# WAITING ON GOD TO MOVE?

SIX STEPS TO GET HIS ATTENTION



L.M.H.C



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Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted. "NKJV" refers to the New King James Version of the Bible. "NAS" refers to the New American Standard version.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband, Jeff: Thank you for your love and support as I attempt to fulfill the call of God on my life. You are awesome.

To my daughters, Kristine and Caroline, and my son, Mitchell: I am honored to be your mother. Keep Christ first place in your life and He will take you places you never dreamed possible!







In memory of my brother-in-law
Steven R. Larson
December 18, 1954 – April 30, 2010
whose life and death impacted so many.

Steve, I wish I could say thank you once more for the inspiration you were to your wife, three children, family, and friends. You are missed more than words can express.







Do you feel like you have been waiting on God to move in some specific way in your life or in a loved one's life? Are you frustrated? Do you wonder if the answer is ever going to come?

Guess what. You are not alone. If you take a look in the Bible, you will see example after example of men and women who had to wait on God's timing to see their prayers answered.

God is a faithful God, and He is a God of restoration. Can you trust that fact? Jeremiah 29:11 states:

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

This is a promise from God that we can hold on to and meditate upon. The Lord has plans to bless you. Can you believe this? Can you trust in God's perfect timing for the answer you have been waiting for?

If you are waiting on God to move, I am so glad that you have picked up this small booklet. It is my heart's desire that the contents will help you get through the waiting time until your answer comes. Waiting on God's timing can be difficult. Many





times when we are waiting on Him it feels like the answer is never going to come. During this suspended time period, can you trust that He is doing a good work in you while you are waiting on Him to answer your prayers?

In my twenty-five years of counseling, I have seen Christians struggle while waiting on God to move. I personally know what it is like to grow tired during the waiting process. The Bible admonishes us in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Don't give up on His plan and purposes for your life no matter how weary you become. Press on through until you see God's mighty hand move in your given situation.

With the above in mind, I have identified six steps I believe will help you through this lingering process of waiting on God.

### SIX STEPS TO GET GOD'S ATTENTION:

- 1. Be near to God and He will be near to you.
- 2. Be yielded to God's plans and purposes.
- 3. Be persistent in the Word, in faith, and in prayer.
- 4. Be free from worry and fear.
- 5. Be joyful.
- 6. Be forgiving.

Let's begin by looking at the first step.







# BE NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL BE NEAR TO YOU

The Lord's desire is to have a close relationship with you. He is a God who longs for you to put Him first. His Word tells us in Hebrews 11:6, "...He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (NKJV). God wants you to make time to fellowship with Him. He says in Matthew 6:6:

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."



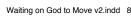
Your heavenly Father knows everything about you. He is your closest friend. Psalm 139:1-4 tells us:

"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord."

Your heavenly Father wants a close relationship with you. He does not want a monologue. He wants you to listen to Him. He wants to speak to you. He wants to reveal to you things you don't yet know.

When I was between ten and twelve years old, I loved to swim. I trained several summers to swim across a lake that was two-and-a-half miles across. In fact, several of us trained all summer long during the week to swim across the beautiful lake and back—altogether a five-mile swim. I can remember practicing with the others to prepare for the "long distance swimming adventure" at the end of the summer before going back to school.

During the weekend though, I would practice on my own. I have fond memories of my father's willingness to swim beside me while I was training individually. There were times when I would have to hold on to my father's neck and let him swim back to shore.





While he continued swimming, I would rest on his back. Whether I was tired or not, it was a blessing to know my father was right by my side. I knew that I could draw near to him at any time.

This is how it is with your heavenly Father. You can draw close to Him. You have to settle the fact and know that He is right beside you. In fact, He *wants* you to draw near. He wants you to be able to trust Him completely.

In James 4:8 we are told, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (NKJV). What a promise this is to us! As we take the time to draw close to Him, He will honor that time. Psalm 16:7 states, "I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me."

Your heavenly Father wants to counsel you and give you direction for your life. You need to find the time to spend with Him and then choose to be disciplined about the time you have set aside.

