

# WAIT

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Every lesson has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** Waiting on God is worth it in every circumstance.

**Head Change:** To know that God is greater than our circumstances.

**Heart Change:** To feel joyful in the process of waiting for our circumstances to change.

**Life Change:** To resist the temptation to complain about where God has us.

## OPEN

**When have you been somewhere—maybe in a class or at an event—and you couldn't wait to leave? How did you get through it?**

It's natural to complain about an errand that unexpectedly takes too long or an event that fails to entertain us like we hoped it would. Life can sometimes feel like a series of boring events. We can feel stuck waiting for the exciting part of life to begin and dread our current circumstances.

Sometimes our suffering feels too much to handle, or we feel frustrated about not reaching a certain level of success. Christians can fall into the temptation to blame God during these times, and we can doubt if waiting on God's guidance is worth it.

Pastor Watson will use this session to unpack the power of waiting on God instead of doing things our way.

## VIEW

Before viewing the lesson, here are a few important things to look for in Pastor Watson's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**Why is it better to wait on God instead of going our own way?**

**How can waiting be the best way for us to move forward in life?**

**In what ways does waiting help us rejoice in the plan God has for our life?**

## REVIEW

Waiting on God can be difficult. Especially in our fast-paced culture, no one wants to hear the word "wait." But in God's timing, waiting is often the best thing for us to do. **What are some reasons waiting can be difficult?**

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**What is the hardest thing you ever had to wait for? What did you do to remain strong and not give up?**

Pastor Watson mentioned Isaiah 40, which says God renews the strength of those who wait on the Lord. Read Isaiah 40:31. **When have you learned that waiting on God was worth it?**

Waiting on God can cause us to obtain something greater than we could have imagined. For example, while the apostle Paul was in prison, he saw the gospel spread in amazing ways. Read Philippians 1:12–14. **Why do you think Paul was able to have a positive outlook on waiting in prison?**

**In what ways does Paul's example demonstrate the importance of being patient despite your circumstances?**

We can embrace our current circumstances and wait on God. Pastor Watson used a story from the life of Jonathan Evans to illustrate that sometimes what we want is not exactly what God wants for us. Although Jonathan never had an NFL career the way he imagined, his time waiting for the opportunity to run through a game-day tunnel prepared him for his role as an NFL chaplain. **In what ways can you relate to the experience of waiting for something you wanted but God had other plans?**

Pastor Watson said that God makes “a greater progress in your problems and in your pain.” **What examples from your own life show that greater progress comes from waiting on God's timing?**

Toward the end of the lesson, we learned about Paul's ability to rejoice even while he was in prison. Paul gives us an example of how waiting on God does not need to be gloomy or filled with negative emotions. Read Philippians 1:18.

**What are some of the emotions you've felt while waiting on God?**

Our emotions can change while we wait when we know where we are going. Pastor Watson used a story about four brothers going to heaven and how their vision of where they were headed changed their posture towards where they were. **Do you think we can function as they did?**

The story of the four brothers show us the power of a changed perspective as we wait on God. **What are some areas of your life where you struggle to have that perspective?**

We can often be too short-sighted and forget that God has already revealed the end of our story. Despite what we are facing now, God intends to bring us into his kingdom to dwell with him forever. **What can you do to remind yourself of the future God has planned for you when you get tired of waiting?**

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## **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

Throughout the biblical narrative, many people had to wait on God's timing, and they experienced a range of emotions. Mary and Martha's story in the Gospel of John is a great example of what it looks like to wait on God.

Read John 11:1–16.

**When Jesus received word of Lazarus's illness, what did he tell his disciples?**

**How does John describe Jesus's feelings toward Lazarus? What did Jesus do when he learned that Lazarus was seriously ill?**

Jesus did not go to Lazarus right away, despite being fully aware of his serious condition. In this passage, Jesus demonstrates that sometimes God does not move at the speed we believe he should. **What do you think about Jesus waiting a few days before going to Lazarus?**

In verses 14–15, Jesus declared that Lazarus was dead and that he was glad he did not make it there in time. **How does the timing of Lazarus's death demonstrate the difference between God's timing and ours?**

Read John 11:17–44.

When Jesus finally arrived in the town Lazarus lived in, he visited Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha met Jesus right away with her grief, but Mary stayed home and waited. The sisters demonstrated their feelings about waiting on Jesus to come to their brother's aid.

**How would you describe Mary and Martha's response to waiting on Jesus? What did each of them say to Jesus that lets us know how they were feeling?**

**Which of the sister's responses resonates the most with you? Why?**

When the people saw Jesus weeping at Lazarus's tomb, some of them asked, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" **What does their question tell us about their faith in Jesus?**

**In what ways can you relate to the people's question? How do you feel when it seems like God is taking too long to change your circumstances?**

Jesus knew he would raise Lazarus from the dead, but that did not stop him from weeping over Lazarus's death. **What do Jesus's emotions in this story tell us about God's compassion for us when we are waiting on him?**

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The passage mentions that the people were amazed and gave God glory after Lazarus rose from the tomb. **In what ways does this story relate to Pastor Watson’s point about how waiting can be for the “greater progress of the gospel”?**

Mary and Martha both received their brother’s resurrection with joy. Whether our approach to waiting on God is more like Mary’s or Martha’s, God has a plan for our waiting. We can trust God. **What does this story tell us about the benefits of waiting on God?**

**What are you waiting on God for right now? What could it look like to trust him while you wait?**

**In what ways can we support each other as we wait on God this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

We can rejoice while we wait once we recognize God has a plan. Although we may not see an end to our waiting, God has shown us the end of history in Scripture. We will one day live with him in his eternal kingdom—and it’ll be worth the wait.

The idea of waiting makes many of us want to give up. But the sooner we choose to rejoice while we wait, the sooner we will be able to rest in God’s timing.

If you are struggling to wait on God, look for ways to grow, serve, and learn during this time in your life. Find ways to glorify God and be joyful in your waiting. God is more powerful than our circumstances—he can use them for our good. We can put our trust in him as we wait.

## **DEEPER WALK**

**Read:** Reflect on the benefits of waiting on God by reading Isaiah 40:31 and Mark 5:25–34. Remember to find joy in your circumstances by reading Philippians 1:1–18 and Hebrews 9:28.

**Pray:** Pray that God would help you to remain strong and patient while you wait. Ask God and others how you can cultivate joy no matter the circumstances you face.

**Wait:** Commit to remaining faithful to God and trusting his timing. Resist the temptation to force your way out of a challenging season of life. Wait on God’s direction. Find opportunities to invest in your relationship with God and grow in your faith while you wait on God.