

# The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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## Waiting

**I** waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry" (Ps 40:1, NIV).

The tests of our willingness to wait patiently for the Lord come almost daily for most of us, I suppose. Probably I am among the Lord's most *impatient* servants, so the lesson has to be reviewed again and again. A tough test came when my daughter's family (of ten) was searching for a house. Southern California is not a place where one would wish to conduct that search. It's a long story, but at last, all other possibilities having been exhausted, a house was found, an offer made. That night word came that two other offers, of unknown amounts, had also been made. Dark pictures filled my mind: the others would surely get the house, the Shepherds would be reduced to renting and we'd been told that rentals start at about \$2000 per month (imagine an owner willing to rent to a family with eight children!).

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Ps 27:14, NIV).

I lay awake in the wee hours ("when all life's molehills become mountains" as Amy Carmichael said), repeating Scripture about God's faithfulness, trusting, casting all cares, waiting. I had to keep offering up my worries and my impatience. At four I was up reading the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham called the place where he had offered up Isaac The Lord Will Provide. I took that as the Lord's word to me that morning.

Before nine o'clock Walt called to say "Offer accepted. Other offers, both *higher*, turned down." No explanation. It was the Lord's doing.

Waiting requires patience—a willingness calmly to accept:

what we have or have not,  
where we are or where we wish we were,  
whomever we live or work with.

To want what we don't have is impatience, for one thing, and it is to mistrust God. Is He not in complete control of all circumstances, events, and conditions? If some are beyond His control, He is not God.

A spirit of resistance cannot wait on God. I believe it is this spirit which is the reason for some of our greatest sufferings. Opposing the workings of the Lord in and

through our "problems" only exacerbates them. It is *here* and *now* that we must win our victories or suffer defeats. Spiritual victories are won in the quiet acceptance of ordinary events, which are God's "bright servants," standing all around us.

Restlessness and impatience change nothing except our peace and joy. Peace does not dwell in outward things, but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully and quietly on Him who has *all* things safely in His hands. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives" (Jn 14:27, NEB). What sort of peace has He to give us? A peace which was constant in the midst of ceaseless work (with few visible results), frequent interruptions, impatient demands, few physical comforts; a peace which was not destroyed by the arguments, the faithlessness, and hatred of the people. Jesus had perfect confidence in His Father, whose will He had come to accomplish. Nothing touched Him without His Father's permission. Nothing touches me without my Father's permission. Can I not then wait patiently? He will show the way.

If I am willing to be still in my Master's hand, can I not then be still in everything? He's got the whole world *in His Hands!* Never mind whether things come from God Himself or from people—everything comes by His ordination and/or permission. If I mean to be obedient and submissive to the Lord because He *is* my Lord, I must not forget that whatever He allows to happen becomes, for *me*, His will at that moment. Perhaps it is someone else's sinful action, but if God allows it to affect me, He wills it for my learning. The need to *wait* is, for me, a form of chastening. God has to calm me down, make me shut up and look to Him for the outcome.

His message to me every day  
Is wait, be still, trust, and obey

And this brings me to the matter of counselling. Upon our return from England I found a pile of mail, so many letters asking me what to do about things, for example: a wife's critical spirit, unemployment, a wife who has abandoned husband and children, a single mother doing a job she hates, an unfaithful husband, a woman (who tells me she is Spirit-filled) having an affair with her pastor, a farmer who'd like a wife, a mother-in-law who is nasty to her daughter-in-law, a stepson who is angry because "we don't spend enough

money on his children," a wife who snaps at her husband each time he tries to snuggle up, and a husband who "drinks like a fish, curses like a sailor, and says he loves God."

I wish I could write the same letter to everybody: Wait patiently for the Lord. He will turn to you and hear your cry. It is amazing how clear things become when we are *still* before Him, not complaining, not insisting on quick answers, only seeking to hear His word in the stillness, and to see things in His light. Few are willing to receive that sort of reply. "Too simplistic" is the objection. One listener to my radio program, *Gateway to Joy*, wrote, "I got so upset at what you were saying I ripped the earphones out and said, 'I'll do what I want to do!'" But there are those who can say, "This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Is 25:9, KJV). Here are two testimonies:

"I've lost my mother, my brother, my husband, and my baby. My song is *More Love to Thee, O Christ*."

