



WAITING WELL

in a world that says hurry up

WENDY POPE

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Wendy Pope

A study designed to complement *Wait and See: Finding Peace in God's Pauses and Plans*,
with online companion video teachings by Wendy Pope.
Videos package and information can be found at wendypope.org/store

*Dedicated to all my
sisters who struggle with the wait...*

the best is yet to come

Waiting Well in a World That Says Hurry Up
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Welcome

Friends and Bible study, united together by the Holy Spirit and the miracle of technology... you can't get any better than that! I'm thrilled to spend the next few weeks with you. Studying the Bible changed my life, and I pray at the conclusion of this study you can say, "my life is a life that has been changed."

Time is a valuable commodity. I'm honored that you have chosen to spend time with me digging into God's Word. We are going to study the life of David and learn principles about waiting well. Our world tells us to hurry up, get it while you can. Social media has set a hypersonic pace to life that is impossible to maintain. But God teaches order and balance. His pace is steady and sure. His unhurried tempo is one we can keep up with and trust.

When we succumb to the rush of the world, we are tempted to manipulate things to meet our expectations. This causes us to miss all the experiences God wants to have with us. *Waiting Well in World That Says Hurry Up* teaches that our wait is more like a classroom, rather than a place of confinement. God has a lot to teach us and He wants to prepare us for what lies ahead. He has a plan for each person, "We have become His poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!" (Ephesians 2:10 TPT). In the pause, let's agree pause is more palatable than wait, God prepares us for what He has already prepared for us. He is the greatest Teacher and fully aware of the lessons we need to learn. How unfortunate that we would not be prepared to participate in the great plans He has designed for us!

Schedule

The study schedule will vary depending on your group size. The beauty of the study is its flexibility. Whether you are in group, or completing the study individually, you determine your own pace.

Each week features:

- A focal Bible verse, complete with a word study of the original Hebrew and Greek meaning of key words. In-depth word studies will help develop our understanding of the scripture. Wendy includes the Strong's Lexicon number and definition.
- A Waiting Well Statement that sums up the week's lesson in a fun tongue twister kind-of way.
- A Listening Guide for the video teaching is taught by Wendy live each week on her Facebook page. Make sure you have "liked" her page so you will receive notifications. If you are completing the study after the original time, the videos can be found in Videos link on her Facebook page www.facebook.com/wendypopeofficial and on her website www.wendypope.org
- Two encouraging devotions

Reading Plan

Waiting Well in World That Says Hurry Up is a companion study and video series to *Wait and See: Finding Peace in God's Pauses and Places*. Although it is not necessary to purchase *Wait and See*, the book will enhance your Bible study experience and provide additional waiting well tools that we aren't able to cover in four short weeks together. Use the following reading plan from the *Wait and See* book, with the video teachings.

Week 1: Chapters 1-2

Week 2: Chapters 4-5

Week 3: Chapters 6-7

Week 4: Chapters 8-9

Thank you again for joining me in this 4-week adventure to waiting well. May God be glorified and your journey enhanced by our time together.

Work Out My Salvation

Week 1

Waiting Well Statement and Weekly Verse

Waiting well looks forward to the future while staying present in the present.

“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides You, who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.” Isaiah 64:4 (NIV)

Wait

Strong's: 2442ⁱ

Chakah (khaw-kaw') adhere; await

Await:

- to remain inactive; be available in readiness

Adhere to

- to stay attached; stick fast; cleave; cling
- to be devoted in support or allegiance; be attached as a follower or upholder
- to hold closely or firmly

Our wait is profitable and even a blessing when we view it as a time to make ourselves ready for the next part of our adventure. God works on our behalf as we cling to and hold firmly to Him. I know; it's easy to say, but difficult to execute.

As the wait continues, we can lose our grip on the truth of this verse, and the hope of the great future He has planned for us. So how are we supposed to maintain the hold? Stay in His Word. Maintain a consistent prayer life. Keep moving forward based on God's history of faithfulness. It's imperative that we don't allow our feelings to dictate faith. You can trust Him to prepare something that your eyes have never seen, or your ears have never heard. He will make the waiting worth it!

Listening Guide

Waiting well looks forward to the future while staying present in the present.

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Philippians 2:12 (NIV)

We are to *work* _____ our salvation, because we don’t have to *work* _____ our salvation.

Do what you _____ to do.

What Do We Know To Do?

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30-31(NIV)

We Know to Love _____

We Know to Love _____

How do we do what we know to do?

