

## *Wait for It...*

It was my first time at Lutherhaven (Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho) — my first major church retreat as an adult, I mean. The kids were due any minute. I admit I was a bit nervous. I wanted to know everything there was to know about the camp grounds RIGHT NOW — I was afraid of a camper asking me a question I couldn't answer. After asking almost every other adult present, Pastor Marquart himself consented to give me a tour.

First he took me to all the cabins and the main lodge, then the chapel, the craft area, and the docks. On the way to each site, he told me local tales and folklore. As a final treat, he led me to the special campfire spot at the top a hill by the lake (quite a climb). "This," he said in a hushed but very authoritative voice, "is a magical place. If you yell just loud enough, the sound travels over the water, bounces off the forest and Boy Scout camp on the other side of the lake, and then echoes back across the water again. But, you have to be very quiet ... and patient. Listen." Then, he turned and bellowed mightily, "BALONEY!"

He leaned forward, put his hand out to hush me and said, "Wait for it." We waited. Nothing happened. Finally, after what seemed like an endless silence, he calmly said, "I must not have done it right." He took two calculated steps to the left, then sucked in a great breath and shouted at the top of his lungs, "I'M THE SMARTEST MAN IN THE WORLD!!"

Again we leaned towards the water, listening intently. Faintly, but very clear, we both heard, "baloney."

Impatience can make a fool of you. Impatience is divisive. It severs friendships, dissolves marriages, breaks up families, and breaks hearts. Patience is not a noun that God hands you, it is a verb that He teaches you. Patience must be actively practiced, and, for many of us, relearned on a daily basis.

Being patient doesn't mean sitting around waiting for things to happen or for others to do it for you. Instead, it means to work as hard and as long as necessary, without giving up, until you achieve your goal.

On the first day of camp, poor Jenna broke her leg while water skiing. The night we were to have campfire at the "special" place, Jenna left dinner early and, bless her heart, began the climb — crutches and all — so she would be there in time to meet the rest of the kids. Little Jenna made it across the beach, over the logs, and up the rocky terrain in a full leg cast because she wasn't willing to sit idly and wait for someone else to describe the experience to her. She wanted to hear the echo for herself.

Patience goes hand-in-hand with persistence. When we abandon patience, we abandon self-discipline. A world without either is a world without Helen Keller, Beethoven, or Thomas Edison. Edison is quoted as saying it would take a matter of a few weeks to invent the light bulb. In reality, it would take him almost two years of failed attempts, new discoveries, and prototypes before he would find success. During that time, Edison failed over 9,000 times. He said that each failure simply meant that what he was trying to do what couldn't be done that particular way, and that he would have find some other way to do it. Imagine what would not have happened if Edison gave up at the 8,999<sup>th</sup> attempt. If Edison weren't willing to take that one more step, we would all still be in the dark.

Patience is the ability to wait for the fruition of our goals. Without patience, it is also a world without Olympic Gold Medal winners, astronauts, college professors, or the perfect patience of Jesus Christ.

Patience is about maturity. Patience binds, heals, and supports relationships. Patience teaches us about ourselves.

When I think of how we trekked over 200 fourth through twelfth graders up that hill to light three candles in lieu of a campfire (due to the local burn ban), then got all 200 of them to be SILENT long enough to hear their own echoed voices shouting "Praise God" across the water, I am reminded at just how powerful patience can be. It may have taken us three tries, but once we finally convinced the younger ones to ***wait for it***, the resonating echo and the look on Jenna's face was, indeed, magical.