

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | If you could start a charity, what would it be for? Explain your answer.
2. The Bible is full of encouragement for us to wait patiently on God, but this is often easier said than done. Can you relate? In what area(s) of your life do you find it difficult to wait on God? Where do you believe this impatience comes from?

What do you see as the connection between waiting on God and trusting God (see Psalm 33:21)?

**Psalm 27:13-14 (NLT)** – <sup>13</sup>Yet I am confident I will see the Lord's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. <sup>14</sup>Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.

**Isaiah 64:4 (NLT)** – For since the world began, no ear has heard and no eye has seen a God like you, who works for those who wait for him!

**Psalm 33:16-22 (NLT)** – <sup>16</sup>The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior. <sup>17</sup>Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—for all its strength, it cannot save you. <sup>18</sup>But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. <sup>19</sup>He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. <sup>20</sup>We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. <sup>21</sup>In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. <sup>22</sup>Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.

3. One of the core themes from Joseph's life is that the space between an ordinary life and a technicolor life is the development of our character. With this in mind, Pastor Josh preached that God works in our waiting to break us of our need to control and understand everything and strengthen our trust in Him.

Share about a season of waiting that you've walked through. As you share, consider these questions...

a) What was the most difficult part of waiting?

b) How did you experience God's grace and ministering? Do you feel closer to God having walked through this season of waiting?

c) How did God grow your character?

d) How did God reveal to you an even better plan for your life than you had imagined?

**2 Corinthians 2:7-10 (NLT)** – <sup>7</sup>even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. <sup>8</sup>Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. <sup>9</sup>Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. <sup>10</sup>That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**Romans 8:25-27 (NLT)** – <sup>25</sup>But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently. <sup>26</sup>And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. <sup>27</sup>And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.

“Whatever the reasons, I’m convinced that in most cases God delays because he wants to give us more than we’re asking for. He loves us enough to wait to give us his best rather than to satisfy our impatience with a quick, cheap substitute. Sometimes what seems like God’s apathy is really his mercy.” - Wayne Stiles, *Waiting on God: What to Do When God Does Nothing*

## DIVING DEEPER

4. In a season of waiting, we face a choice to press into God and seek His counsel, or to pull away from God and harbor feelings of bitterness and anger.

a) Have you felt this tension before when waiting? If so, how did you address it?

b) Have you seen people walk away from their faith as a result of not getting or seeing something that they’ve asked for from God? What impact did that have on you?

c) When waiting, how can you cultivate a habit of seeking after God’s counsel?

**Psalm 106:12-14 (ESV)** – <sup>12</sup>Then they believed his words; they sang his praise. <sup>13</sup>But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel. <sup>14</sup>But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert;

**James 1:2-8 (NLT)** – <sup>2</sup>Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. <sup>3</sup>For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. <sup>4</sup>So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. <sup>5</sup>If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. <sup>6</sup>But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup>Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

5. One of the biggest temptations we face when waiting is to take matters into our own hands. To try and provide for ourselves when we feel God isn't providing or working quickly enough. An example of this is recorded in the Bible with the story of Abraham and Sarah and their sons Ishmael and Isaac. Study that story by reading the key Bible passages listed below. Then discuss the corresponding questions.

**Genesis 12:1-5 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. <sup>2</sup>"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." <sup>4</sup>So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. <sup>5</sup>He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

**Genesis 16:1-6, 15-16 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; <sup>2</sup>so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. <sup>3</sup>So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. <sup>4</sup>He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. <sup>5</sup>Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me..." <sup>15</sup>So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. <sup>16</sup>Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

**Genesis 17:15-21 (NIV)** – <sup>15</sup>God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." <sup>17</sup>Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" <sup>18</sup>And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" <sup>19</sup>Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. <sup>20</sup>And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. <sup>21</sup>But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."

- a) How did Abraham handle waiting for God to fulfill the promise of Genesis 12:1-3? How hard do you imagine it was for Abraham to wait more than 25 years to see his son Isaac born?

- b) Do you have a personal story of “rushing ahead” of God’s timing in an attempt to fulfill a desire or vision God gave you? If so and you’re willing, share it with the group.

## TAKING IT HOME

6. What are you currently waiting for and like Abraham, tempted to take in your own hands? Or what are you afraid to let go of because it seems that something is better than nothing? What are you trusting God for like Joseph did with the fulfillment of his dream?<sup>1</sup>

1. These questions are adapted from an article by Vaneetha Rendall Risner titled “When We Want to Give Up Waiting.” | <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/when-we-want-to-give-up-waiting>

7. Read Psalm 40 together. Then spend several minutes in silence reflecting on the words of David and these questions: 1) What stands out to you from this psalm? and 2) What did David do in the midst of waiting on God and how can you apply that to your own waiting?

**Psalm 40 (NIV)** — <sup>1</sup>I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup>He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. <sup>3</sup>He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. <sup>5</sup>Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.

<sup>6</sup>Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—but my ears you have opened—burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. <sup>7</sup>Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. <sup>8</sup>I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.”

<sup>9</sup>I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know. <sup>10</sup>I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help. I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness from the great assembly.

<sup>11</sup>Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord; may your love and faithfulness always protect me. <sup>12</sup>For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me. <sup>13</sup>Be pleased to save me, Lord; come quickly, Lord, to help me.

<sup>14</sup>May all who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace. <sup>15</sup>May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!” be appalled at their own shame. <sup>16</sup>But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, “The Lord is great!”

<sup>17</sup>But as for me, I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## *RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW*

1. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary (WOBE) | We're having a night of worship and prophetic ministry on Sunday, October 24th at 6:30pm at our Mason campus. As we gather to exalt the name of Jesus, you will encounter the power of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. Come expectantly, come ready to see God move, come to seek the extraordinary life. Where possible, Community Groups are encouraged to attend and participate in WOBE together.
2. 2022 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link below. <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>