Philippians 2

_____ of others more valuable than yourself (V3)

_____ God (V8)

_____ Proceed in fear and trembling (V12)

The Waiting

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:14 (NLT)

Waiting: a virtue I aspire to obtain but often fail to achieve. How about you?

In our hurry up, need it, gotta-have-it-now culture, we have been brain-washed into thinking there is something wrong with waiting and we shouldn't have to do it. Within seconds we can know the weather in southern Mongolia, order a cute blouse from a trendy store, or Skype a conversation with a friend on the opposite side of the country. We can instant message a friend or send a tweet to thousands in the blink of an eye; no wonder we believe waiting is hard to do.

The author of today's key verse was no stranger to waiting and knew full well of its difficulties. Out of nowhere, the prophet Samuel showed up at his home to anoint the next king of Israel who was to be chosen from his family. Only one of Jesse's sons would be anointed as God's chosen king for His beloved Israel. The son chosen was David. Scripture tell us the Spirit of God rushed over David and was with him the remainder of his days (1 Samuel 16:13, ESV). With such an anointing one would expect David to run to take his seat on the throne, but the only running David did was back to the pasture to do his job. Thus, his wait began.

In the wait, God prepared David for his seat on the throne. The only vocation David knew was shepherding. He did not know the ends and outs of kingly protocol or the rules of royal deity. David did not have the support of the people or armies to defend him as king. He was only a lowly shepherd boy. Instead of taking the position he was promised David waited for God to move him from the pasture to the palace. In the wait, God made David ready for the move.

David learned many lessons about waiting. By examining and applying these truths we can find hope in the difficulty of waiting and determine that waiting in the present is beneficial to our future.

1. Even though we are anointed and appointed we may still have to wait. David waited close to fifteen years to be king of Judah and even longer to be king of all Israel.

2. God's ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts. After being anointed and appointed David was called to serve Saul, the king who was sitting on "his" throne.
3. God doesn't waste time; He holds it in His hands. He redeems it by using our experiences to prosper us in each season of life.
4. If we allow it, our waiting will bring us to an intimate knowledge of the Savior that we would not otherwise have. Most of David's beautiful and poetic psalms were written while in caves, caverns, and the wilderness, waiting on God.
5. God does not ignore the cries of His children. David cried out, and at times begged God for help, invention, and defense. God never let David down. He did eventually take the throne, didn't he?
6. Our waiting has a purpose for someone other than ourselves. It is not all about us. Just think of how rich our lives are today because of the wait David endured. We have the comfort, compassion, hope, and healing of his amazing poetry.

What awesome instructions David gives for waiting! Waiting is less difficult and the future is brighter when we let God to do His work in our waiting season. When we let our guard and defenses down, He proves Himself faithful to bring His plans for our lives to fullness.

Dear Lord, help me wait. Help me wait well. I want to be still and allow You to bring Your plan in my life to its fullness. I can't do this without You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. Do I view waiting as a classroom or place of confinement? Elaborate on your answer.
2. How did the individuals in Exodus 32 fail to live out this week's waiting well statement?
3. How I am living out this week's waiting well statement?
4. How do I demonstrate my love for God?
5. Use John 13:35 to answer the following question: How will others know that we are Christ's disciples?
6. How am I currently "doing what I know to do?"

Time is in His Hands

"So, the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies." Joshua 10:13a (NLT)

Has there ever been a time when you longed for just a little more light in your day to accomplish your tasks? When you need more time, do you ask God for it? After all, time is in His hands.

As we read in today's key verse, God knew Joshua needed a little more time in his day, so He gave it to him.

Joshua and the Israelite armies were in battle against five combined Amorite armies to conquer the land allotted to them after crossing the Jordan. Joshua and his men were tired. The warring for the land had been intense. As the leader, Joshua decided to travel all night for a surprise attack. And then Joshua asked God to hold the sun and moon still so they could fight.

Over a decade ago God called me to radically trust Him with my time and get up each morning before the sun rose to spend time in prayer, and in His Word.

How can I do this? I remember asking the Lord.

I argued: I am a busy wife and mother. The baby is only a few months old. I need sleep.

It never occurred to me to ask God to help me by adjusting my time so that I could walk in obedience to Him as well as take care of all my other responsibilities.

