of me?" Then do something tangible. Sit down and write a letter or a prayer for your future spouse today. Allow God to get your hopes up as you wait with expectation and preparation. The best is yet to come!

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