



11: The Daily Struggle of Waiting

Hi, I'm Elisa Preston. You're listening to episode 11 of Praise Through It.



This podcast is based on Philippians 4:8, which says “Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, whatever is excellent and praiseworthy -- think about these things.” My goal will always be to help you see an old burden in a new way, to see the praiseworthy side of your daily struggles. To see life in a way that brings hope, and in a way that shows the glimmer of light that inevitably shines, even in the daily grind. If that's something you're working on or you'd like to be a part of, listen in.



Before we get started, I want to let you know some business up-front, especially if you don't like surprises. This summer on Praise Through It will look a little different. Season 1 will wrap up after 2 more episodes. Starting the last week of June, you'll have two new kinds of episodes through the end of August/beginning of September. One episode will be a couple minutes and will be a short blessing for your week. The other will be Praise Through It Together, a community extension--a community offering--of what I do here solo each week. There will be IGTV videos and the audio will publish to this podcast feed each week, starting the week of June 30th. I'll be talking to women who have their own beautiful stories and perspectives on seeing the praiseworthy side of our daily struggles. I'm really excited to share those with you, so stick around and make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss any.

Now, for a conversation on the daily struggle of a four-letter word: wait.



(acoustic guitar melody)

I live on the corner of a four-way intersection. It has a STOP sign at all four corners. Yet, if I were to calculate the actual percentage of cars that *actually stopped* ... I'm guessing it would be around 15-25%. Because we're a thru-street between two big roads, and because the area is pretty wide open and it's easy to see whether or not another car or person is coming, so most people just don't see the value in stopping.

And to be perfectly honest with you, if you tune your ear just absolutely to the speaker when you're listening to this podcast you might be able to hear a car or two in the background. Where I record in my house faces the four-way intersection. So, if you can, you can; if you can't, you can't. (small laugh). That'll make me feel better.

Even if you are an ardent follower of the STOP signs on your regular commutes and routes, how often do we blast through STOP signs in our lives? How often do we keep going when something should clearly be *done*? How often do we keep trying the same thing when tries 1-999 haven't worked, we're hoping that by waiting, by trying for all those times, we're hoping that the 1,000th time will be the miracle worker? Because we are waiting for that miracle.

Sometimes there's truth to and value in that.

Also, if there are three STOP signs on your travels today, see what they have to offer. Experience the value in pausing. (All the way, not coasting through, but actually pausing). Taking a breath. Feeling the STOP all the way, through and through.

Sometimes the value of a STOP sign cannot be overstated. On the road, they're meant to keep everyone safe, keep everyone aware, and keep everyone in line. They are just light-hearted suggestions for our travels. And maybe God sends the same kind of STOP signs for us & we'd do well to adhere to them.

Listen, I'm not talking about this because I'm an expert. Waiting is a four-letter word isn't it? We want nothing to do with it: the impatient leg bounce, the dizzying effects of the wonder-worry see-saw; the snacking, the tense shoulders, the silence, the noise. Waiting looks different for everyone depending on what we're waiting for, but I assure you: you are not alone, the person next to you is waiting for something, too.

What do we do when it seems like all we do is wait? Waiting for an answer or a diagnosis. Waiting for dinner or waiting for the game to start. Waiting for your dog to do her business or waiting for your kid to do the same. Waiting for the job to come through or for the job to end. Waiting for the deployment or TDY to be over. Waiting for the next duty assignment, waiting for the next promotion, waiting to board a plane. Waiting for the grief to be over. Waiting for the joy to come. Waiting for the night to pass. Waiting for the morning to arrive.

So many opportunities to learn how to wait well, huh?

Well again, since waiting is not my strong suit, I won't offer advice on how to do it well. Emily P. Freeman has an episode or two on what your next right thing can be while you wait. You can check out episodes 18 and 48 of her podcast, *The Next Right Thing*. I'll also link those in the show notes if you want to check them out.

Google 'books on waiting' and you'll find a host of options. I will also link my Google search in my show notes.

If you have littles, Kevin Henkes (or Henk-ees, H-E-N-K-E-S, I'm honestly now sure how to pronounce that) has a beautiful book called *Waiting* - it is one of our family favorites. If I remember correctly, it was the first book I read to my daughter as an infant.

When we were kids, waiting was the worst, right? I guess it still might be, depending on what we're waiting for. But when we were kids, waiting five minutes for Mom to get the ice cream out and ready felt like forever. Waiting 30 or 45 minutes after eating to go in the pool felt like a lifetime. Waiting for our friends to arrive might as well have been an eon. As kids, we didn't really have a good concept of time. Our expectations were more like five minutes equals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Done! I can still see myself at 6 years old doing that to my mom in the hallway. As we get older, we know that instead of just counting to five we actually have to count to 60 five separate times. What does *not* change is the fact that we hold our own expectations of what should happen and when it should happen.