Eventually I obeyed, but not wholeheartedly. My problem wasn't that I did not want to know God better through prayer and His Word. My problem was that I believed I could manage the time in my day better than He could. I believed the lie that told me I was in control, arranged my day, and accomplished much. The lie told me I did not need God for the little details of my day-to-day living. The lie told me I did not need to tithe the first fruits of my day to God. The lie, lied.

Like the Amorite armies were defeated, eventually so was my lie.

Over the last decade I have learned like Joshua, to call on God and ask Him to "let the sun and moon stand still" so that I can accomplish what He has ordained for me to do. It is my desire to be at peace with His timing and not to complete my checklist.

Do I believe He has held time in His hands for me? Yes I do. How can that be? He is God, the great I AM, and the Creator of time. I am just a little "i am not" enjoying the story of God one day at a time.

When you need more time, will you ask God for it? Will you trust Him to hold your time in His nailed-scarred hands?

Lord, waiting is hard and waiting well seems impossible. As I wait, help me see the good around me, rather than feeling neglected and dismissed. Lord, when I grow impatient, remind me how You are trustworthy and have my best interest in mind. Thank You for the good plans You have prepared for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Accept God's Ways

Week 2

Waiting Well Statement and Weekly Verse

Waiting well teaches us to trust His delays rather than doubt His ways.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Trust

Strong's: 982ⁱⁱ

Batach (baw-takh')

to trust God

Submit

Strong's: 3045ⁱⁱⁱ

yâda' (yaw-dah')

know, recognize, and acknowledge God

Isn't it frustrating when the definition of the word is the word itself? Let's dig a little deeper. Dictionary.com to further define trust. Trust; to rely upon or place confidence in someone or something; to have confidence; hope. It's easy to place our trust in the things we see, the things of this world. The world's solutions are make-shift, temporary, and will fall apart as quickly as a house of cards. Faith, the kind of faith we need to stand strong in our pause is, “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Heb.11:1 NIV).

When we act on our thinking, we get in the way of what God has planned. The *working on our behalf* is interrupted. To *not lean on our own understanding* means that we trust God's higher ways and higher thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). The best thing we can do in our wait is to know and acknowledge God in our pause. He is doing something new and exciting. In the pause, we can have a confident hope that the new thing is greater than anything we can ask or imagine.

Listening Guide

Waiting well teaches us to trust His delays rather than doubt His ways.

“And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.” 1 Samuel 16:21 (ESV)

When God asks us to do something, we _____ or _____.

We delay because the *what ifs* shout louder than the _____ of _____ is.

We obey because our love for _____ becomes greater than our _____ and _____.

Common Obedience Obstacles

Obstacle 1: We _____

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”
Proverbs 3:5 (ESV)

Obstacle 2: We _____

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

“For I am the LORD your God who holds your right hand; it is I who says to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.”
Isaiah 41:13 (ESV)

Obstacle 3: We _____

“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” Hebrews 10:35-36 (ESV)

Obstacle 4: We _____

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there you will be disorder and every vile practice.” James 3:16 (ESV)

Obstacle 5: We _____

“Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

And What Happens When We Don't Wait Well

“It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old.” Hebrews 11:11 (NLT)

Patience. Endurance. Pause. Tarry. These words are all synonyms for one of my least favorite words in the Bible: wait. Waiting is not one of my top strengths. I'm more of hurry-up and let's-get-this-thing-going type of girl. Today I introduce you to my friend Sarah, with whom I have a lot in common...neither of us like to wait.

Her story is like yours, and mine. She had a dream, a desire waiting to be fulfilled. Sarah longed to be a mother. The details of her infertility are mostly private, yet God published one verse concerning the matter. “Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him (Gen. 16:1).” Sarah is caught in a dilemma. She wants a child, but is unable to have a child. Feeling she has reached an impasse; Sarah takes matters into her own hands.

Desperate to fulfill her dream, Sarah convinces Abram to have sex with her maidservant Hagar. (Gen.16:2) Her plan was successful and Abram became a father. Her response to her delay teaches us a great deal about waiting well. Sarah's interference enlightens us to the dangers of waiting on God, rather than waiting with God.

Waiting on God gives way to actions based on human reasoning while waiting with God sees the pause as time to experience God. Sarah was living life in the pain and disappointment of an unfulfilled dream. She examined her situation and rather than trusting God's timing and experience His presence during the pause, she trusted her logic and understanding. The writer of Proverbs speaks candidly about those who trust themselves: “A man is a fool to trust himself! But those who use God's wisdom are safe” (Prov. 28:26). I'm more like Sarah than I care to admit.

