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Meet Ashley, Samantha, Dianna, Scott (my husband), and David. These are real people who waited on God. As we journey together, you will see how each individual applied the principles of waiting well.

When she was thirty years old, Ashley sensed God leading her to teach women the Bible. Thinking she had it all figured out and certain of God’s desire for her life, Ashley jumped right in to preparing her Bible study class at church. She organized her materials, started the sign-up process, and counted on God to fill her classroom. Only one woman joined, and she later withdrew because of a scheduling conflict. Did Ashley hear God wrong?

God shows you His design for your life. He whets your appetite for all He has planned. Excitement overwhelms you as you sit on the edge of your seat. Then you wait.

Ashley waited.

In her early twenties, Samantha began to seriously ponder if it was the Lord’s will for her to be married. She felt Him give her a green
light, so she prayed daily for her marriage and her husband—even though she didn’t yet know him. She studied scriptures on marriage and about being a wife, and she gleaned wisdom from many married women. Year after year, Samantha continued hoping for a husband, trusting that her desires to marry were from the Lord. Yet year after year, she remained single.

God tucks a dream deep into your heart. You believe Him for the completion of this dream. You patiently do all the “right” things. Then you wait.

Samantha waited.

Dianna felt the call to full-time ministry. With her husband’s job secure, she walked away from a $75,000-a-year career to pursue her calling. Her yes to God was followed by the 2008 market crash, which devastated her family. Her husband, a builder of custom homes, lost his job. Losing their own home was just the start of some tough years of waiting and rebuilding. During the family’s five moves, including a two-month stay in a hotel, Dianna contracted severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Things looked hopeful when the family found a wonderful home to rent—only to receive an eviction notice because the landlord had not paid the mortgage. Facing homelessness again, a disease, no health insurance, and no job, Dianna felt betrayed, helpless, abandoned, and hopeless.

The timing seems right. You step out in faith and say yes to God, then you lose your home and health.

Dianna waited.

Scott stood six foot three—a strong, healthy man. He and I were busy doing life and raising our two children. Everything seemed
picture perfect for our family. Without warning, the picture became blurred, literally, when the vision in Scott’s left eye began to fail. He went from one specialist to another. Each doctor ordered new tests and, with the best intentions, prescribed new treatments. We prayed for healing. Our church family rallied around us and prayed. I invited my blog friends to pray. We had people all over the world asking God to heal Scott’s eye. Yet after eighteen months, there was still no definitive diagnosis or change in Scott’s condition.

You pray. You anoint with oil. You pray some more. Then you wait.
We waited.

Jesse was a farmer and breeder in Bethlehem. David was the youngest of his eight sons, who worked the land with their father. Can you imagine if any hopes or dreams were left for you when you’re the youngest of eight?

The prophet Samuel called on Jesse to anoint one of his sons as the next king of Israel. Jesse brought each son one by one to Samuel. After meeting the boys, Samuel still had not heard God’s voice of confirmation. The prophet asked Jesse if he had any more sons. Imagine Jesse’s internal response: *Um, this isn’t my hope or plans for David. He’s just a shepherd boy. He deserves to stay home.* Jesse answered truthfully and called David from the pasture.

*Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”*

*So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah. (1 Sam. 16:12–13)*
I can only imagine what might have been going on inside of David’s mind (and Jesse’s). David did not dream of being king. He thought his life’s path had already been chosen for him: he would be a farmer and breeder, just like his father and brothers. But God’s plan for David’s life was different. Samuel appointed and anointed David king of Israel, but David wouldn’t fulfill that position for many years.

David waited.

Do you see yourself somewhere between the lines of these waiting stories? Maybe you are praying for a husband or waiting for God’s plan for your life to come to fruition. Perhaps your life has fallen into place just as God revealed but something or someone is blocking the way toward what you really hope for. So you wait, hope, believe, and yet sometimes second-guess the plan.

_The wait is more about experiencing God than enduring the delay._

**Wanting and Waiting**

I don’t know anyone who likes to wait. Life in our technologically advanced world has taught us that waiting does not have to be an option. Let’s face it—within seconds of posting to Instagram and Facebook, everyone can see pictures of your lunch with your best friend.

Snapchat allows us to instantly picture chat with anyone, anywhere, anytime. Text messaging is faster than a telephone call, and email is quicker than the postal service. Our dinner can be paid for, cooked, and placed in our hands in a matter of minutes without us
even leaving our car. Yes, the message we’ve received from our have-it-your-way world is “You don’t have to wait.” But, friend, we have been deceived.

We may want our food served quickly; however, in waiting we are more likely to be served healthier food that’s better for us. I am sure at one time or another we all have burned with an urgency to express our thoughts in an email, text message, or Facebook update concerning something that has made us angry. On the other hand, if we push through the want with a timely wait, we have the opportunity to thoughtfully respond so others will see Christ in us. Can we collectively agree things usually turn out better when we wait?