Get out your Bible or daily devotional, and have a journal in which to write down your prayer requests. God has a plan and purpose for your life. There is a God-given destiny for you. Psalm 37:23-24 informs us that:

"The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand" (NAS and NIV).







How can you know the steps your heavenly Father wants for you to take? You can do this by spending time with Him. He doesn't want to play spiritual cat and mouse with you. He wants you to fulfill your God-given destiny. Therefore, make time to spend with Him and you will not be disappointed.









# BE YIELDED TO GOD'S PLANS AND PURPOSES

od honors when we say to Him, "Lord, I am yielded to You. I desire Your will for my life and not my own." When we choose to say, "I submit to You and Your plans and purposes for my life," God can move and work in a powerful way. Until we are ready to surrender to Him, can He really do His work that He longs to do in us and through us? Can we relinquish control and let God have control of our lives? Think of the saying, "Let go and let God." What would happen in our daily lives if we did that?

God's timing is usually so different—and usually longer—than what we expect it to be. We live in a world where we are taught not



to wait for things. Examples of this would be our drive-through banks, restaurants, and even drycleaners. Our society is like that of a microwave oven. We acquire things so quickly that there is virtually no waiting time. Isaiah 55:8 states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord."

You may feel that the Lord is not hearing your prayers. You may think that you are never going to get out of the situation that you are in. Our heavenly Father's answers to your prayers may seem to never come early. Often, it may feel like you have to wait on God for a lengthy period of time, and many times this is true. But in the meantime, you must remember that God is doing a work in you as you yield to Him. Trust in God's promise that is found in Philippians 1:6. It states, "...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." He longs for you to be mature and complete.

What helps us to become mature Christians? You may not want to hear this, but pain sometimes is the greatest motivator for change. As human beings, we often do not do much changing until we experience enough pain in our lives to make us willing. James 1:2-4 admonishes us to:

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your





faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

What a promise this is to us. Therefore, if you have a problem, big or small, there is good news. God is doing a good work in you so that you can become more like Him.

You need to be excited when you face trials because, in them, good will come out. Romans 8:28 reminds us that, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (NKJV). This verse doesn't say "all things" are good. It does say that God can work "all things" together for good. As you are waiting on Him, He is doing a good work in you.

God, and only God, can take a lousy situation and weave it together for good. As you are waiting on Him, He is doing a good work in you. Take the time to read the story of Joseph (Genesis 39). Think of how Joseph was in prison for twelve long years. I bet there were days when Joseph was discouraged and even questioned, "Where is my God?" But God was there and was faithful. God was present with him in difficulty. When God saw that Joseph was ready, He released him. At that point Joseph went from prisoner to prime minister in one day.





As you continue to yield to your heavenly Father, He will show up in your given situation on His timetable. And you will receive answers to your prayers and begin to walk in newness of life.









# BE PERSISTENT IN THE WORD, IN FAITH, AND IN PRAYER

Right now, you may desire to walk by faith, but instead you may be keeping your eyes on the mess you are in. Therefore, you get discouraged and feel defeated. I challenge you here to keep your eyes and focus on the promises of God. Keep His Word in front of your eyes until you can trust that what He promises in His Word He will do (see Numbers 23:19). Keep His Word in front of you until you can see it coming to pass with the eyes of your spirit.

This is how the spirit of faith works. It looks:



"...Not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

To make myself clear, I am not saying that you should ignore your problems as if they are not real. They *are* real. But again, to remind you according to the Word of God, they are temporary. *Temporary* means that they are "subject to change." You can rest assured that if you keep focusing on the Word of God, your circumstances will change!

In addition, our heavenly Father wants us to be persistent in faith and prayer. The Bible gives example after example of people who were persistent in faith and prayer, and God moved on their behalf. We see an example of a man who was persistent in faith in Luke 11:5-13 when Jesus was teaching His disciples.

This particular man went to a friend's house, knocked on his door, and asked him to get up to lend him three loaves of bread. Reason being, a person on a journey had come to visit his house but he had nothing to feed him. The friend inside the door answered and said, "Don't bother me." He further stated that he and his children were in bed, and the doors were locked. Yet because the man persisted, the friend eventually got up and gave him everything he needed.







