

Think Long

Isaiah 40:27-31

Picture a grandmother standing in the kitchen watching her grandson toss a bag of popcorn into the microwave and hitting the popcorn button. He fidgets impatiently, waiting “forever” for his snack to be ready. As he munches on his snack she tells him about how she made popcorn as a child. Getting a pot out, pouring oil in it and waiting for it to heat up. Pouring kernels in and putting a lid on top you would jiggle and shake until you heard the first pop, and continue shaking so the kernels on the bottom wouldn’t burn. She asks her grandson, “Would you like to make some popcorn the old-fashioned way?” He thinks for a moment and says, “That sounds like it would take all day. It takes long enough in the microwave,” and he wanders from the room.

We live in a world where virtually everything comes quickly...or we want it to. But prayer is like planting and then waiting for the harvest. God does not promise instant results at the speed of light or even the speed of a microwave. Many prayers stay buried, growing slowly in the fertile soil of God’s heart. But they *are* growing and they will bring a harvest. We just need to remain patient and keep praying!

“To dream big and pray hard, we need the patience of the planter. We need the foresight of the farmer. We need the mindset of the sower.” - Mark Batterson

Icebreaker:

Tell about a life experience where you had to wait patiently, much longer than you wanted to wait. How did this shape and form you? How might the experience have ended differently if you could have rushed things and make them happen quickly?

1) Thinking Long Term involves considering WHO GOD IS. Read together in Isaiah 40:27-28.

Of the descriptions Isaiah uses in v.28, which stands out or hits home the most to you? Explain.

Read **Pslam 46:1-7** and consider how it relates to our passage. How had the Hebrew people lost sight of God’s everlasting faithfulness?

Sometimes our present circumstances dominate our thinking. Isaiah is telling the Israelites to shift their thinking towards who God is. In other words, stop telling God how big your problems are, and starting telling your problems how big your God is! To what circumstances in your life right now does this apply?

2) Thinking Long Term involves considering GOD’S STRENGTH. Read Isaiah 40:29.

What’s something you’ve been trying to accomplish and relying on your own strength to do? How is that going for you?

Paul talks about God's power in our weakness. Read in **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**. What has been one of your weakest moments? How did you see God's power work through you to increase your strength?

What weaknesses or fears do you need to release to God in order to make room for His power in your life?

3) Thinking Long Term means **WAITING ON GOD**. Read Isaiah 40:30-31.

The word trust here means "to eagerly wait for." Just as the people of Israel were eagerly awaiting their deliverance from captivity, was there ever something you waited for in the Lord?

When difficulties arise we often question God and forget His goodness in our past. Read **Psalm 103:1-5** and take some time to reflect. How does this passage give you confidence as you wait?

Read **Psalm 37:3-9**. We often start strong when it comes to our faith and prayers, but over time our fervor wanes and we make decisions based off of feeling or our own ability. That's called fretting. What does "fretting" in the face of waiting accomplish?

- What benefits are there to being still and doing good while waiting? How does this apply today?

What's something you are fretting about now? How can you be more patient and still this week?

Pray:

Pray for each other and the things you are waiting on and have circled in prayer as a group. Thank God for his power and strength and ask for the confidence to trust in His goodness and timing as you wait eagerly for an answer.

Connect:

Try a 10-Day or 21-Day time of Prayer and Fasting. Read Daniel 6, 9-10. Then, plan a Daniel Fast (fruits, vegetables, and water). Have a list of specific needs you will circle every day in a regular time of intercession. Also, Pray for those needs every time your stomach cries out for food. Let your hunger for food drive you to hunger for God and pray with voracious passion.

"God answers every prayer, and He keeps every promise. That is who He is. that is what He does. And if you have the faith to dream big, pray hard, and think long, there is nothing God loves more than proving His faithfulness."

- Mark Batterson