When I was young, my family had one television. My brother and I had to take turns watching our favorite television shows. This got old fast, so I decided it would be nice for me to have my very own television in my bedroom. I took this bright idea to my parents. To my surprise, they said yes, but they wisely turned my want into a wait. Instead of buying the television for me, they made me earn the money. After months of babysitting and doing extra chores, I finally saved the eighty-nine dollars needed to purchase the thirteen-inch, black-and-white set. While sitting on my bed, watching my favorite shows, without my older brother pestering me, I determined that small television I had wanted so much to be worth the wait.

As adults, the value of what we wait for is far greater than the cost of a black-and-white television. We wait for the salvation of our loved one, the healing of our friend, the end of our own long-term health issue, deliverance from addiction, a positive result on a pregnancy test, or the end of unemployment. The value of what we wait for is so great that we can easily become derailed from life.
These things are important to pray about, for sure. But when they become all consuming, their value is magnified—especially the longer we wait. Some carry greater weight than we originally thought, while some carry less. As the days, months, and years pass, we can put more energy, effort, prayer, conversations, and, yes, sometimes manipulation and guilt trips into making these things come to pass. We easily become derailed, sacrificing our time with the Lord, relationships with loved ones, and enjoyment of life in general. When we do, we become bankrupt: spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and sometimes even financially. When we value the things we wait on more than we value the commands of the Lord—not to worry, to accept His peace, to live by faith—we lose sight of what’s really important: our relationship with God. Without realizing it, we exchange the Person of our faith for the object of our wait.

THE PERSON OF OUR FAITH

Too often, we consult the Person of our faith (God) only after we have exhausted our efforts to push through our wait on our own. If we want to be women who wait well, we will invite God to be part of the process at the beginning, setting our focus on the Lord, not that for which we are waiting. In Scripture, we see the prophet Isaiah helped the Israelites turn their focus on God with a promise. A woman waiting can adjust the lens of her focus with the same truth.

Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.
(Isa. 64:4)

This invitation is an act of surrender and does not deemphasize the worth of her husband’s salvation, a friend’s healing, or anything else she’s waiting on. The invitation directs the lens of her hopes, desires, and dreams to her great God, rather than the object of her wait.

What encouraging words! God is speaking to His people concerning their restoration after seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Although this verse is about Israel’s return to Jerusalem, we can find ourselves in the reference to “those who wait.” We share in the hope that no ear has perceived, no eye has seen. That means we are the benefactors of something that no one has ever seen or heard when we wait on God. Now that is shoutin’ worthy news right there (insert your own shouts and amens here)!

The news gets better as we find the word prepared used in the King James Version of Isaiah 64:4, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” “Prepared” is the Hebrew word asah, which means “to do” or “make” in the broadest sense and widest application. “Those who wait” have access to unlimited and mind-blowing futures when they are willing to wait on God to work on their behalf. That bears repeating: in the broadest sense and widest application. If you weren’t shoutin’ before, you should be now! This truth is the first of many we’ll discover that will change our perspective about waiting.
We all know the unlimited, mind-blowing lengths that God went to in creating our world.

As my son would say, “There’s always a catch.” The unlimited and mind-blowing future God has for us has a prerequisite: we are required to wait.

“Wait” in Isaiah 64:4 is the Hebrew word *khaw-kaw*. God teaches us through the word *khaw-kaw* to tarry for Him to act on our behalf. This means “those who wait” are to delay in acting or starting anything. Waiters are to linger where they are, doing what they know to do until they receive instructions.

Words such as delay and linger don’t sit well in the spirit of a girl like me who prefers to move, take action, and make things happen. However, as we delay and linger, we can know for certain the future we move toward is from the hand of God, not by means of manipulation or anything we can add to the equation. What a relief! We don’t have to do anything to get what only God wants to bring us. Isn’t that awesome to remember?

The Hebrew word *khaw-kaw* helps us understand that waiting for God is not laziness. Waiting for God is not going to sleep. Waiting for God is not the abandonment of effort. Waiting for God means, first, activity under His command. Second, it means readiness for any new command that may come: we pray for His direction. Third, waiting involves the ability to do nothing until the command is given.1 Honestly, all of this sounds well and good on paper, but we all know waiting isn’t easy and waiting well is even more difficult. As our wait begins, our mind conjures up all manner of fallacies and misunderstandings. But equipping ourselves
with these truths will empower us to do what seems impossible—to wait well.

WAITING MISCONCEPTIONS

When times get hard and the wait seems too long, we begin to doubt God as well as the unlimited and mind-blowing future He has planned for us. We begin to question God: Did I hear You correctly? Do You see what I am going through? Why does this have to be so hard? We blame God because our circumstances seem more difficult than before we invited Him into our wait. It is during these times that we have to fight to maintain our focus on the Person of our faith rather than the object of wait or distracting circumstances that surround us. One way to do this is through prayer.