Another example of powerful faith and prayer pertains to the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18. "Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (verse 1). Jesus proceeded to teach them about a widow woman who continued going to an unjust judge. She kept requesting that the unjust judge would grant her justice against her adversary. Verse 4 gives the judge's response:

"Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!"

Verses 6-7 go on to tell us what the Lord said:

"Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?"

Mark 5:24-34 is another example of a particular woman who received what she believed by being persistent and having faith. This woman's body had been subjected to a bleeding condition for twelve years. She had heard about this man named Jesus who was trying to make His way through a crowd of people. She felt that if





she could just press through the crowd and touch Him, then she would be made whole. As she pressed through the large crowd and managed to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, she was healed.

People often give up before their prayers are answered. As Christians, we are instructed in Ephesians 6:16 to "take up the shield of faith." Faith is described as a shield that protects us. We have a choice to walk in faith or not. Walking in faith means to believe God as evidenced by our ongoing actions. James 1:6-8 states:

"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

This is a strong statement.

Our heavenly Father wants us to walk in faith. Jesus reveals His character on this aspect over and over in the gospels. The very thing that moved Christ was the faith that people had in Him.

How about you? Can you be diligent in reading and persistent in prayer and faith until your answer comes? The answer is promised to you. To encourage yourself to be persistent before God







regarding any situation you may face, read the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You will see how Jesus honored faith over and over again.

He is faithful concerning His promises to us!







#### **STEP 4:**

## BE FREE FROM WORRY AND FEAR

Our heavenly Father wants us to be totally free from fear and worry. He has provided a way in which this can be accomplished in Him. God instructs us:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).



God calls us to trust in Him. Sometimes it is hard to trust when things are painful and stressful, especially when you feel the situation will never change. I have good news for you. God will enable you to walk in peace and in His security even when you may be walking through the most difficult time of your life.

My siblings and I grew up in upstate New York where sailing was very popular. My father was an avid sailor. In fact, he raced sailboats competitively. When I was a young girl, he would take me out sailing with him. When the winds and waves picked up on the large lake where we would sail, I chose to sit very close to my father on the boat. I would do this because I knew my daddy knew how to maneuver the rudder and the main sail in order to get us safely back to dry ground.

Given the fact that a large part of my family's activities revolved around sailing, it was only natural that I took sailing lessons during the summer. At times the lessons required me to sail alone. As I look back now, I remember that when the weather was windy and a storm was approaching, I always felt safer when I was sailing with my father. Again, this is how it is with our heavenly Father. We are never alone. We can feel safe and secure as we are walking through a difficult time because He is right by our side. Can you trust, in the midst of a storm, that your heavenly Father is going to get you to the other side of the lake safely? (See Mark 4:35-41







where Jesus literally calmed the winds and waves for His disciples.) It is easy to feel safe and secure when we are sitting on a boat in a harbor. But real joy and victory come when we can trust our heavenly Father completely while we are in the middle of a storm.

First Peter 5:7 admonishes us to "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." It does not say to cast "some" or a "few" cares upon Him. No, He wants us to cast "all" our cares upon Him. Why? So we can walk in peace. Romans 12:2 provides us with a little bit of insight on how to go about casting our cares onto Him: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Your mind is like a computer. You can choose to allow positive or negative thoughts to saturate your mind. The choice is yours. That said, you should be aware of one main strategy that satan utilizes in his attacks on us. He works through our thinking. Consequently, our thoughts affect what we say. We can chose to replace old, negative thoughts with positive thoughts, especially with the help of Scripture verses.

Think about this fact for a minute. How would it affect you if you meditated on a verse or two throughout your day? For example, let's use the topic of "fear." Suppose you are being gripped by fear. The reason for this is that the thoughts in your mind are telling your emotions to be gripped by fear. Therefore, you need to





replace the negative thoughts that are driving you to be fearful with one of the many verses in the Bible on this topic. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). Condition yourself to confront the fear head-on with what the Word of God says. And believe what God's Word says—regardless of how you feel or what you see—until the battle is over. Refuse to live in fear!

Another circumstance in which you can replace bad thoughts with good ones is when you suddenly receive some bad news. If this happens to you, you should immediately fall back on verses like Psalm 112:7. Personalize them so that you are the one speaking: "I will have no fear of bad news. My heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord." As suddenly as bad thoughts come to you, condition yourself to immediately respond with Scripture and meditate upon it.

