

***Finding Joy While We Wait* — August 19 & 20, 2017**  
**Follow-up Bible Studies**

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**Day One: Psalm 27**

- Why is David not afraid (1)? How does he weather attacks (2-3)? What one thing does he want from the Lord (4)? Why (5)? What does he do when experiencing God's presence like this (6)? Joy in waiting is indeed possible when you "dwell in the house of the Lord" and "gaze on his beauty." What are some ways to engage God like this? Make a plan to do so on a regular basis.
- David then makes several more pleas to the Lord; summarize them (7-12). What do you think his emotions were like when he penned these words? Mighty God can bring his joy into desperate times like this. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with hope in this truth.
- What is David confident about (13)? In conclusion, what does he remind both himself and his readers to do (14)? Meditate on these last two verses for a few minutes and visualize what they mean to you personally. Finally, memorize them and recite them aloud when you find yourself in a hard season of waiting.

**Day Two: Psalm 130**

- As he speaks to God, what is the psalmist's emotional state (1)? What does he want from the Lord (2)? Because God forgives, what is possible (3-4)? What sort of foundation do these first four verses lay for seeking the Lord when we are in need?
- Describe the way the psalmist waits for the Lord (5-6)? What does he hope in (5)? Imagine what it's like to be awake all night standing guard, waiting for the sun to rise. How is your "whole being" involved? What makes waiting for the Lord even more intense and visceral than this? Invite God into this reflection; ask him if any adjustments to the way you wait for him are in order.
- How does the psalmist take this from a personal reflection to a corporate call (7-8)? Why is it worthwhile for God's people to put their hope in him (7-8)? What are some ways you can point others toward the joy that can be found in waiting on the Lord?

**Day Three: Lamentations 1**

- In this acrostic poem about the Babylonian exile, how does the author describe the deserted city and the plight of God's people (1-11, 17)? Which imagery moves you the most? Why?
- What is the author's personal experience of the exile (12-16, 18-21-22)? In addition to hoping for his enemies' demise, he appears to be pointing a finger of accusation at the Lord; why do you think this is the case? Do you ever blame God for your suffering when you are waiting for a breakthrough? Pray for grace to move past bitterness and despair as you wait, and ask the Lord to fill you instead with patience and hope.
- Meditate on these phrases from verses 20 and 22: "outside, the sword bereaves; inside, there is only death" and "my groans are many and my heart is faint." What vivid imagery captures your own current experience of waiting? Ask God to meet you in this contemplation; what joy does he want to impart into your waiting?

**Day Four: Luke 2:22-40**

- Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem (22-24)? Describe Simeon (25). What did the Holy Spirit reveal to him and move him to do (26-27)? How did he react to Jesus (28-32)? How did Joseph and Mary respond (33)? What did Simeon prophesy to Mary (34-35)? What is one way you want to be like Simeon?

- Describe Anna (36-37). What was her interaction with Jesus like (38)? Imagine being like Anna: despite a difficult life circumstance, you never leave God's presence as you patiently, eagerly and hopefully wait. Summarize this passage's conclusion (39-40).
- Ask the Holy Spirit to make you more like Simeon and Anna: faithful to wait on the Lord and expect him to do great things. What is the first step he's inspiring you to take to embody this change?

#### **Day Five: James 1:2-8**

- What should we consider "pure joy" (2)? Why (3)? This is a bold statement; can trials *really* be an experience of *pure*, unadulterated joy? If so, what would make it possible? Ask God to inject his truth and clarity into your reflection.
- Why should we let "perseverance finish its work" (4)? What is your own testimony of trials leading to spiritual maturity? Give thanks to God for this journey. Pray that remembering what he's done in past waiting trials would give you joy while enduring future trials.
- What is James' charge to those lacking wisdom (5)? However, what caveat does he add (6)? How does doubt impact one's sense of spiritual expectation (7)? What is the holistic impact (8)?
- Once again, in pronouncing someone "double-minded" and "unstable," James uses bold language. How do you receive this message? If he's "reading your mail," echo this prayer from Mark 9:24: "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" Pray this specifically regarding your ability to trust God while you wait.