The Lord longs for us to reach out to Him and ask for help, clarity, and direction. See what James 1:5–8 says: “If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get his help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who ‘worry their prayers’ are like wind-whipped waves. Don’t think you’re going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open” (THE MESSAGE). In this verse, James clearly tells us we are to ask our Father for what we need. James says God loves to help. I certainly like the sound of that—how about you?

Let’s keep this verse handy as we revisit and expand on the wait-and-see stories (of Ashley, Samantha, Dianna, Scott, and David) from earlier in the chapter to identify common misconceptions “those who wait” encounter. Recognizing these misconceptions will
empower us to wait well, stay present in the present, and experience God in our delay. Notice how each person asked for and experienced God’s help along the way.

Ashley sensed God moving her toward teaching a Bible study. She prepared and did everything necessary to give the class a great start. But all her efforts seemingly went unnoticed and were in vain. When it was time for the class to start, she didn’t have any students to teach.

**Misconception #1: If I am waiting, I must not have heard God correctly.** Ashley learned that waiting doesn’t necessarily mean you heard God incorrectly. Ashley says, “We give up too easily because we don’t see what we want to see when we want to see it.”

We can redirect the negative thoughts we often receive by revisiting the moments when we sensed the Lord’s nudging. Reliving the moments of pure excitement we experienced when we felt the prodding of His Spirit will extinguish uncertainty that tries to creep in to steal our joy. We may have to travel down memory lane many times during our wait. Ashley had to make the trip several times throughout her ten-year pause, asking for God’s clarity and assurance.

This is why it is so important to invite God into our wait from the very beginning, instead of after we have tried everything we know to make things happen. As we spend time with Him and in His Word, we gain confidence in His plans. A quick visit to the past fills us with the peace we need to make it through the pause. Waiting well teaches us to trust His delays rather than doubt His ways.

**Misconception #2: If I am waiting, I must desire something not in God’s will for my life.** Samantha desired to be married. She knew God ordained and approved marriage, but did He want her
to be married? There are plenty of verses in the Bible about marriage, relationships, and how to be a loving spouse. Yet Samantha also knew the verses in which Paul clearly states that some people are called to remain single. When passages seemingly conflict, it can be difficult to determine God’s will for your life.

Samantha asked her family and several close friends to pray for her. She committed to taking each step she felt God asked of her—whether that was toward meeting her future spouse or remaining single.

_We need to prepare in the pauses so we’re ready to embrace God’s plans._

**Misconception #3: If I am waiting, I must not be praying enough.** Day after day, Dianna prayed and sought the Lord. Many days, she ate only one meal so her family could have all the food they needed. She watched her husband take odd jobs here and there just to make ends meet. Dianna spent weekends at the laundromat because she did not have a washer or a dryer. She fought the spirit of discouragement on her knees.

She knew in her heart God would supply their needs, but she had to keep telling her head. Dianna faithfully followed the teaching of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Never stop praying” (NLT). Her wait didn’t end because she prayed, but her resolve strengthened, helping her to face each day.

**Misconception #4: If I am waiting, I must not have enough faith.** This was the lie I believed as we agonized over Scott’s declining health. His faith is quiet and personal. As we lived out this mystery, I
watched his discreet faith become deathly silent. His attitude toward prayer and the things of God grew cynical.

While Scott’s faith is quiet, mine is vocal. When I wasn’t serving or teaching at church, I was leading women’s conferences and writing devotions and book contributions. My prayer life and Bible study were more than routine. Each morning, I had, and still have, a standing appointment with the Lord. Certainly I was doing enough work for the kingdom to get God’s attention concerning Scott’s health. All of this surely proved my faith was strong enough for the two of us and was worthy of a little healing.

What was I doing wrong? Was God holding my past against me? Had I not done enough to earn His favor? Sometimes waiting has less to do with the strength of your faith and more to do with the perfection of God’s timing.

Here’s the thing—I should have prayed and read my Bible, but not to work my way back into God’s good graces. He is a gracious and merciful God. My praying and Scripture reading do not make Him more gracious. Somewhere along the way, I’d convinced myself otherwise. God makes us wait at times so we can glean valuable lessons. But He never does so out of spite. This is something David taught me as I continued to wait for God to heal my husband.

Misconception #5: If I am waiting, I must not be working hard enough. We will look further into David’s wait from the pasture to the palace in the upcoming chapters, but I want to remind you now of a significant point concerning David’s kingship. David did not ask to be king. David did not dream of being king. He wasn’t born into a royal family line from which he would naturally
be appointed king. God chose David to be king. It is possible you and I could find ourselves waiting for something we never desired but God desires for us. He knows better than we do what we need to fulfill what He’s called us to do.

