

THE BEST THINGS ALWAYS TAKE TIME

By Robert J. Tamasy

It used to be said that “a watched pot never boils,” but with the advances in technology, a more current version of this saying might be, “a watched microwave never beeps.” It seems that whether in business, in family matters, cooking a meal, or simply going through the process of experiencing everyday life, we are in a hurry. We do not want to wait for anything. “I want it – and I want it NOW!”

In reality, however, the best, highly cherished things in life almost always require time – and lots of it. Prospective physicians attend college, then spend more years going to medical school and receiving training in their chosen specialties. To earn a prized MBA, business and professional must invest much more time and expense beyond college as well.

We all have been confronted with “get rich quick” schemes at one time or another, but the most certain way to attain financial security is through careful and judicious spending, wise investments and well-thought-out plans for the future. As the Bible states, “*Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow*” (Proverbs 13:11). It also observes, “*Steady plodding brings prosperity; hasty speculation brings poverty*” (Proverbs 21:5).

Some of the most priceless qualities of life also are products of time. For instance, parents of teenagers just starting to drive feel anxious, usually not because they lack trust in their children, but because they know **experience** cannot be taught – it can only be gained through practice. Professionally the same is generally true, whether you are an airline pilot, a computer programmer, or a CEO.

The same applies to **wisdom**. Intelligence and skill can be gained through classroom study, workshops and special training. But wisdom – the effective application of knowledge through understanding and insight – must be acquired over extended periods of time. If it were possible to store wisdom in a package, it would generate an instant fortune. However, wisdom cannot be bottled or manufactured. It must be developed over the process of daily living, learning from success and failure.

So how can we successfully “bide our time” as our greatest hopes, aspirations and goals seem to remain just beyond our reach? The Bible offers some suggestions:

Resist questionable shortcuts. If we become fixated on achieving plans or fulfilling our desires, emotions can cause us to make unwise decisions. Acknowledging the time required and being willing to exercise the necessary patience can be the difference between success and failure. Looking again at one of the passages above, we are told, “*The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty*” (Proverbs 21:5). Yet another translation of the same passage states, “*Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.*”

Maintain a forward-looking attitude. We can either become caught up in what we have not yet achieved, or remain focused on our ultimate goal, just as a marathon runner ignores pain and weariness by concentrating on the finish line ahead. “*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:13-14).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. The title of this Monday Manna states, "The best things always take time." Do you agree with this statement? Can you think of notable exceptions to this principle? Is attaining wisdom always a product of time?
2. Think of something you are engaged in that is requiring of you a substantial investment of time, energy, and perhaps personal resources. Do you think the dividends you will reap from this investment will prove worthwhile? Explain your answer.
3. What other examples come to your mind that cannot be realized through shortcuts or trying to minimize the amount of time required for achieving them?
4. How can or should a person deal with times of discouragement when hopes and dreams, goals and objectives are proving to take longer to become reality than you expected? Can you offer an example from your own experience?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Psalm 37:3-7,34; 46:10; Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:3,9, 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9