

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kürb'stön') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ⁽¹⁾to hold the material in the roadbed, ⁽²⁾to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ⁽³⁾to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT.
¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV

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Scripture teaches that we are to wait upon the LORD always and without fail. Scripture is rife with examples of God's people allowing their human nature to override the truth of God's Word, by putting their faith on the shelf—*instead of themselves*—and not allowing God's timing to rule the day. Patience seems to be in short supply, while pride can be found in abundance throughout the Bible.

Why do these two forces—*patience and pride*—seem to be at opposite ends of the spectrum of all human activity? Why are these bookend motivators, *patience and pride*, mutually exclusive?

Why does one halt our activities until a more appropriate time, God's time, while the other motivator pushes us blindly ahead of God's will to do what we think is best? Why does *patience* seem to come naturally to some folks, while *pride* rules the lives of most of us? We can find the answers to these questions buried in Scripture.

A great place to begin our search is in the Old Testament. It is there that we discover individuals and groups, who blindly followed their prideful human nature (1) to jump-start what God had in mind, (2) to use human strength to seek an advantage, or (3) to abandon what God had in mind altogether.

Let us begin with the story of Abram and Sarai. With help from Hagar, the two agreed to jumpstart the nation of God's people that God had promised as Abraham's descendants. Even after the birth of Ishmael, God remained faithful, when Isaac was born to them.

³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

Genesis 16:3—NIV

Moses became enraged watching the persecution of his people in bondage in Egypt. He killed a slave master caught in the act of beating a Hebrew slave. He fled to Midian, where he learned to wait on God—for *forty years*—before he led the people out of Egypt.

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Exodus 3:1—NIV

During the six week absence of Moses on Mount Sinai, God's people, Israel, in thinking that Moses was not returning to lead them, swayed Aaron to fashion a golden calf as an idol for their worship. They abandoned God in favor of going back to worshiping one of the false gods of the Egyptians, who had kept them in bondage.

¹⁹ When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

Exodus 32:19—NIV

When we become prideful in our human nature and try to jump-start what God intends, when we use human strength or intellect to seek an advantage ahead of the plans God may have, or when we totally abandon what God has in mind, we will fail. And, when we do not look to history and its lessons, we are bound to fail.

Where is God calling you to step out in faith? Are God's promises leading you in a direction, where you might feel like you are out of control?

Where are you being instructed by God to wait? How do you fare when you are asked to be put on the shelf until God's timing is perfect for his perfect will?

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¹⁹ The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

Ecclesiastes 7:8 — NIV