*Waiting well pushes through the pause by doing what we know to do.*

David had twenty years to work through his wait. Boy, did he work! Read his psalms to feel the agony of his wait as he cried out to God, “How long?” David worked hard, obeyed God, and ran from an enemy. His wait wasn’t easy, but he pushed through the difficulties by doing what he knew to do: tend sheep, serve faithfully, and obey God patiently.

In each circumstance, these individuals sought God through prayer. They asked hard questions when they didn’t understand His ways. We see that God may not have ended their waits, but He responded with loving faithfulness to all their needs.

**FASTPASS, PLEASE**

A few years ago, our family took a vacation to *the place where dreams come true*, Disney World. To prepare for the trip, I read websites and blogs and interviewed Disney World experts (aka, friends who call Disney World their favorite place on earth).

In my research, I discovered something called a FastPass, which is a printable ticket that gives you access to the most popular rides without having to wait in long lines. You get a ticket ahead of time,
allowing you to go to the front of the line at an appointed time. It is ideal for girls like me who don’t like to wait.

Each evening, my family would map out our ride plan. When the park opened the next morning, we would rush (notice that we rushed) to the FastPass machine. Our ride plan could not have worked out any better, but of course we were at Disney Word, where dreams come true.

Real life, though an adventure, is far from Disney World’s Adventureland. Too often, we want a FastPass straight through God’s pauses to move directly to His plan. God seldom hands out passes so you can avoid the wait and skip to the front of the line. That’s not a bad thing, as painful as it is at the time. A rush through the wait has the potential to stunt our spiritual growth and dull our senses to what God wants us to learn as a result of our wait. As the apostle James tells us:

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. (1:2–4 THE MESSAGE)

James advises those who follow Jesus not to take the FastPass through tests and challenges. He says that a pause will actually work in our favor. Our faith will mature, and we will become well-developed women of God, ready for all the good works He
has prepared for us. God is the creator of time. We can trust His pauses to be purposeful and perfectly arranged. God will make the most of our pause, and we should too.

As “those who wait,” we find ourselves in great company. Noah waited 120 years for the flood. Abraham and Sarah waited nearly a hundred years to become parents. Jesus waited thirty years to start His public ministry. These and countless others waited on God and in the wait experienced Him in remarkable and miraculous ways.

I know what you are thinking: But he was Noah. They were Abraham and Sarah. And He was Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. They are all in the Bible. Rest assured, they are indeed all in the Bible, but not because of their perfection in waiting. All had moments when they questioned God. Not one was superhuman. They were men and women like you and me, but each was willing to wait and do the work necessary for God’s plan to come to fulfillment.

Waiting isn’t meant to be a grueling process. What if we view it as a pause or an interlude, a place we can experience the peace of God while He works in us so He can work through us? He is actively working while we wait—a promise that never disappoints in the end—and that work sometimes gets personal.

**THIS PRINCIPLE IN THEIR PAUSE**

Ashley easily became derailed from everyday life as she hurried to make sure everything was “just right” for her Bible study. She was sure of God’s tug on her heart to teach and a bit confused when
the class had to be canceled, but she realized she had rushed rather than rested in God’s timing.

**Samantha** could have become entangled by the everyone-is-getting-married season of life. She asked herself the hard questions, prayed, and invited others to pray for her also. Samantha fought to keep the Person of her faith front and center in her wait.

**Dianna** waited for God to provide as she prayed. He proved faithful Jesus’s words in Matthew 6:11, “Give us today our daily bread.” Each day, her family had what they needed. She was fervent in her prayers, so why was God allowing things to be so hard? She wasn’t opposed to the testing of her faith, but it seemed God was tightening the screws, and at times seemed unfair.

**Our story:** We started this health journey hopeful. *Scott will go to the doctor, get some medicine, and everything will be fine.* Our hope diminished quickly when the medicines were ineffective and Scott’s condition worsened. Scott spent the better part of the year lost in the maze of various doctors who prescribed various medications. The ride left us weary and certain of one thing: our future was uncertain.

**THIS PRINCIPLE IN YOUR PAUSE**

Now it’s your turn. Use the “Worth the Wait” pages in chapter 10 to examine your current wait in light of the lessons outlined in this chapter. Here are some prompts to help you get started:

Do I really believe that God is good and His blessings are not dependent on my “works”??
In what ways am I rushing through my wait? What *misconception* resonates most with me?

*Misconception #1: I must not have heard God correctly.*

*Misconception #2: I must desire something not in God’s will for my life.*

*Misconception #3: I must not be praying enough.*

*Misconception #4: I must not have enough faith.*

*Misconception #5: I must not be working hard enough.*
Digging Deeper with David: Psalm 13

Read Psalm 13.