"God picked up the scraps and pieces and made us whole—a whole woman, a whole man, a whole marriage."

## Shame

When a young American received four blows with a cane in Singapore as part of his punishment for vandalism, there was a great uproar. "Cruel and unusual punishment!" In my opinion it wasn't cruel, and it ought not to be unusual. In fact, I've often thought that an excellent sentence for youthful first-offenders might be to reinstitute the stock — a frame of timber with holes in which the hands and/or feet of offenders were confined, usually in a public place. A mall might be a good place to arouse a healthy sense of shame.

Imagine the uproar if we did that! To inflict *shame* would be thought horribly shameful in America today. Think what it would do to a boy's self-image if his friends were to see him in such disgrace, but might not that "damage" be a stinging salve which would arouse his conscience as usual punishments seldom do?

An Olympic skater is charged with conspiring to cover up a plot to attack her rival to eliminate her from competition. When convicted, is she ashamed? Repentant? She tells us she "let us down," but wants us also to know that she let herself down. A radical of the 1960s who took part in bombings that injured twenty-one people has spent years in therapy, "learning to understand, to tolerate and forgive both others and myself." The lawyer representing a woman who emasculated her husband says the acquittal was "a giant step forward in the healing process. She really needs

healing." One who has been much in the news as a child molester, "wants to get on with his life and let the healing process begin." Lyle Menendez killed his father and told the court he had loved him very much. Of this case columnist Charles Krauthammer writes, "Their trial has elevated therapeutic expiation to truly comic proportions. The classic definition of *chutzpa* is a person who murders his parents and then demands mercy from the court on the grounds that he is an orphan."

Shame, as Christina Rossetti wrote, is "a shadow cast by sin.... Shame gives back what nothing else can give—a man to himself, —then sets him up on high."

## Do the Next Thing

From an old English parsonage down by the sea  
There came in the twilight a message for me;  
Its quaint Saxon legend, deeply engraven,  
Hath, as it seems to me, teaching from Heaven.  
And on through the hours the quiet words ring,  
Like a low inspiration: DO THE NEXT THING.

Many a questioning, many a fear,  
Many a doubt, hath its quieting here.  
Moment by moment let down from Heaven,  
Time, opportunity, guidance, are given.  
*Fear not tomorrows*, Child of the King,  
*Trust them with Jesus*. DO THE NEXT THING.

Do it immediately; do it with prayer;  
Do it reliantly, casting all care;  
Do it with reverence, tracing His hand  
Who placed it before thee with earnest command,  
Stayed on Omnipotence, safe 'neath His wing,  
Leave all resultings. DO THE NEXT THING.

Looking to Jesus, ever serener,  
(Working or suffering) be thy demeanor.  
In His dear presence, the rest of His calm,  
The light of His countenance be thy psalm.  
Strong in His faithfulness, praise and *sing!*  
Then, as He beckons thee, DO THE NEXT THING.  
(source unknown)

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## An African Martyr's Testimony

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed, the die has been cast, I have stepped over the line, the decision has been made—I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight-walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till everyone knows, work till He stops me, and when He comes for His one, He will have no trouble recognizing me because my banner will have been clear.

(If anyone can tell me exactly who wrote this, I will gratefully include the information in a future newsletter. Was it an African martyr?)

## Two Luther Stories

One evening when Martin Luther saw a little bird perched on a tree, to roost there for the night, he said, "This little bird has had its supper, and now it is getting ready to go to sleep here, quite secure and content, never troubling itself what its food will be,

or where its lodging on the morrow. Like David, it 'abides under the shadow of the Almighty.' It sits on its little twig content, and lets God take care."

From *Daily Strength for Daily Needs*

When Luther finished his commentary on Romans 8:21 he looked down at his little dog and said, "Thou too shalt have a little golden tail!"

Don't you *love* that? Scripture tells us that *creation* (doesn't that include everything?) "waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (Rm 8:19, NIV). I expect my lovely little Scottish terrier MacDuff is waiting, too, with little pointy ears and tail erect, eagerly expecting that stupendous revelation.

