



# Our Prayers, God's Timing

James Banks



*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. **Ephesians 3:20***

**Read:** [Luke 1:5–17](#)

**Bible in a Year:** [Jeremiah 37-39](#); [Hebrews 3](#)

Sometimes God takes His time in answering our prayers, and that isn't always easy for us to understand.

That was the situation for Zechariah, a priest whom the angel Gabriel appeared to one day near an altar in the temple in Jerusalem. Gabriel told him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; *your prayer has been heard*. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John" (Luke 1:13, italics added).

But Zechariah had probably asked God for a child years before, and he struggled with Gabriel's message because Elizabeth was now well beyond the expected age for childbirth. Still, God answered his prayer.

God's memory is perfect. He is able to remember our prayers not only for years but also for generations beyond our lifetime. He never forgets them and may move in response long after we first brought our requests to Him. Sometimes His answer is "no," other times it is "wait"—but His response is always measured with love. God's ways are beyond us, but we can trust that they are good.

Zechariah learned this. He asked for a son, but God gave him even more. His son John would grow up to be the very prophet who would announce the arrival of the Messiah.

Zechariah's experience demonstrates a vital truth that should also encourage us as we pray: God's timing is rarely our own, but it is always worth waiting for.

*What are you praying for today? Tell us at [yourdailybread.org](http://yourdailybread.org).*

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**When we cannot see God's hand at work, we can still trust His heart.**

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## Second Chances

Keila Ochoa



*He has not stopped showing his kindness. **Ruth 2:20***

**Read: Ruth 4:13–17**

**Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 40–42; Hebrews 4**

“How can you be so kind if you don’t even know me!”

By making some wrong decisions, Linda had ended up in jail in a country not her own. For six years she remained in prison, and when she was set free she didn’t have anywhere to go. She thought her life was over! While her family gathered money to buy her ticket home, a kind couple offered her lodging, food, and a helping hand. Linda was so touched by their kindness that she willingly listened as they told her the good news of a God who loves her and wants to give her a second chance.

Linda reminds me of Naomi, a widow in the Bible who lost her husband and two sons in a foreign land and thought her life was over (Ruth 1). However, the Lord hadn’t forgotten Naomi, and through the love of her daughter-in-law and the compassion of a godly man named Boaz, Naomi saw God’s love and was given a second chance (4:13–17).

The same God cares for us today. Through the love of others we can be reminded of His presence. We can see God’s grace in the helping hand of people we may not even know well. But above all, God is willing to give us a fresh start. We just need, like Linda and Naomi, to see God’s hand in our everyday lives and realize He never stops showing us His kindness.

*Dear Lord, thank You that You let us begin again and again.*

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**God gives us second chances.**

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# Think Before You Speak

Poh Fang Chia



*Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.* **Psalm 141:3**

**Read: Psalm 141**

**Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 43–45; Hebrews 5**

Cheung was upset with his wife for failing to check the directions to the famous restaurant where they hoped to dine. The family had planned to round out their holiday in Japan with a scrumptious meal before catching the flight home. Now they were running late and would have to miss that meal. Frustrated, Cheung criticized his wife for her poor planning.

Later Cheung regretted his words. He had been too harsh, plus he realized that he could have checked the directions himself and he had failed to thank his wife for the other seven days of great planning.

Many of us may identify with Cheung. We are tempted to blow up when angry and to let words fly without control. Oh, how we need to pray as the psalmist did: “Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3).

But how can we do that? Here’s a helpful tip: Think before you speak. Are your words good and helpful, gracious and kind? (See Eph. 4:29–32.)

Setting a guard over our mouth requires that we keep our mouth shut when we’re irritated and that we seek the Lord’s help to say the right words with the right tone or, perhaps, not speak at all. When it comes to controlling our speech, it’s a lifelong work. Thankfully, God is working in us, giving us “the desire and the power to do what pleases him” (Phil. 2:13 nlt).

*Dear Lord, help us always to think before speaking. Give us the words to say and the wisdom to know when to keep silent.*

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**Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Proverbs 16:24**

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# A Good Ending

Amy Boucher Pye



*The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face. [Revelation 22:3-4](#)*

**Read:** [Revelation 22:1-5](#)

**Bible in a Year:** [Jeremiah 46-47](#); [Hebrews 6](#)

As the lights dimmed and we prepared to watch *Apollo 13*, my friend said under his breath, “Shame they all died.” I watched the movie about the 1970 spaceflight with apprehension, waiting for tragedy to strike, and only near the closing credits did I realize I’d been duped. I hadn’t known or remembered the end of the true story—that although the astronauts faced many hardships, they made it home alive.

In Christ, we can know the end of the story—that we too will make it home alive. By that I mean we will live forever with our heavenly Father, as we see in the book of Revelation. The Lord will create a “new heaven and a new earth” as He makes all things new (21:1, 5). In the new city, the Lord God will welcome His people to live with Him, without fear and without the night. We have hope in knowing the end of the story.

What difference does this make? It can transform times of extreme difficulty, such as when people face the loss of a loved one or even their own death. Though we recoil at the thought of dying, yet we can embrace the joy of the promise of eternity. We long for the city where no longer will there be any curse, where we’ll live forever by God’s light (22:5).

*Lord Jesus Christ, give me unfailing hope, that I might rest in Your promises and welcome Your life eternal.*

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**God promises His people a good end to the story.**

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# The Hand of Comfort



Randy Kilgore

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . who comforts us in all our troubles. **2 Corinthians 1:3–4***

**Read:** **2 Corinthians 1:3–7**

**Bible in a Year:** **Jeremiah 48–49; Hebrews 7**

“Patient is combative,” the nurse’s notes read.

What she didn’t realize until later was that I was having an allergic reaction as I awakened after a complicated open-heart surgery. I was a mess, with a tube down my throat. My body began shaking violently, straining against the straps on my arms, which were there to keep me from suddenly pulling out my breathing tube. It was a frightening and painful episode. At one point, a nurse’s assistant to the right side of my bed reached down and simply held my hand. It was an unexpected move, and it struck me as especially gentle. I began to relax, which caused my body to stop shaking so badly.

Having experienced this with other patients, the nurse’s assistant knew that a hand of comfort could minister to me as well. It was a vivid example of how God uses comfort when His children suffer.

Comfort is a powerful and memorable tool for any caregiver, and Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:3–4 it’s an important part of God’s toolbox. Not only that, but God also multiplies the impact of His comfort by calling us to use the memory of the comfort He gives us to comfort others in similar situations (vv. 4–7). It is but another sign of His great love; and one we can share with others—sometimes in the simplest of gestures.

*Thank You, Father, for the comfort You provide to us, either directly or through the acts of Your children. Help us to see where we can apply that same comfort to others in and for Your name.*

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**Simple gestures can bring powerful comfort.**

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