A wait doesn’t sound terribly awful in the beginning. But as time passes, we become antsy and even question God about the length of our wait.

In the Principle in Your Pause section for the introduction, I asked you to write details about your current wait, including how long you have been waiting. Can we all agree that these are difficult seasons? Our emotions are up, down, and all around like an amusement park roller coaster. Spiritually speaking, we trust God one day and doubt Him the next. The “how longs” can even wear us down physically. This is where we find David.

It’s undetermined when David wrote Psalm 13, but his words give us a snapshot of his circumstances. David, living in a how long season, was at his wit’s end.

How many times did David ask God “how long”? ____________

Can you hear the desperation in David’s voice? Read verses 1–2 out loud for greater impact. I love that David asked these questions. Because he asked, you and I can feel the freedom to ask too.

LIVING “HOW LONG”

When I was a little girl, my daddy had a talk with my brother and me. “One day your momma will not be able to brush her hair and she will
need help getting dressed. Her fingers will become crooked, making it difficult to do everyday, simple things. She has a disease called arthritis.” I couldn’t imagine this ever being a reality. My momma was a strong woman who loved the Lord and could do anything. And I knew God. He healed. And He would heal my momma. So at eight years old, I began to faithfully pray and believe that God would indeed heal my mother.

Like David, I tried to depend on God but sometimes cried out for answers. I was sure He could give this arthritis to someone else. There weren’t immediate answers to my questions and cries, but leaning on God’s strength made the “how long” bearable and my young faith stronger.

As our heavenly Father, God expects us to cry out to Him. He longs to lift the burden of our how long. The burden is lifted when we cast our cares and concerns on Him.

Read 1 Peter 5:7.

Why should we cast our cares on God? __________________________

What cares and anxieties of your current wait can you cast on God?

PRAYING IN "HOW LONG"

As the years passed, I never stopped praying for God to heal my mother. Praying made my young faith strong. Sadly, the longer I
waited, the less I prayed. I remember being anxious, wondering why He was taking so long. Even through my anxiousness and wondering, it never occurred to me that He would choose not to heal her.

Despite his anxious heart, David’s spiritual response to pray superseded his natural instinct to doubt. He directed his fretful and question-filled thoughts to God. David’s natural instinct had become spiritual. He knew praying would, in time, bring peace of mind.

**Read Philippians 4:6–7.**

In what types of situations should we pray? What happens when we pray?

Through prayer, our natural instinct becomes spiritual. This transformation of thinking and responding enables us to dwell in our “how long” with hope for deliverance. Our response to this new hope is the impulse to praise. Yes, you can praise God in a season of waiting, no matter how long.

**PRAISING IN “HOW LONG.”**

In just a few short verses, David’s prayer changes from *how long* to *hallelujah*. Through prayer, David remembered God’s past faithfulness, encouraging him to trust in God’s future provision. Had his situation changed? Had his enemy suddenly decided to
surrender? No. David was not delivered from the situation, but he was released from its despair. His anxiety was replaced with a new song of praise.

**Read Psalm 40:3.**

Who provided David with a new song? _______________________

As we pray, God will not only guard our mind and heart with peace, but He will also put a hymn of praise on our lips. Peace and praise produce endurance and unity with God, making a waiting period worthy of praise.

Are you living in the unbearable days of “how long”? Maybe like David you feel God has abandoned you. Praying and praising will not only make the long wait bearable, but they will also cause your faith to flourish. Your relationship with God will grow stronger even if your situation doesn’t change.

Write verse 5 in the space below. Take a moment to read it aloud as a prayer to God.

________________________________________

________________________________________

We can trust God in our “how long” waiting period. He will sustain us until He is ready to deliver us. Oh, and we can be confident that our deliverance will be perfectly timed.
When Waiting Means Working Out

At six weeks old, Maxie came to live with us. After surveying all the puppies, we chose her and knew with great confidence she would be the perfect addition to our family. We had looked into her dark eyes and fallen in love. She displayed her love and appreciation to us by licking our chins and using her furry chocolate-brown paws to climb onto our laps.

Maxie’s puppy days were full of running and retrieving. She was happy, except when she would spot her feathered nemesis in our front-yard tree. Being an energetic Boykin Spaniel, Maxie was very determined to get her bird. Boykins are bred to be bird dogs, so bird chasing is in her DNA. You might say it’s her calling.

