

*When God delays answering prayer, is that a punishment? I try to make up with God for delaying my life plans like getting my driver's license for the first time. I still fail on applying his word. I have had a long-time fear of driving. I believe I have art skills and I want to serve him with my post-grad life. I mess up because of faith issues.*

Waiting on God is a crucial aspect of faith. One must be patient and trust in divine timing. God has a specific plan for each person's life. Waiting is essential because his plans are interconnected, affecting not only the individual but others, as well[1]. Because God is perfect the believer can try to see waiting as him a joyful experience[2]. God promises renewed strength (Isa 40:31) and advises against anxiety (Phil 4:6)[2]. Waiting enables the Christian to grow spiritually. God uses time to: reshape, mold and change the believer for the better[3]. A balance between waiting and taking action in pursuit of God-given desires must be struck[4].

Charles Stanley taught that God answers every prayer with a "yes," "no," or "wait." God does not dismiss the faithful follower. One must trust in his timing.

When God says "no," it may be to protect an individual from harm or it could be that he has a better plan. When he says "wait," his timing is different. He may have a purpose in the delay. A Christ follower can remain: active, prayerful, and obedient.

Charles Stanley said:

Sometimes God is in the process of getting us ready for the answer. We are not always ready for the things we ask for...

...God has to make some changes in our life—changes in our circumstances in order to give us the very thing we ask for. And so he says ask and keep asking, and seek—keep seeking. Knock and keep knocking[5].

The child of God can trust God's wisdom and seek his will (Jn 14:13). God is trustworthy and he has plans for good not evil (Jer 29:11). He is able to restore lost years (Joe 2:25) in this life or in the afterlife (Ps 27:13).

The apostle Paul said to Titus, "Let no one disregard you (Tt 2:15, HCSB)." Paul was more concerned about morality rather than age[6]. The Christian tradition teaches that one's faith and relationship with Christ should not be diminished or disparaged due to age or any other factor. This is exemplified in the New Testament, where Jesus is portrayed as accepting and valuing people regardless of their background or status[3][4]. The focus is placed on the individual's faith and character rather than external factors like age[7][8][9].

[1] Stanley, C. F. (2009). Life Principles for the Graduate: Nine Truths for Living God's Way. Thomas Nelson.

[2] Got Questions Ministries. (2002–2013). Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered. Logos Bible Software.

[3] Groeschel, C. (2010). What Is God Really Like? Expanded Edition (p. 222). Zondervan.

[4] Meyer, J. (2018). The Confident Woman Devotional: 365 Daily Inspirations. FaithWords.

[5] "The Key to Answered Prayer." <https://sermons.love/>, uploaded by Charles Stanley, sermons.love/charles-stanley/822-charles-stanley-the-key-to-answered-prayer.html. Accessed 31 Mar. 2025.

[6] Lelwica, M. M. (2017). Shameful Bodies: Religion and the Culture of Physical Improvement (p. 187). Bloomsbury Academic.

[7] Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moll, C. B., & Kendrick, A. C. (2008). A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Hebrews (p. 47). Logos Bible Software.

[8] Pope, W. B. (1879). A Compendium of Christian Theology: being analytical outlines of a course of theological study, biblical, dogmatic, historical, volumes 1-3 (Vol. 1, p. 123). Beveridge and Co.

[9] Edwards, M. J., ed. (1999). Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians (p. 86). InterVarsity Press.

*[Follow up question] I'm sensing my bigger fear of growing punishment from God every time I can't overcome my fear of driving and can't build confidence on moving on to my next chapter of life.*

Faith is a gift of the spirit (1 Co 12:9). Perhaps faith is not your strong suit; but each Christian is given a measure of faith which allows him to have a supernatural ability to trust God.

Sin fails him and breaks his heart; but, when God gets even a small amount of faith from his child, he is pleased (Mt 17:20, Lk 17:6).

He understands: negativity, confusion and discouragement. These burdens are to be put on him (Ps 55:22). Make time to be alone with him (Mk 6:31) and lift up your head (Lk 21:28).

If you would like to overcome your fear of driving, you could take small actions like signing up for a defensive driving course. When you believe that good things will happen to you when you drive, the fear will subside.

The Bible says to fear not. Satan wants you fearful; but, God does not (2 Co 11:3).