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**Small Group Material**

Leader Guide

**"In The Waiting"**

**August 6th, 2017**

**Bottom Line:** *Sometimes God says, "Hang on" so that we can learn to "hold on."*

**Study Verses:** *Psalm 40:1-5, Psalm 46:10, Romans 5:1-5*

**Define The Win:** *Participants would examine places where they find themselves in a time of waiting. They would understand the importance of displaying faith and patience during these periods. Group members would view the act of waiting as a spiritual discipline and become curious about what God is teaching them through this time of waiting.*

## Key Points

- ***God uses waiting for spiritual formation. By waiting God is teaching us to trust His provision.***
- ***We must shift our heart and mind from waiting to worship. We do this by taking the focus off of ourselves and putting it onto God.***
- ***No one loves to wait. Why? Because waiting for something you really want is hard.***
- ***The act of waiting is a spiritual discipline.***
- ***We will miss out on so much of what God is doing in our lives if we're always trying to "hurry things up."***
- ***When God hits the pause button, He is saying, "Pay attention...I have you here for a reason."***

- *Instead of trying to speed things up and get us unstuck, God is wanting to do something deep inside our heart that shapes and forms our character.*
- *Even in the midst of the waiting, God is doing something.*
- *God is trying to shape and form us into complete dependence on Him.*

## **ENCOUNTER**

*"God wants you to get where God wants you to go more than you want to get where God wants you to go." -Mark Batterson*

- On a scale of 1 (completely impatient) to 10 (no problem with waiting), how would you rate your typical response to waiting and displaying patience? What makes you answer in the way that you do?
- Read the quote from Mark Batterson. Do you agree with this quote. Why or why not? How does your answer influence your willingness to be patient and faithful during times of waiting and not understanding God's direction?
- Describe a time when you encountered a time of waiting. How did you react to your circumstances initially? Over time, how did God shape and transform your character? In what ways did your perspective of God change by going through these circumstances?
- What is the difference between a delay and waiting?

## **FORMATION**

- Read Psalm 40:1-2. What do we need to trust in and remind ourselves of when we find ourselves waiting?
- Read Psalm 40:3-5. How did David turn his waiting into worship? Where did David turn his attention towards?
- Read Psalm 46:10. How can the act of patiently waiting serve as a spiritual discipline?
- Read Romans 5:1-5. Why is hope and character transformation only found if we are willing to preserve during difficult times?

## **EXPRESSION**

- When we are impatient, we are unwilling to let go of certain things (pride, fear, control, etc.)? What are you currently holding on to and why are you gripping to these things for pseudo security?

- Where is God trying to get your attention by causing you to wait? How would a perspective shift alter your response to these circumstances?
- One way we can turn our waiting into worship is by shifting our perspective off of ourselves and on to others. Who around you is in need of encouragement, support or help? How can you respond to this need?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *No one loves to wait. We all know what it's like to be stuck, or to feel stuck, like everything is out of our control and we're just sitting tight waiting on someone or something else to move so we can get on with life and advance to the next thing. Waiting for something we really want is hard. We'll often take shortcuts because we're trying to skip the waiting if at all possible. To quote the famous theologian, Tom Petty, "The waiting is the hardest part."*

*Normally, when we're waiting, we're not waiting on God, we're waiting on ourselves, or our circumstances to change. We look around wondering what is blocking or holding up our progress. If we're not careful we will miss out on something really special if we're always trying to "hurry things up." The discipline of waiting is an important part of life. It's where we learn to trust and display faith. It's where we come to the end of ourselves. During these times, whether we realize it or not, God is posturing Himself to help when He hears our cry. Sometimes God says, "Hang on" so that we can learn how to "hold on."*

*Instead of trying to speed things up and get unstuck, God is wanting to do something deep inside of our heart that shapes and forms our character and dependence upon him. Even in the midst of waiting, God is doing something. He's shaping our mind and heart so that we can be an expression of Him.*

*When God says WAIT, it's not because He doesn't care or because He doesn't want us to be blessed. He isn't withholding His goodness, joy, or peace. God utilizes times of waiting to shape and form us into complete dependence upon Him. God uses waiting to teach us how to trust His provision.*

*In order to see this we must shift our perspective. We tend to view waiting as if it's a delay, but the two are different. The word delay means to hinder, impeded or to hold up progress while waiting is the act of pausing for purpose and preparation. By being still we see God as God. We must shift our perspective from waiting to worship.*

*Our waiting is not just about us. It's about the rest of the world also learning to see, hear, and trust God. It's about pointing others to worship Him. Our focus should shift to God and what He is trying to do, instead of our own inconvenience and what's happening to us. The way to begin doing this is by focusing on the people and circumstances around us. We've got to move from just focusing on ourselves to focusing outside of ourselves. Growth happens when we stop viewing waiting as if it's not a part of the plan and begin to realize that it is in fact a very strategic part of God's plan.*