Every morning, Maxie robustly ran from her kennel to the tree. With her front paws propped on the trunk, she let out her loudest puppy bark as if to say, “Game on!” Getting no action, she would move just under the low-hanging branches and jump her highest puppy jump. This barking and jumping went on until Maxie finally
gave up and panted her way back to the house. We knew she was thinking, *Oh, never mind. I’m too tired now anyway.*

We are a lot like Maxie. When God unleashes the dream in our heart, sets His plan for our life in motion, or stirs a hidden desire for something we know is possible only through Him, we can’t wait to respond, “Yes, and how can I help?” Each day is spent going from place to place, doing this thing or that, trying to implement the plan. To make it happen, we run around, jump our highest, and put our gifts and talents to use. We spend hours researching, studying, and praying. I’m sure you get the picture. If we deplete ourselves trying to make our dream come true or purpose play out, we won’t be ready when God runs His finger across the kingdom calendar and says, “Today is the day.”

When that day comes, let’s be ready rather than worn out. David is an excellent example of how to prepare while we wait for what God has planned for our lives.

**GETTING READY**

David has greatness in his lineage. He was the tenth generation in the line of Jacob’s son Judah. One of his earliest ancestors crossed the Red Sea when Moses led the Israelites from Egypt. His great-grandfather was Boaz, a well-respected judge in Israel. But despite David’s prestigious heritage, his family did not hold him in high esteem. Even though his father and brothers didn’t recognize him, God did. He called David—who was just a boy at the time—a *man* after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). Perhaps this is one of the many reasons God sent the prophet Samuel to find David.
David was in the fields when Samuel came looking for the next king of Israel. He was simply doing his job when Samuel asked Jesse to call his youngest son. David was being faithful in the small things and obeying his father by tending to the sheep. He became a young man who loved and esteemed God by spending lots of time with Him in the hilly pastures of Bethlehem, gazing at His creation. The isolated meadowlands were David’s classroom that prepared him to be king.

The anointing by Samuel happened in private. No fanfare. No parade. No proclamation of him being Israel’s king. After David was anointed, he went back to his classroom, back to the place where he could do what he knew to do. Physically, he was unchanged; spiritually, he was altered forever.

DO WHAT WE KNOW TO DO

God does most of His work in us in private. He meets us in the pastures of life with a desire to cultivate within us a heart like His. This may take years, as it did with David. Often, we would rather rush through our time in the pasture than wait there to experience His work. Our inclination is to hurry to the finish line, when instead we should patiently stay put, showing ourselves faithful. How? By doing what we know to do and responding to our Father with obedience, even if it means staying in our pasture. Why? Because it’s in the pasture that God is preparing us for what is ahead.

We have to allow God to do a work in us before He can do a work through us.
In the early 2000s, I was minding my business when God introduced me to His plan to move me beyond my current pasture. I felt Him calling me to be a Bible teacher and active in women’s ministry. Not really understanding what this meant or how to make it happen, I took my first step out of my current pasture and attended She Speaks, a conference geared toward women in ministry, hosted by Proverbs 31 Ministries.

In ways only God could arrange, this calling beyond my current pasture was confirmed. I was unsure what was involved in being a Bible teacher and Christian speaker, nor did I feel qualified. I wasn’t even able to locate all the books of the Bible without the table of contents. Should I go to seminary? How will Scott react to this calling? What if I misrepresent God’s Word? Will I have to fly to different cities? I hate flying!

Regardless of my insecurities, I was confident God wanted me to speak to women about Him and teach the truths in His Word. This new place of serving the Lord was on the horizon. However, in my typical high-speed fashion, with all my notes in hand, I returned home from the conference ready to get started. For weeks, I lived and breathed nothing but bio sheets, messages, headshots, and marketing.

My rush showed no regard for how God wanted to prepare me for what was next.

I rushed to prepare myself for life beyond Pope Pastures. So you can imagine my surprise when my sprinting ahead did not result in calls for speaking engagements. My heart ached when my efforts accrued expenses that exceeded our family’s budget. My rush showed no regard for how God wanted to prepare me for what was next.
Have you ever felt God calling you to something? How did you react? You could do one of two things: with good intentions, you could try everything in your power to fulfill the calling … or you could wait for God to give you specific directions. There is wisdom in taking steps of action, and there is wisdom in waiting on God to tell you where to walk. It’s all about finding the balance between the two. Think of waiting as controlled preparation, like getting ready to have a baby. Moms-to-be don’t visit every pediatrician in their area several times a week or buy all the diapers on Amazon. Nor do they just sit at home waiting for the day of delivery. They take deliberate steps for months in anticipation of the big day. Mommas may change their diets to nourish their little ones and ask other mothers for wisdom. They definitely visit the doctor as necessary, buy maternity clothes, and pray (a lot!). As the due date for my firstborn crept closer and closer, my anxiety grew more and more. I organized and reorganized the nursery, drove the route to the hospital, and read What to Expect When You’re Expecting until the cover was permanently folded over.

The same is true for God’s timing and our preparation. Our job is not to run ahead of Him or lag behind. We should take natural, commonsense steps that are in line with His Word so we will be ready when He delivers our heart’s desire. As we step out in faith, He will show us the way by either opening doors or closing them. Sometimes that will require we do a new thing, and sometimes it means doing what we already know to do.