In my mind I know truths like: God's timing is best. God is trustworthy and His plan is worth waiting for, but my impulsivity and impatience get the best of me. I reason, I've been waiting long enough.

My idea is good and God honoring. He's busy helping others, so I will handle this situation. Foolishly leaning on my own understanding causes, me to miss the incredible opportunity of seeing God work things out for my good and His glory. When we wait with God, we enjoy the immeasurable peace that we enjoy when we rest in the hope of His perfect plan.

Is there any hope for those who take matters into their own hands? Or does God write us off as a lost cause? There's always hope with God. Sarah's decision didn't remove the consequences of her action (The problems associated with your husband having a baby with another child- see Gen. 16: 1-16) and Gen. 21:8-21), but God remained faithful in fulfilling her dream with the child of promise, Isaac (Gen.18:1-15 and Gen. 21:1-7). Oh, sweet waiting friend, this brings us to the amazing hope of our key verse.

Hebrews chapter eleven is filled with names of people who proved their faithfulness to God. It is often referred to as the "Hall of Faith." Sarah's name is listed among the faithful! Isn't this incredible? Impatient people aren't cast aside in the family of God. (Whew. I'm thankful for this truth!) Sarah proved that meddling can mess-up God's best plan, but our key verse shows us that God redeems our interruptions and can turn our mess-up into a message.

Maybe your dream is like Sarah's, to be a momma. Perhaps you want to own a home, be married, or for your loved ones to be saved. Your dream isn't too big for God. Trust Him with your deepest desire. Wait with Him and experience God's presence. Participate with Him through obedience. Waiting with Him is worth it. His plans are the best, more than anything you can ask or imagine.

Lord, I'm sorry for interfering with the work You are trying to accomplish in my life. Pauses are challenging. I want to experience You as I wait for Your best plans. Thank You for being a redeeming God who takes my mess-ups and makes a message. Help me to lean on You rather than my own understanding. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. Which obstacle do I struggle with most?

2. Use your Bible to identify the people, the problem and the obstacle.

Numbers 13:1, Numbers 13:21, 25-31

Genesis 15:3-6, Genesis 16:1-4

Mark 9:20-24

3. What is most challenging for you about trusting God's ways?

4. Waiting isn't wasting time...it's training time. How is God training you right now?

Where Do You Find Refuge?

"I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever." Psalm 52:8b (NIV)

The transition from a crib to a "big boy bed" proved difficult for my 3-year-old. Night after night, Griffin would come downstairs, afraid to sleep in his new bed. I'd carry him back to his room, reassuring him he was safe and no one would hurt him. We would pray for protection and thank God for his new bed. My son stayed put for a little while and then, the same scenario would play out all over again.

As with most women, sleep is important to me. I am not happy when I'm woken up in the middle of the night - for any reason. When it happened many times a night, many nights in a row, sleep deprivation took its toll and wore my patience thin. During those long nights, I tried to remember it was only a season of adjustment that would pass eventually.

One night when Griffin called out, I decided it was time for the adjustment period to be over. I was tired of repeatedly getting up. As I headed upstairs - very loudly I might add - my frustration increased. I found my son on his usual stair waiting for me. Right then, my heavenly Father showed me a picture of love I will never forget.

As I gathered Griffin in my arms, ready to give him a firm talking, he asked me to sing *Jesus Loves Me*. I don't have to tell you that it is very difficult to sing this lullaby when you have that not-so-nice feeling in your heart. While I half-heartedly sang, God used Griffin to remind me that my son knew where to go when he needed a safe refuge.

His night-light, stuffed animals and blankie didn't make him feel safe. He couldn't hide out in them the same way he could snuggle in my arms. They couldn't love him like his mom could.

It's natural for kids to seek protection when they're afraid, but we seldom think of mighty warriors needing a place of refuge. However, Scripture tells us King David sought one. His life had been quite an adventure.

From the time Samuel anointed him the future King of Israel, he moved to the palace to play the harp for King Saul, slew a giant, married a loyal woman and hit the ground running in order to save his life from Saul.

David eventually ended up hiding in the dark, smelly cave of Adullam with Saul right on his heels. (1 Samuel 22:1) The word *adullam* means refuge. In fear for his life, David tucked away in the cave and cried out to the Lord. He wrote the song we know as Psalm 52 to bring encouragement to his weariness and relief to his heaviness.

