

Waiting Well...

12/6/2020

From The Principal's Pen

I have never been great at waiting. I would go to great lengths at Christmas to find my presents as early as possible. It almost became a game for my brother and I. Years ago, we were due to receive a new game console for Christmas. My mother had made the mistake of leaving the receipt laying on the dining room table after a shopping trip. We found it and knew that the console must be hidden somewhere in the house. Since I was in Middle School, we had reached the age where we could be “trusted” to stay at home for short periods of time. On a cold early December afternoon, while mom was gone to the grocery store, we set out to find our Christmas gift. After about 30 minutes, we found it in the back of the basement. In a dimly lit corner, covered by a quilt, was the new console and several much-requested games. Since we had spent a good portion of mom’s shopping time, we decided to wait until the next trip to the store to go any further. About a week later, mom left again and we put our well thought through plan into action. We had everything we would need: scissors, packing tape, and a stopwatch. We started the stopwatch and pulled the game console out. We carefully cut the tape that packaged the console, took the console out, and hooked it up. We proceeded to play our new games for about 30 minutes. At the thirty-minute mark, we stopped, carefully packed everything back up, and used the packing tape to make it appear just like it did before we pulled it out. We placed it carefully under the quilt and made everything look like it did before we started. As we were putting the packing tape back in the drawer where we found it, mom pulled up. We have finished just in time.

Looking back, this was a small part of a long line of examples where I struggled to wait. Patience was never one of my gifts. Even as I got older, I found that I needed to wait until close to Christmas to shop for gifts. If I purchased these too early, I would never be able to wait and I would end up giving them away before we ever made it to Christmas. One year, I gave my wife her Christmas gift a week early. Not because she asked for it, but because I just couldn’t wait any longer.

We all have faults, and at the top of the list for me is waiting. I hate waiting. I don’t even wait well when I am cooking. If the recipe says to cook in the oven for 45 minutes, somewhere around the 40th minute, I am ready to take it out and try it. When the recipe calls for something to rest for 15 minutes after cooking, I only want to give it ten minutes. I somehow missed the lesson in school about patience.

A few years ago, I received my lesson in patience. In a visit to the doctor's office, he found an abnormality in one of my scans and wanted to wait a month and do another scan to make sure that there wasn't a change in the results. A change would indicate that the severity of the issue was more significant than he expected and would result in an aggressive treatment plan. Over the course of the next month, I waited. I waited and waited. Fortunately, the results came back and all was fine. There was no change in my scans and I could breathe a deep sigh of relief. Even though I realize that I am not great with the "In Between Time," I have started to appreciate the necessity of these moments and the power that we can gain from waiting well. Like a great cake, smoked pork or an amazing gift, some things simply can't be rushed. The waiting is part of the process.

We all have faults. The key to growth is taking the time to recognize the real us on the inside. Understanding our faults helps us recognize when we might be cheating ourselves of the opportunity of the moment. I have finally embraced this part of who I am. I'm not proud that it led me to several moments where I opened the gift before it's time had come, but I am far more aware of that part of me. My patience is developing, but sometimes I still wish it would hurry up!

*Each life is made up of mistakes and learning, waiting and growing,
practicing patience, and being persistent. -
Billy Graham*