So I'm not sure how to teach you how to wait well. What I can do, though, is what I always try to do: show you the praiseworthy side of the daily struggle of *waiting*.

What is so great about waiting? What is so true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy about waiting? About adhering to life's natural STOP signs?

Before I go through this list, let me assure you: I had to work for this. It was not an easy flow of words where I went from one flowery thought to another. For every one you're about to hear, I wrote the first sentence and then said out loud: I don't know. *Waiting stinks*. Please know you're not alone in struggling through the act of waiting. When I let God gently prod my heart to figure out what's so good about waiting, some really cool things came out.

What's true about waiting is that it can be tough. Amazon knows this, that's why I got my copy of *The Lazy Genius Way* less than 48 hours after it was ordered for me by a beautiful friend who is clearly invested in my sanity.

What's also true about waiting is that we might see something on the way to the destination that offers us a fuller experience of humanity, a fuller view of life as God intended.

What's noble about waiting is that when we do it, we teach our littles to do it. We show them that Mommy can wait in the grocery store line and not get riled up that the person in front of her has 9 items in the 7-or-less line. And then, look, we throw in some empathy, compassion, and minding our own business lessons in there, too. Win-win-win-win.

What's right about waiting is it is a tool God uses to draw us nearer to him. The Psalms are full of soul-level requests to ease anguish, to hurry past the hurt and get to the healing. Song after song, poem after poem, talk about waiting as an act of worship and as a way to remember who is really in control (and who's really *not* in control).

What's pure about waiting? I think it gets our hearts into this natural rhythm with God. Waiting says: I see what's in front of me and I see where I want to be, and I know you know how I get there. Show me the way, help me discern left from right, and be with me in the murky middle.

What's lovely about waiting? I suppose this would depend on the circumstance, huh? If you're waiting for an answer after a scary doctor's appointment, you might find nothing lovely about waiting. If you're waiting for a flower in your garden to bloom, you might find those buds incredibly lovely. I think the point is to find the lovely in what is presently around you. Waiting for that answer? Find a song that lifts your spirit. Find a lovely flower that reminds you of the truth that rain is imperative for growth.

What's admirable about waiting? I think about how many mistakes are made right off the bat in anything we do. Rarely does impatience lend itself to excellence. So in waiting, we curb some of the mistakes we might have made had we rushed and put the cart before the horse.

What's excellent about waiting is it can give us more of a chance to find ways to relish in our present-day life. I'll admit this was the hardest one to figure out because I generally don't think there's anything *excellent* about waiting. But I can remember plenty of seasons of waiting and all the *delighting* we've done. Because until *the thing* comes down the pipe, we have space for other things that can do us good. While we wait for a job, we can enjoy one extra episode of our favorite show or one extra mile on our morning run. While we wait for a call from the doctor after some blood work, we can make space and energy for reading. While we wait for our kids to get their morning routine done so we can head out the door, we can delight in the sunrays dancing through our window. In waiting, there is always room and space to relish in something when we take the energy we would have spent worrying through the wait, and instead live and delight and relish through the waiting.

What's praiseworthy about waiting is the chance to delight in hopeful expectation, and what could be healthier for the soul than hopeful expectation.



I do know that some of us today are waiting for something that seems impossible: a job, a pregnancy, a birth, an invitation, an answer, a question, a moving on of some sort. I know that finding the true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy does not work for every STOP sign we experience. And I'm pretty sure that's okay. It's biblical to find these attributes in our situations, it's also biblical and totally permissible for you to feel antsy or angry or tired. Both sides exist within us, and honoring both as part of our story is essential to survival.

So if you are waiting and finding the praiseworthy feels impossible, I hope you can tuck one of these thoughts away for later when it feels a little more possible.

Think of this as an invitation to invite your weariness to the table along with these true and praiseworthy things. We don't have to sink ourselves in our pain and ignore everything else, and we don't have to sink ourselves in the true and praiseworthy and discredit or dishonor our pain. We invite both in, acknowledging and honoring the beauty and the mess.

(acoustic guitar melody)

Thank you so much for listening to episode 11 of Praise Through It. I'd love to connect with you beyond your earbuds. Find me over on Instagram as [elisapreston](#) or send me a message to hello@elisapreston.com.



I'm going to end this with a familiar passage from the Bible. I'm going to read it as a prayer, and I hope that as we speak it, listen to it, or read it, we can let it be a balm to our spirits.

Dear God, we know that there is a time for everything, a season for every activity under the sun:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,

a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate,

a time for war and a time for peace.

Lord, help us know when it is time for what. Let us live in your timing, let us be willing to put on hold what needs to be put on hold, and let us be willing to find the beauty in the mess of what our hearts continue to wait for.

Amen.