Through his praise and lamenting, David realized his refuge was not in a cave but in the Lord. *"I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever"* (Psalm 52:8b).

Many times, like Griffin and David, we find ourselves in need of refuge. In our world of modern conveniences and quick fixes, it's easy to find comfort in places, people and things, rather than in God. He is often our last resort rather than our first choice. But our heavenly Father offers us shelter in His faithful love. He never fails to pick us up and sing over us when we are weary and afraid ... no matter how many times we call out to Him.

Let's set our minds and hearts today to develop a daily relationship with God so our natural response to fear and anxiety is to run to Him as our Refuge. We can trust in His unfailing love.

Dear God, I ask You today to help me seek You as my refuge in times of trouble. Help me put down my phone, turn off the TV and close my computer so I can spend time with You, experiencing the comfort of Your unfailing love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Infuse
Yourself
With Truth

Week 3

Waiting Well Statement and Weekly Verse

Waiting well turns to truth when the wait makes us weary.

“But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.”
Psalm 3:3 (NIV)

Shield

Strong's: 4043^{iv}

magen or meginnah (maw-gane')

a shield or buckler

a round shield held by a grip and sometimes having straps through which the arm is passed.
any means of defense; protection.

My glory

Strong's: 3519^v

Kabowd (kaw-bode')

the one whom I glorify

Lift

Strong's: 7311^{vi}

Rum (room)

to raise or lift head with hand

The wait makes us weary. The world offers many options to shield us, bring glory to who we are, and to lift our head. We will be tempted to surrender to the world's way of dealing with our wait, rather than experiencing God's power, compassion, and love while we wait, if our minds are not focused and our hearts are not seeking truth (God's Word)

David was man on the run during his wait to be king. His war experience yielded knowledge to the power the shield. It was his weapon of defense against the enemy, and without it a warrior would perish. He fully understood glory. The crowds shouted, “This was their song: ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!’” (1 Samuel 18:7 NLT). Encounters with various people encouraged and lifted his weary spirit. All these David knew from an earthly perspective. However, in this verse He extols God. “You are my shield”, better than any earthly weaponry. “You are my glory,” no earthly recognition can match You.

Listening Guide

Waiting well turns to truth when the wait makes us weary.

“Then David said in his heart, ‘Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand.’”

1 Samuel 27:1 (NIV)

We have to be so very careful what we say to our heart. Words have _____.

If/when we _____, it’s important that we don’t _____.

If/when we slip, we must _____ our mind, body, and soul with truth.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Phil.4:8 NIV)

Psalm 56

This I know: God _____ !

Because He is on our side, we can *infuse* our mind, body, and soul with these truths that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise.

I can trust God.

I can praise God.

I can fulfill my vows to God.

I offer sacrifice thanks for His help.

_____ in the life-giving light through the remainder of our wait. (V12)

God Goes Before You and Follows You

"You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head."

Psalm 139:5 (NLT)

My 4-year-old had become quite insistent about walking into school alone. He adamantly declared that he could go from the parking lot to the school by himself. But I knew that an independent, spirited preschooler and a busy parking lot did not mix. Griffin couldn't understand why I had to walk with him. Trying not to extinguish his self-sufficient spirit, I came up with a plan that ensured his safety and still let him think he was walking by himself.

Upon arriving in the school parking lot, he would unbuckle, put on his backpack, get out of the van and wait for me. Together, we looked for cars and decided whether it was safe to cross. While I remained next to the van, he crossed the parking lot. Little did he know that I kept my eyes on him the whole time and quickly followed at a distance - far enough behind so he didn't see me.

My son thought he was "the stuff." It was wonderful to see his confidence soar. He followed the same path each day and I protected him without his knowledge.

Our heavenly Father walks behind us too. Psalm 139:5 reminds us, "You go before me and follow me. You place Your hand of blessing on my head."

In moments of confusion and busyness, God knows which way we are going and is there to protect us - even when we can't see Him, just as I protected my son without his knowledge.

Whether you're waiting in a doctor's office, at work, riding the bus or sitting at home - God has made a way for you to get through the diagnosis, project, busyness and responsibilities.

Whatever you face today, God has already gone before you and will guard you from behind.

This truth is especially comforting to me as my children grow up. We can't always stand in the "parking lot" of life and watch our kids everywhere they go.

But we can trust that their heavenly Father is there with them, leading the way and bringing up the rear. Whether they're facing a tough exam, driving for the first time alone or dealing with a bully at school, God is with them.