Remember, fear contaminates your faith. You cannot walk in faith and fear at the same time. By nature, you will automatically choose one or the other, and many times you will experience an ongoing battle between them. However, your heavenly Father loves it when you put your trust in Him. The gospels give evidence over and over of how Jesus was moved by people's faith in Him. And remember, you cannot have a testimony without first having a test. But God can make your messy test into your miracle in a moment's time.





#### **STEP 5:**

# **BE JOYFUL**

Nowing Christ should begin to totally transform your life. You can be joyful when you know the benefits in serving God. Do you believe He loves you and He died for you? Do you know that He promises to lead and guide you throughout your earthly life and your eternal life? If you do believe this, you should be walking in joy.

Psalm 103 is often referred to as the believer's "benefit package." Verses 2-5 in this Psalm tell us:

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who





redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

### Verses 12-13 of this same Psalm go on to say that:

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

If we believe Him at His word, we sure have reason to shout for joy. He is a heavenly Father who can be trusted. If we trust Him even in difficult situations and circumstances, we can be joyful. And we can trust Him. In Psalm 89:34-35 God states, "I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness...."

If you are walking through a difficult situation, keep in mind God's Word can get you through anything. You have to know that you can trust Him. If you *know* that your heavenly Father knows all about you, and that He cares about all the details in your life, then you can rejoice in the fact that He is working out all these details for your good.







Remember, being joyful is a choice. You can wake up in the morning and choose to be joyful, or you can choose to be down because of the difficult circumstances in your life. Be encouraged today and choose joy. In regard to this emotion called joy, always remember Nehemiah 8:10: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." When you praise and thank Him, in advance, for working out all the details in your given situation, your heavenly Father honors that choice and gives you strength.

Psalm 22:3 teaches that God inhabits the praises of His people. God loves when we praise Him because it demonstrates that we have faith in Him and that we love and trust Him. Again, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." This means that when you have no joy, you have no strength. Therefore, if you are feeling down because of your present and given circumstances, do something.

For instance, turn on some praise music. Do what King David in the Bible did (see 2 Samuel 6:14). Dance, sing, or even laugh a little. The Bible encourages us to offer up to God a sacrifice of praise. This means that we should praise Him like King David did even though we may not feel like doing so. Regardless of how you feel, just do it! See what it can do for you. You may look and feel a little funny dancing, singing, and praising. But just remember, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."





#### STEP 6:

## BE FORGIVING

The thought is overwhelming that Christ died on the cross to forgive us of our sin nature. Colossians 2:13 is but one of many Scripture verses that remind us of this fact. It states, "When you were dead in your sins...God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins." What a blessing to think that we have been forgiven. We are free from our sins. We have been made new creatures in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:16-18).

Now that we have been made new creatures in Christ, God expects us to treat others like He would. Colossians 3:12-13 states:

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility,





gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Can you imagine how awesome it would be if all believers walked in forgiveness toward one another?!

So often believers do not understand that when they choose not to forgive others, they are hurting themselves, not their offenders. But it is true. When you walk in unforgiveness, it opens the door for resentment, hate, and bitterness in your life. Think about it for a moment. And looking at this principle from another angle, forgiving someone is the best revenge. Why? Because you can then sleep normally, eat normally, and move on with your life, usually with less pitfalls. God calls us not to walk in unforgiveness. Stated another way, God calls us to walk in forgiveness—and for our own good.

God knew even before He formed you how destructive unforgiveness would be for you. Therefore, learn to let things go! In fact, learn to be quick to forgive. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, "But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Having read that verse, are you being stretched yet?

God wants His children to live and respond differently from those in the world. He wants to be glorified through you, especially when it comes to forgiveness. Jesus emphatically stated in Matthew 6:14-15:







"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

This is a direct statement that leaves no room for excuses.

You may be saying to yourself right now, "Well, you don't know how much this person has hurt me." Or, "You don't realize that in my own strength I cannot forgive this person." True, no one really knows how much you have been hurt by others except you and God. But this is why He gives us promises in His Word through Scripture verses like Second Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." God's Word states over and over again that we can ask Him to help us, and He will.

