

Lisa A. Hudson

# Restful or Restless?

A SKIING ACCIDENT TAUGHT ONE COVENANTER  
THE MEANING OF WAITING ON GOD

*Covenanter Lisa Hudson was skiing at Whistler Resort in British Columbia this past March, when loose snow avalanched underneath her. She fell about thirty feet, striking a rock about halfway down, breaking her pelvis. Fortunately, with the next revolution, she landed not on more rocks but in fresh powder. Hudson, a doctor and someone not used to waiting or being cared for, reflects on the lesson she learned in her recovery.*

The waiting started while I lay in the snow, waiting for the ski patrol. I had fallen off a thirty-foot cliff, hitting rocks with an excruciating blow. All I knew was that I had extreme pain and could not move my right leg.

The waiting continued in the hospital that evening, listening to the beep, beep, beep of the morphine pump and watching the red call light flash as I waited for the nurse. I learned that I could wait, and that help comes on its own terms.

During the eleven days I spent in the hospital, I waited often. I waited for the airplane to fly me home, I waited for my doctor's smiling face. I waited for my breakfast, I waited for my blood counts to normalize, I waited for the pain to go away, I waited to walk again.

At home I waited for the mail each day. I waited for the physical therapist. I waited for Mom to bring me my orange juice, another pillow, an ice bag. I waited for the first rhododendron blossom. I waited to drive again.

Mostly, I waited on the Lord. To wait, according to *Webster's*, is "to remain, to attend expectantly, with

respect." Biblically, it is a sabbath time to rest and renew strength. "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). Rest is God-given, and can be withheld if we keep to our shortsighted, selfish ways (Hebrews 4). Without it, we are restless, irritable, impatient, and anxious.

Resting is not a time of doing what I want, when I want. When I wait, I am waiting for someone else to help me—when they want, how they want. Far from being frustrating, I found it a time of refreshment. Now I was the one being waited on—I was the one being helped. Instead of thinking about the time I would save by doing it myself, I allowed myself to sit back, take a deep breath, and be restored.

To do otherwise, I learned, would be to rob my friends of the opportunity to be blessed as givers. I became more oriented to people and less to the tasks at hand. The transformation came entirely from within. Just as with my fractured pelvis, there was nothing to see outwardly. Often I felt the Holy Spirit, dovelike, reassuring me it was O.K. to rest.

Before my injury, I had been in deep need of a sabbatical. I was weary, depleted, and without direction. I had planned to go to Papua New Guinea and work in a mission hospital to put another notch in my belt of good deeds for God. Perhaps then I could coerce God to go along with my ten-year plan for the future.

Now, after intensive study of the examples of Abraham, Moses, and David, I see that God gives us our por-

tion of himself daily, like bread. That way we keep our eyes focused on him.

So I learned to pray, "Thank you, God, for being my portion and strength forever. Help me to trust in you daily as my source. Thank you for the refreshment that comes directly out of your hands to me through others. Help me to see your love and faithfulness daily. Help me to remain, to abide, to savor, and to rest—in you—more so as I return to strength and busy days. Continue to refresh me with insights from your word. As the brokenness leaves my body, may it remain in my heart, as a tender spot close to that of your own heart, Lord, so my eyes may continually be refreshed to see my world through your eyes."

As I return to health, I am trying to include time to see God's hand at work in the small daily things of life. I am making "oases" of time in my day to pause and be thankful, to remember God's miracles, and to worship. Finding this space in my day creates a deep sense of calm and a newfound patience to be extended to others and to God. I can wait for his timing.

If I get anxious and try to push my own agenda onto God's, I risk losing my God-given rest and returning to restlessness. If I try and return to complete independence and self-sufficiency, I risk forgetting the lessons God so tenderly taught me during this precious time out.

I choose to wait. □

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