## Clutter

Someone asked me if I *collect* anything. Far from it. I am too old to be accumulating things. Simplify! is my motto. My grandchildren often ask me to help them get things sorted out, cleaned out, organized. Recently it was the toy closet. We found half of Jim's Christmas pageant costume, one roller skate, a wooden train, Colleen's butterfly net, two stuffed animals, two telephone books, an umbrella, Evangeline's birthday gift which had disappeared, quite a pile of plastic horses, one slipper, books, a toy gun, a walkie-talkie, a doll's hairbrush, one bed pillow, a tape recorder, somebody's treasured rock, and uncounted pencils, papers, and a hundred other things. I encouraged Colleen, seven, and Evangeline, five, to make three piles: PUT away, GIVE away, and THROW away. They actually enjoyed seeing the clutter reduced—and so did I.

## Too Much Stuff

Words by Janet L. Janzen

An Ode to the Simple Lifestyle

Traditional Melody ("Three Blind Mice")



1. Too much stuff, Too much stuff, More than e - nough, More than e -  
 2. Too much stuff, Too much stuff, More than e - nough, More than e -  
 3. Too much stuff, Too much stuff, More than e - nough, More than e -  
 nough; It's out of the clo - sets and fill - ing our space, It's grow - ing and spill - ing all  
 nough; The piles are star - ing us in the face, They mul - ti - ply at an a -  
 nough; It is - n't eas - y to run the race With all of this stuff slow - ing  
 o - ver the place, We're trip - ping all o - ver a ter - ri - ble case of  
 lar - ming pace, And soon we'll be bur - iced with - out a trace in  
 down the pace. I think that I need some ad - di - tion - al grace for too much stuff.

\* When sung as a round, parts enter here

## One Way to Avoid a Spanking

A grandmother read my story, *The Savage My Kinsman*, to her little granddaughter, who then began carrying her doll around in a dishtowel slung over her shoulder, in imitation of the jungle Indian mothers' carrying their babies in a cloth. Grandma had read many stories one evening, but the child, not wanting to go to sleep, was heard talking. "I headed for the bedroom with fire in my eyes," the grandmother wrote me. "She was saying, 'Lord, if you want me to go to the Aucas, Lord, I'm willing.' I didn't dare 'lick' her then as I couldn't be sure if she was spoofing me or not!"

## Recommended Reading

John McArthur: *The Vanishing Conscience*. "In speaking to Christians around the country," he writes, "I have seen a disheartening trend developing.... The church is growing less concerned with sin, and more obsessed with self-exoneration and self-esteem." What a relief to find a book that deals head-on with this evil, and affirms God's blood-bought remedy.

### Keep in Touch

Are you moving? Getting married? Leaving school? Don't forget to send us your change of address. The post office DOES NOT FORWARD third class mail like the Newsletter. Please remove your address label below and send it with your new address to: The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, Post Office Box 7711, Ann Arbor, MI 48107-7711.

## Travel Schedule July - December 1994

- July 11-13 Taping for *Gateway to Joy*.
- July 15-17 Cheyenne, WY; C & MA Family Camp, Harry Bolwyn, (307) 635-1014.
- July 23 Tuxedo, NC; Camp Greystone.
- September 10 Marblehead, MA; Baptist Women, Lila Foster, (617) 631-6569.
- September 10-11 Middleboro, MA; Missions banquet and Sunday School, Mr. Kohl, (617) 585-5242.
- September 17 Lexington, MA; Grace Chapel, (617) 862-6499.
- September 17 Waltham, MA; Charismatic Renewal Service, Dean Condon, (617) 891-3592.
- September 22-28 Hungary and Transylvania.
- September 29-October 2 Vienna, Austria.
- October 3-9 Czechoslovakia and Poland.
- October 13-15 Chattanooga, TN; Joyful Woman National Jubilee, Joy Martin, (800) 728-7318.
- November 1-4 Holland, Evangelical Broadcasting Co.
- November 5-6 Brussels, Belgium.
- December 15-27 E. to California, L. to Norway (?).
- December 17 Aliso Viejo, CA; Pacific Hills Church, (714) 362-7475.
- December 29-30 Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Campus Crusade, Tony Wong, (613) 830-9693 or 1751.

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