Remember, He is your heavenly Father. He created you. He set your emotions into order. He realizes that harboring unforgiveness within your heart only hurts you. With this in mind, take a risk. Ask the Lord to help you forgive. Ask Him to help you see the person(s) you are having difficulty forgiving like He sees them. Your heavenly Father can reveal things that will help you to walk in forgiveness.

If at first you find it difficult to forgive, it may help you to know that forgiveness is a process and not necessarily an event.





Another strategy that will help you is to find a trusted individual whom you can talk to about this issue. Become accountable to him or her while walking through this process of forgiveness.

Ephesians 3:20 states that He can "do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (NKJV). Ask God to help you, and learn to take Him at His word. He promises that He can do far more than you can think.

For those of you who may have experienced broken relationships with family members or friends that you wish to be restored, our God is in the restoration business. Joel 2:25 gives evidence of this fact. In it God says, "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." As you do your part and choose to walk in forgiveness, your heavenly Father can do mighty things in the other person's heart and mind. He can then cause broken relationships to be mended.







aybe you are insecure in your prayer life, and are not sure if your prayers will be answered. Some people doubt that God will move and answer their prayers because of sin in their lives. Maybe you are afraid to bring your prayer requests to God because you do not feel worthy. Remember, the Bible tells us that we should draw near to His throne because it is a "throne of grace." Therefore, take Hebrews 4:16 to heart and hold fast to what it says. It encourages us:

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (NAS).



I want to remind you that we cannot approach Him because of anything we have done, for none of us can measure up to His standards. We have access to the throne of grace because of Jesus. Because of what Christ did on the cross, our prayers do not have to be blocked by our sins, mistakes, and weaknesses. Hebrews 4:15 informs us that:

"we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."

Christ knows what it is like to be tempted. He understands the situation you are in and the trial you are walking through. Therefore, come to Him as you are. You don't need to "clean up" your life to come into His presence. Come just as you are and cry, "Help me!" At this moment, don't feel intimidated because of your weaknesses or failures, and don't be afraid because of any sins you might have committed. Right now, you can confess your sins to God and receive forgiveness from Him.

Refuse to be robbed of your God-given right to bring your needs and requests to your heavenly Father. Remember, He is a God who loves to answer prayer. Today, you can approach God's throne with confidence. And remember, it is a throne of grace!







Every day is a brand-new day. Can you put yesterday's trials behind you? Can you wake up today and declare Isaiah 43:18-19?

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

Can you wake up tomorrow and say, "I am one day closer to my miracle" and, "I am one hour closer to answered prayer"?

Many years ago I read a book by Hope McDonald called *Discovering How to Pray*.<sup>1</sup> A chapter in this book is dedicated to picturing a prayer as answered. McDonald expresses the importance of visualizing your loved one healed, your relationship with your spouse made whole, your financial situation restored, your children serving Christ, etc. I have found that this exercise is helpful in achieving the desired end result of our prayers. Try practicing this spiritual exercise with Christ Jesus in mind.

Habakkuk 2:2 admonishes us to, "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that [we] may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time...." In essence, this verse reminds us to write down our prayer requests.



<sup>1</sup> Hope McDonald, Discovering How to Pray (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).



Expect that God wants to give you the desire of your heart and make your plans succeed (read Psalm 20:4). Expect your prayers to be answered.

Genesis 18:14 states, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" No situation is too big or too desperate for our God. Expect Him to move on your behalf. Wait on Him and His timing, and you will not be disappointed!







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VALERIE PETERSON is a conference speaker and has been a regular guest on a radio talk show addressing mental health concerns. She has a degree in social work from Ashland University and her Masters degree in pastoral psychology and counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary. She is a licensed minister through the International Conference of Faith Ministries, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of Florida, and a National Certified Counselor. Valerie is in private practice with Destin Counseling Center in Destin, Florida. She specializes in women's issues, marriage and family issues, and addictions. An award-winning writer recognized by Parenting Publications of America, Valerie writes on psychological, educational, and health topics. She lives on Florida's Emerald Coast with her husband and three children.







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