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By Rick Boxx

Waiting: The 'Game' No One Likes To Play

Many of us find ourselves each day on the proverbial treadmill, frantically rushing to another appointment or the next deadline, refusing to slow down for fear of failing or missing out on some once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Patience is not a virtue we strive to nurture. If we wait, we suspect this fast-paced world will still keep moving, leaving us far behind.

People talk about the “waiting game,” but it is a “game” the vast majority of us find no pleasure in playing. We want what we want – and we want it now. Whatever “it” happens to be.

Some time ago I met with a successful business leader who admitted this. He told me that one of the hardest things for him is to “wait on the Lord.” Finding himself in a time of transition, he felt ready to move forward with the next stage of his career, but God would not release him yet. So, he found himself in God’s “waiting room.”

Driven, goal-focused business leaders often struggle with waiting patiently on God’s direction, preferring to charge forward on their own. There are many reasons for this. When forced to wait, we feel no longer in control, like we are at the mercy of circumstances as they unfold. We are action-oriented and think that waiting – pausing from frenetic activity – is a terrible waste of time and energy.

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However, as we consider principles presented in the Bible from our perspectives as business and professional people, we discover that some of God's greatest work occurs after He has commanded His people to wait.

For instance, we read in Acts 16 a time when the apostle Paul and his companions were prohibited from going into an area that seemed very reasonable for them to enter: *"When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to" (Acts 16:7)*. They must of wondered why, knowing the people in the region needed to hear the Good News they were so eager to present.

In fact, Paul was stopped twice from moving forward with his plan. However, he later learned the reason for the delay. By waiting on the Lord and His timing, Paul eventually was able to launch a vibrant church in Macedonia instead. God, it turned out, had a better idea.

In *Psalm 37*, written by King David of Israel, we read passages filled with action verbs: *"Trust in the Lord..." "Delight yourself in the Lord..." "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him..."* Those are words we like to hear – things we can do. But then we read, *"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37:7)*. In verse 34 of the same psalm we read, *"Wait for the Lord and keep his way."*

When we read such instructions, we want to respond, "What? Wait? Why can't we just keep moving? There is so much to do!" Often, we discover in retrospect that God's plans and His timing are different – and superior – to what we had in mind. When you are feeling stifled by God, remember that He knows the beginning and the end. And our heavenly Father always knows what is best.

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up for Rick's daily Integrity Moments emails, visit www.unconventionalbusiness.org. His latest book, *Unconventional Business*, provides "Five Keys to Growing a Business God's Way."

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. How good are you at waiting? What is your typical reaction when confronted with an unexpected and undesired delay?
2. Why do you think waiting is so difficult for most of us?
3. Think of a time when you had no alternative but to wait – and discovered later that the delay actually resulted in a much better outcome. Describe that situation and how you responded – first, when you had to wait, and then when you realized that waiting was the best thing that you could have done.
4. When you run out of options, forced to wait rather than moving forward as you had intended, do you typically recognize that the "waiting game" is of God's doing, a result of His intentions? Why or why not?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

1 Kings 19:1-18; Psalm 40:1-5, 46:10, 62:5, 123:1-2; Isaiah 40:27-31; Lamentations 3:25-29

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