

**LIFEGROUP STUDY
IN THE WAITING
PERSEVERANCE IN THE WAITING
DEC. 20, 2020**

LEADER NOTES

"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Romans 8:25

Welcome to week 3 of our 3-week series leading up to Christmas, "In the Waiting". Over these three weeks we've been exploring the importance of waiting in our faith journey. In this week's study, Perseverance in the Waiting, we'll see that waiting is not passive. There are things we can do while we wait. Specifically, we can worship while we wait, and we can decide to still be obedient while we wait. Do you have a worship routine? You need one. Is there something you're putting off doing because you're frustrated with God or things moving slowly? You need to start being obedient even in your disappointment. The goal of this week's study is that you would move ahead with worshipping God and being obedient to His lead while you continue to grow in patience.

ICEBREAKER: My Favourite Christmas Worship Song

This time of year we get to hear (and sing) lots of Christmas songs. Think about the Christmas songs that have special meaning for you. Particularly, what is a favourite Christmas worship song for you? What is about this song that you love? How does this song grow your love for God and what He has done for us at Christmas? Share (or if you're really brave, "sing" 😊) part of your favourite Christmas song with your group.

STUDY:

1. What was a highlight for you from Pete's teaching on Sunday?

2. Where in your life are things moving slowly or completely stalled out?

LEADER NOTE: In this question you are asking your group members to be open about an area of their life where they are disappointed that things aren't moving as quickly as they wanted, or at all. In what area are they waiting for a resolution or a change that they have not yet seen? You may want to get the conversation started by sharing an example from your own life.

3. Where do you wish God would speed up? Think globally, but also in your personal life.

4. READ: Hebrews 12:1-4

Running the Race While We Wait

Waiting is active. It is a time of intentional engagement and activity on our part, engaging in worshiping God and in being obedient to His lead. This is what faithful followers of God have done down through the centuries. Many experienced times of waiting, but in the waiting, they were active - they ran their race of faith. Hebrews 12 begins with the word, "therefore". It is looking back to Hebrews chapter 11, a "hall of faith" - men and women who ran their race with faith and endurance. Faith involves a confident action in response to what God has made known. In times of waiting, God does not want us to sit on the sidelines. He calls us to "... run with endurance the race God has set before us." (Hebrews 12:1). As a group, explore the first four verses of Hebrews 12 to be challenged in how to run this race well.

- In Hebrews 12:1 the author reminds us we are surrounded by a "huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith." Imagine this crowd gathered around you, encouraging you on in your race. What are they saying to you?

LEADER NOTE: We may imagine this crowd of witnesses calling out to us as we run our race – "God is with you!" "Keep going!" "Your reward is just ahead!"

- Hebrews 12:1. What are the action words in this verse? How do these verbs speak to you about our response in times of waiting?

LEADER NOTE: "strip off" – get rid of that which weighs us down – doubt, distraction, apathy, sin. "run" – forward momentum. Intentional energy/exertion toward growing our faith in God.

- Hebrews 12:2 encourages us to "keep our eyes on Jesus" in our race. What does this look like, practically? What helps keep your eyes fixed on Jesus?

LEADER NOTE: Jesus is our supreme example of faithful endurance. We can keep our eyes fixed on Him by reading about and thinking about how He ran his race. We fix our eyes on Him by choosing to worship Him and follow Him in our own race.

- Hebrews 12:3: How does Jesus' example help you to keep going when times are tough?

LEADER NOTE: When times are tough, we can become tired and want to give up. Jesus' example helps us realize He has gone before us. He experienced the toughest circumstances and came through victorious. Now He is here to give us strength and endurance to run our race well.

- It's easy to become so focused on one area of your life where you're waiting that your whole life stalls out. Is there an area of your life where you need to get moving? What is the first step you take?

5. Worshiping While We Wait

We should worship when we're waiting because worship keeps us close to God and keeps us in a humble, submitted orientation toward Him. King David exemplifies this beautifully. David experienced many seasons of waiting. In the waiting, He learned the importance of keeping focused on worshiping God. Let's explore this idea by looking at the first 4 verses of Psalm 40.

READ: Psalm 40:1-4

- Vs. 1 – 2. What action words do you see? What is David doing? What is God doing in David's life?

LEADER NOTE: Here are some action words we see - "*waited*" – In his time of need, David waited patiently for God's help. "*turned*" "*heard*" – In response to David's cries, God turns to him and hears his prayer. "*Lifted*" – David describes his situation like being down in a pit. He looks back and says – "God lifted me out". "*Set my feet*" "*steadied me*" – God brings David out from the slippery mud in the pit and gives him a firm place to stand.

- Vs. 3 - David writes, "He has given me a new song to sing." How might God use times of waiting to do something new in the way you worship Him?

LEADER NOTE: Times of waiting are an opportunity for God to do something new in our life, particularly, in the way we worship Him. This may be a renewed dedication or passion to engage in worship, or a new song God uses to speak words of comfort and hope to us.

- Vs. 3 – "Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD." How have you seen God use seasons of waiting to encourage others in their faith journey?

LEADER NOTE: As we trust God in the waiting, God can use our example to encourage others. This is why sharing our stories, our testimonies of God's faithfulness, is so important. Like David, we can remember together how God has been faithful in our seasons of waiting in the past. Then together we can have confidence to put our trust in Him, our God who is always faithful, today.

- What has your worship life during COVID looked like? Have you made it a priority?

6. What is a key takeaway for you from this study?

PRAYER

Pray for Creekside Missions

The N Family as they procure the needed visas and other documentation to return to the field in January
The C Family as they are living through extremely stringent lockdown conditions in Athens at present
Kelley and Hannah with Power2Change Digital Strategies, as they connect online with many seeking Christ

Paul as he teaches linguistics at Tyndale and mentors the next generation of Bible translators
Our Partner Church in Carmen Bajo, Ecuador as they provide monthly food and PPE aid to the community

Our Partner Church in Kitigoma, Uganda as they meet within limiting guidelines and reach out into their community with aid.