In the circumstances that surround you and your kids today, in the events that are scheduled on your calendar, take comfort in knowing God is there. He has gone before you - and your children - and follows you, too.

Lord, thank You for this tender reminder that You are always with me. Forgive me for foolishly carrying the weight of my path, forgetting that Your guiding hand is always upon me. Help me guide my children in this path as well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your default response when weariness sets in?
2. David grew weary another time as he waited to become king. Turn to 1 Samuel 21:10. What was David's response to his weariness?
3. Read 1 Samuel 21:11-13
How was David received?

Describe David's response to the comments he heard.

4. After this experience David, infused his thinking with truth.
Read Psalm 34:1-3
How did David's attitude change from His time with the Philistines?

Read Psalm. 34:17-18
Who does the Lord hear?

What does He do for those who call on Him? Who is the Lord close to?

Our Wants, God Will

“I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will rescue you and this city from the king of Assyria...” 2 Kings 20:6a (NLT)

Several years ago, it seemed my mother’s time to meet the Lord face-to-face had come.

She had contracted an unidentifiable infection in her lungs following a routine gall bladder surgery. The doctors told us nothing else could be done to save her. As we sat in the Intensive Care Unit waiting room, my family prayed and wept. If only God would heal my mom and allow her to stay here on earth a while longer.

Listening to the machines whoosh and beep, my mind roamed to a familiar prayer request in the Old Testament. Difficulties and hardships are no respecters of time or position, and King Hezekiah was no exception.

The king had reached the prime of his life. Extreme wealth filled his coffers. He had achieved military success. Long-awaited peace rested over his kingdom, Jerusalem. You might say things were smooth sailing for him. Yet, without notice, a terminal illness struck the great king.

Hezekiah responded as any of us would if faced with such news. He prayed and wept. He reminded God of his faithful service and wholehearted devotion and begged for more time. This is how God answered him: “I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will rescue you and this city from the king of Assyria ...” (2 Kings 20:6a)

My family took a page out of Hezekiah’s prayer book and reminded the Lord of my mother’s wholehearted devotion to Him. We begged for more time. Like Hezekiah, God sustained my mom’s life here on earth — over 20 years and counting!

I rejoice daily over God’s gift of life to my mother. Yet I’m aware that many of my prayers aren’t answered the way I desire. I have prayed for other faithful servants to recover from illnesses, yet they’ve passed away at an age that seemed too young to me.

I'll be honest and tell you that I've wrestled with God over this. My rationalization goes something like this: "Lord, they could have done more for Your kingdom. He should have been able to raise his children in a godly manner. She would have served others in Your Name. Now they can't."

Can you relate to my ponderings?

After losing a dear friend, I knew I had to work out my questions once and for all. There was only one place to take them — Scripture.

Studying prayer in the Bible, I found the answer I'd been searching for: When praying, I need to focus on God's will, not solely on my wants. Then I can expect to hear Him and will know that no matter His answer, He will bring good out of even the hardest situation. This isn't an easy thing to grasp when the answer is losing a loved one, but I am learning to lean on the Lord's wisdom when circumstances feel hard.

Neither my heart nor my mind is equipped to handle or understand the big picture. But God sees the beginning from the end and gives what is good. Difficulties and hardships will strike each of us at different times in our lives. Our best response to them is to cry out to God in prayer, according to His will and rest in His trustworthy answer.

Lord, forgive me for the times I have focused more on my wants than Your will. I know in my head that Your will is perfect; please help me believe with my heart. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Trust the
Lord when the
Wait Ends and
When It Doesn't

Week 4

Waiting Well Statement and Weekly Verse

Waiting well focuses on the Person of our faith rather than the object of our wait.

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:2 (NIV)

Set your mind

Strong's 5426^{vii}

Phroneó (fron-eh'-o)

to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for

Above

Strong's 507^{viii}

Anó (an'-o)

up, above, heavenly things

Earth

Strong's 1093^{ix}

Gé (ghay)

the earth, land

The busy and fast pace rhythm of this earthly life lures us to the shiny, exciting, and popular things of the culture, distracting us from the things that really matter. Setting our affections, desires, and wants on the temporary things of this mortal life, (earthly things) will always deliver disappointment. We were created for things greater than this world. Those in Christ experience a tug between what this world offers and what our Creator wants for us. Therefore, it's easy to lose sight of the greater vision, when God hits pause.