A friend of mine wanted to write a book for ten years. Every time she got serious about starting the project, something deterred her: her family moved, she started a new job, she had another baby. God continued to close doors. A decade after He called her to write that
book, she finally did. My friend realized the move, job, and baby each held lessons that ended up playing integral parts in her message. As she waited in her pasture—tending her sheep—God was getting her ready to share His heart in her book.

Waiting in the pasture and tending sheep are difficult when we feel God has called us to something different. Many of us Jesus girls are doers, created with a nature to fix, nurture, and make things happen. Therefore, we don't easily accept an assignment to hang out in our pasture and do the same old things when new things need to be done. And some of us Jesus girls are more cautious, created with timid hearts that seek confirmation.

Before we get discouraged or passive about hanging out on the hilly slopes of what we know, let’s revisit James 1:4: “So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let [a test or challenge] do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way” (THE MESSAGE).

David was approximately ten years old when he was anointed king. He was not old enough or experienced enough to be king. Simply put, he wasn’t ready for the throne. However, his time as a shepherd had prepared him to be king.

Like David’s, our pasture experience will mature and develop us for the next season of life. Lingering in our field will teach us the trustworthiness of God and the vastness of His ways. If David had rushed to the palace, his kingship would have advanced quite differently. Yet if he hadn’t taken the steps to get to the palace, he may never have been crowned. Who knows—we might never have been blessed by his poetic artistry of the Psalms. Regardless if we like it, it is necessary for Jesus’s followers to embrace the pasture and tend to our sheep, as well as be willing to take a few steps toward leaving our current pasture.
Our pasture experience prepares us for what is next.

TENDING TO OUR SHEEP

David did what he knew to do in order to prepare for what he did not know. So what did he know? His primary responsibilities were to protect the sheep from predators, guide them to nutritious grazing, shear them, and monitor the lambing process. He did what he knew until God was ready for him to take the next step toward his kingship. He spent his days learning to recognize and obey God’s voice, two traits that would serve him greatly as king. Sometimes our time in the pasture can be longer than expected, leaving us confused and wondering, What should I do now?

Do what you know to prepare for what you don’t know.

In the apostle Paul’s second missionary journey while preaching to the church in Philippi, he stirred up opposition when he cast an evil spirit from a young slave girl. This upset the girl's masters because they could no longer charge money for her fortune-telling services. Her masters had Paul and Silas brought before the magistrates for a public hearing, causing the crowd to rise up against them. The magistrates had them beaten and thrown into prison, but later they were miraculously set free (Acts 16:16–40). Despite this miracle by the Lord, the uprising threatened the growth of the young church. Members were paralyzed with the fear of persecution and the confusion of false teachings.

Paul had to move on with his mission work, but he didn’t leave the young church hanging. While they waited and wondered what
to do next, he wrote them a letter—what we now know as the book of Philippians—to instruct, encourage, and exhort them to remain faithful. They took his words to heart and supported Paul’s missionary journeys, even when he was once again imprisoned. They showed compassion to the poor. This band of believers, perhaps without realizing it, tended to the sheep.

Let’s examine one verse in Paul’s letter to this church that will draw a line connecting pasture time, sheep tending, and doing what we know to do:

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12)

Now let’s circle our wagons around the phrase “work out your salvation.” It is imperative we establish what Paul was and was not saying. Without clarification, we could easily find ourselves debating salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ with the idea of a works-based salvation (Eph. 2:8).

Paul said to “work out your salvation,” not “work for your salvation.” In no way did he suggest that salvation could be earned through doing good deeds. He was speaking to believers who had experienced the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. He encouraged them to demonstrate their salvation by doing what Scripture asks believers to do. Those who accept salvation witness a soul transformation. As a result of this transformation, obedience to God is birthed out of a desire to please Him rather than a duty
to serve. This desire bids us to obey even when the instructions contradict natural inclinations.

Let’s not miss the word continue. In simple terms, Paul encouraged the church to keep caring for the poor, nursing the sick, and staying true to what they knew. When our wait stirs within us the need to make things happen, we can become more preoccupied with moving forward than tending our sheep. We neglect working out our salvation. Our desire to end the wait is so overwhelming that we manipulate circumstances and design methods to make things turn out the way we want. Or worse, we try to make things happen the way we presume God wants them to turn out. This, my friend, is dangerous. The revered writer Oswald Chambers referred to individuals who conduct themselves in this manner as “amateur providences,” people who attempt to make things happen. By injecting our actions and ideas, Chambers suggested we hinder God’s progress as well as movement in our situation.

