

## SLOW DOWN AND GROW UP

It is not uncommon to hear loving parents counsel their children with the words, “slow down,” or “grow up.” So it should not surprise us to learn that these are expressions we can also expect to hear from God our loving Father.

**Patience is the  
companion of  
wisdom.**

..Saint Augustine

The wide use of credit cards and the availability of “on demand pay-per-view TV” gives testimony that we like to have everything **now**. We have become a people who do not like to wait. Yet, because God knows all, and understands all, He knows that there are times when we must slow down and wait. An obvious example would be His answer to a nine year old girl praying for a particular boy to marry her! Yet, not all our requests are so easy to discern, so we must trust God’s wisdom in answering our prayer—even if He delays.

If we do slow down, we will see the reasons that God delays in answer to our prayers. When Jesus received the news about his friend Lazarus’ illness, he delayed two days before going to do something about it. In those two days, Lazarus died! When His disciples question his delay Jesus tells them that it was “*for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*” (Jn.11:4). Remember, in the Lord’s Prayer which we recite so often, we are ultimately praying for His kingdom, will and glory—not ours! Therefore, if His glory is best served by a delay, then so be it—Amen.

Growing up is not only for the young. Indeed, in the spiritual life, we should constantly grow in faith and knowledge of God and in mature love for our neighbor. The delay in an answer to prayer may be rooted in a need for growth in one or both of these areas. I recall a divorced person telling me how frustrated she was because God did not seem to be answering her prayer for a new husband with whom she could finally get it right. As we began to talk, it became apparent that though she was very devout in her personal prayer life, she had not been to Church in years, nor had she gone to confession in that time. In other words, she was asking God to give her a good husband, but she had separated herself from the place where God could equip her with the tools to see the right man when he would come along! She needed to grow in her relationship with God so His answer would be apparent to her. God had to once again be first in her life, “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.” She also had to remove unconfessed sin from her life, “*Your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear you*” (Is.59:2). The answer to her prayer was, “Wait and grow in the grace of God.”

Sometimes the answer to prayer can be very much affected by our relationships with others. I recall early in my priesthood having lots of tension in my life and not able to see clearly in making a number of decisions. One day, I realized that I was very angry with a brother priest. The more I thought about it, I realized the anger was the source of lots of anxiety. After I had a long and honest talk with this priest, there was a wonderful reconciliation, the birth of a marvelous friendship and the dissipation of lots of emotional clouds that had obscured my vision. Soon after that, answers to prayers for wisdom in a number of parish situations suddenly became very obvious. There I discovered a glaring truth about prayer; lack of forgiveness and love in relationships can seriously impede our ability to discern the answer to prayer. Indeed 1 Jn. 2:9 says it very well, “*anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is in darkness.*”

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*While there have been thousands of books written on the subject of prayer there are some basic principles will spark your prayer life. Much of my material will be rooted in a wonderful book that is no longer published, Appointment With God, Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R (Franciscan University Press). It is one of the best books I have seen for outlining and forming a life of prayer. If you can find a copy via the internet it will make a great resource for your spiritual life of prayer.*

...Fr. Moe