The arena in which we live does not, will not, and cannot satisfy our souls, no matter how loud the bells and whistles may be. Paul, the writer of Colossians shows us how to bring relief to the tension between the two worlds. Focus, set our mind on the things above, the Person of Faith, and everything He is about. Reading and studying His Word are the best way to remain zeroed in on Him and heavenly things. Eventually, the hold of this world loses its grip and we experience His peace in the pause, as well as in the moving forward of our faith adventure.

Listening Guide

Waiting well focuses on the Person of our faith rather than the object of our wait.

Whether our wait continues or ends, we are _____ for the enemy.

We have to protect what has developed in the _____ .

Protection Plan

Step 1: Be in the _____ and _____ my knees.

“Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!” 1 Chronicles 16:11(NIV)

When we continually search and seek, we are less likely to be _____ by the enemy.

“In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.” 2 Samuel 11:1 (NIV)

Step 2: Be _____ I should be doing _____ I should be doing.

Succumbing to the lusts of life it is more like a _____ fade, than a _____ fall,

Step 3: Be _____ with myself and God about my weaknesses.

“Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; See for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong— then guide me on the road to eternal life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (The Message)

David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” 2 Samuel 12:13 (NIV)

Step 4: Be _____ to the Lord when the slide turns to sin.

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

Psalm 51:12 (NIV)

God is Working in the Waiting Season

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:14 (NLT)

Efficiency is my middle name. I like to get things done and get them done fast. Waiting for my computer to re-load a web page, or my kids to find their shoes, or even for God to come through on a prayer request isn't something I always do with patience.

In our hurry up, need it, gotta-have-it-now culture, it's easy to think we shouldn't have to wait. Think about it: within seconds we can know the weather in southern Mongolia, order a cute blouse from a trendy store, or move dinner from the freezer to the table in five minutes thanks to microwaves. We can instant message our mom or send a tweet to thousands in the blink of an eye. No wonder waiting is hard!

King David, the author of Psalm 27:14 was no stranger to waiting and knew full well of its difficulties. So, when David wrote, "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD," it was with experience honed through years of waiting to fulfill God's destiny for him. That destiny started in the humble home of his father Jesse, and in the pasture herding sheep.

It started when the prophet Samuel showed up at Jesse's home to anoint the next king of Israel who was to be chosen from his family. Only one of Jesse's sons would be anointed. That son was David.

Scripture tells us the Spirit of God rushed over David and was with him the remainder of his days (1 Samuel 16:13 ESV). With such an anointing one would expect David to run to take his seat on the throne. But the only running David did was back to the pasture and his sheep.

Thus, his wait began.

In the wait, God prepared David to be king. However, the only vocation David had known was shepherding.

He did not know the ins and outs of kingly protocol or the rules of royal deity. David did not have the support of the people or armies to defend him as king. He was only a lowly shepherd boy. Instead of taking the position he was promised, David waited for God to move him from the pasture to the palace.

In the wait, God readied David by teaching many lessons about waiting. By examining and applying these truths we can find hope in the difficulty of waiting, and see how waiting now can be beneficial to our future.

Even though we are anointed and appointed we may still have to wait. David waited 15 years to be king of Judah and even longer to be king of all Israel.

If we allow it, our waiting will bring us to an intimate knowledge of God that we would not otherwise have. Most of David's beautiful and poetic psalms were written while in caves, caverns, and the wilderness, waiting on God.

God does not ignore the cries of His children. David cried and begged God for help, intervention, and defense. God never let David down.

Our waiting has a purpose for someone other than ourselves. It's not all about us. Just think of how rich our lives are today because of the wait David endured. We have the comfort, compassion, hope, and healing of the Psalms.

What awesome instructions David's life gives for waiting! Waiting is less difficult and the future is brighter when we let God do His work in our waiting season. When we let our guard and defenses down, we're open to seeing how faithful He is to bring His plans for our lives to fullness.

Lord, help me wait well. I want be patient as You bring Your plan in my life to its fullness. I can't do this without You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. How can we avoid David's mistake? (Giving into the lust of life) See Galatians 5:16
2. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? How do I demonstrate this in my life?
3. FB Meyer said "*Beware of moments and hours of ease.*" How do I spend my "hours of ease?" (If you have any. LOL)

4. Wrapping It Up: Complete the waiting well statement. Waiting well...

_____ forward to the future while staying present in the present

_____ God's delays, rather than doubt His ways.

_____ to truth when the wait makes you weary.

_____ on the Person of your faith, rather than the object of your wait.

Why Is God Taking So Long?

“But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” Psalm 33:11 (NIV)

Growing up, I had a set plan for my life. Get good grades. Become an elementary school teacher. Marry the cute guy with the cool car. Have babies.

My dreams came to pass, except one — a house full of children. No matter how many tests I took, needles I got stuck with or remedies I tried, I could not get pregnant.

The desire to be a mother consumed my thoughts. Why can't I get pregnant? What is wrong with me? What have I done to warrant such punishment from God? My girlfriends were getting pregnant. That just didn't seem fair, so I determined that God wasn't fair.

I began to decline invitations to the multitude of blue-and-pink parties. My husband and I purposely socialized with friends who were not expecting or didn't have children. However, avoiding pregnant friends did not ease my pain or subdue my longing.

Trying harder didn't help either. For two years, we endured infertility testing, but no one could explain why I was unable to conceive.

Medically, I was doing everything right; spiritually, I was not. The wait exhausted my faith. Resolving that God was mad at me, I was furious with Him. Maybe you can relate?

We have our plans and want our way. When things don't happen accordingly, we retaliate by ignoring God. I felt this way for more than two years as the object of my desire became greater than the Person of my faith.

Struggling with infertility can take you down some winding roads full of dark thoughts and bumpy emotions. Without constant awareness of my need to allow truth to steer me, I could easily get lost wondering why God didn't love me, assume He was punishing me or even question His ability to help.

Many of us face long delays in seeing the desires of our heart come to fruition. You may be waiting for a new job, a second chance at a relationship or a cure to poor health. Days, months, even years have passed without a glimmer of change. Questions of “when” and “why” fill your mind and heart.

Years went by before I eventually conceived my daughter. To be honest, I don’t have an exact answer now for why God asked me to wait to have children. But I do know what Psalm 33:11 shares with us, "But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations" (NIV).

The word “purposes” jumps out at me. In the dark moments of hurt, frustration, doubt and mistrust, I had to remind myself of who God is and what His purposes are.

God is wise, good, and caring. God’s purposes are right, loving, and on time.

When you’re in the middle of a long wait, these truths feel difficult to believe. Even after having my two children, it’s taken me years to trust in God’s perfect timing and ways. In fact, I’m currently waiting on Him to heal my husband from a sickness he’s battled for the better part of 10 years. I don’t know if healing Scott is part of the Lord’s purposes, but I do trust that whatever happens, God is wise, good, caring, right, loving, and right-on-time.

Sometimes the wait is more about experiencing God than enduring the delay. We can rest assured that in due time, He will bring to fruition all His designs and they will be good. As we continue on our journey, let’s remain open to lining up our plans with God’s and allowing His truth to steer our wishes.

Lord, waiting is hard. Forgive me for being impatient and trying to “help” work out things on my own. I truly want to focus on You rather than the object of my wait. I ask Your Spirit to calm my anxious heart as I learn to patiently wait on Your best for me. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

About the Author

Wendy Pope is a wife to Scott and mother to her grown children, one daughter and one son. She is an international speaker for Proverbs 31 Ministries.

Wendy is the author of *Wait and See: Finding Peace in God's Pauses and Plans, Yes, No and Maybe: Living With the God of Immeasurably More*, and *Hidden Potential: Revealing What God can Do Through You*. She writes devotions for *Encouragement for Today*, is a content provider for the free online devotion app First 5, and is a member of the Proverbs 31 Ministries speaker team.

She leads women all over the world to life change through her in-depth online Bible studies. She has led thousands of women through her *Read through the Word* study of the One Chronological Bible. Down-to-earth and transparent, Wendy teaches in a way that women feel she is speaking directly to their hearts. Wendy inspires her audiences to:

- make spending time in God's Word each day a priority;
- look for God working around them every day; and
- view life with a God-first perspective.

To bring the message of *Wait and See* or another of Wendy's inspiring topics to your next event, contact speakercoordinator@proverbs31.org. To learn more about *Read through the Word*, visit Wendy's website, wendypope.org

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Endnotes

ⁱ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2442.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3045.htm>

^{iv} <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/982.htm>

^{iv} <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4043.htm>

^v <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3519.htm>

^{vi} <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7311.htm>

^{vii} <https://biblehub.com/greek/5426.htm>

^{viii} <https://biblehub.com/greek/507.htm>

^{ix} <https://biblehub.com/greek/1093.htm>