I acted as my own amateur providence when I rushed to accomplish everything I had learned at She Speaks. In a matter of weeks, I was raising my hand, saying, “Pick me! Pick me! I am ready to be your speaker.” No one called. Remember Ashley, who also felt the call to be a Bible teacher? As I did, she thought she had it all figured out and jumped in with both feet. God wants us to step out in faith and follow His leading, but rest assured, He never rushes.

We have to stay in our pasture, doing what we know to do even if what we are doing isn’t exciting or doesn’t seem to be effective. Our soul is most satisfied and our life is most effective when we are where God wants us to be, doing what He wants us to do. Paul knew this, and that’s why he encouraged the church at Philippi to stay put and “continue to work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling.”
The Greek word used for “fear and trembling” is *trómos*. This word describes the anxiety of one who completely distrusts his ability to meet all requirements but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty. Let’s not get tripped up on the word *religiously* and let it derail the impact of the power of the word *trómos*. In this context, *religiously* simply means “faithful.”

Paul cautioned the church—and by extension, all believers—to trust and obey God. When we are waiting and wondering when things will come to pass, we should continue to do what we know to do. We have to trust that it is God who ultimately works things out, not our own abilities to make things happen. This goes against every fiber of our natural inclination, and we can stumble right over our own abilities when we don’t wait on God to accomplish His work.

Remember my rush to become a speaker? I didn’t trust God to initiate anything, so I struck out on my own. I worried, put my family in debt, and neglected my duties as a Christian. I was more concerned with accomplishing the goals of my plan than tending my sheep. Being preoccupied with writing the perfect bio sheet didn’t give me much time for prayer, homework with my kids, or volunteering in my church. This can happen to any of us and is precisely why Paul told the Philippians to live with fear and trembling. This does not mean fearing hell or damnation. It is the righteous and awe-filled reverence for God every believer should have. It doesn’t have to be the trembling of a guilty sinner; it should instead be the joyful trembling of an encounter with the glory of God, spurring us to do what we know to do.

*Even if it doesn’t seem like it, God works while we wait.*
WHAT DO WE KNOW?

We would be remiss if we did not ask ourselves, “What do we know to do?” David did what he knew to do when he returned to the pasture: he nurtured his sheep and his relationship with God. The church at Philippi went about what they knew to do: they worked out the things of their salvation.

What about you and me as we wait on the Lord? Each of us was made fearfully and wonderfully, unique to accomplish individual assignments. Maybe you are called to work in the neonatal intensive-care unit with critically ill babies while another person is called to serve in hospice care, assisting those in their final days on earth. Your place of service may be in a suburban home with a white picket fence, loving your husband and children. God may have placed you in the local library shelving books or in a high-rise making big decisions that will affect tomorrow’s stock market. Perhaps you are a medical missionary or physician serving in a third-world country. Tending sheep in our own pasture is different for each of us. However, two things are the same for every believer.

When Jesus began His ministry, the teachers of the day made it their mission to trip Him up concerning the Law. Teachers in that era were called scribes, rabbis, and Pharisees. Their job was to make sure every Israelite was acquainted with the Law. One of these teachers asked Jesus, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” (Mark 12:28). This was a loaded question as these teachers were well versed in the Law. They were referring to the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, which contains 613 laws. But the teachers’ knowledge was no match for Jesus, whose response answers our question, “What do we know to do?” He said:
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30–31)

Jesus clearly summed up what He wanted His followers to know and subsequently do: love God and love others. Simple yet complex, isn’t it? Jesus used the word love to describe how we should treat God and others. Love is a verb. Love is an action. Love is demonstrated.

**WE KNOW TO LOVE GOD**

We demonstrate our love for God by spending time with Him and obeying what He asks us to do. I can think of no better things to do during our wait. In Mark 12:30–31, the word love in the Greek is *agapāō*. This means “to welcome, entertain, be fond of, and to love dearly.” Take a moment to ponder the following questions as they relate to your love for God:

- Do I warmly invite Him into all areas of my life? (welcome)
- Do I keep and cherish Him in my mind? (entertain)
- Do I hold Him in the highest regard? (be fond of, love dearly)

If you answered a resounding yes to each of these, celebrate! If you struggled with your answers, you are not alone.
For years, I watched with envy those women who love God that much. You’ve seen them before; their glow seems to enter the room ahead of them. In Bible study or a small group, they confidently respond to a question or make inspiring comments concerning the lesson. It’s as if they know God personally, on a first-name basis. How do they know God and His Word like that?

Tired of living with envy, I made a confession to God along with a request. Lord, I confess I don’t love You that much, like those other women. I want to love You that much. Will You teach me how? This confession broke the dam that had been holding back my desire to know and love God.

With fear and trembling, I began to have a quiet time with God every day. I had no idea how to get to know and really love Him. For a long time, embarrassment and guilt were my companions. I was embarrassed because I had gone to church since infancy, yet I didn’t really know God, and felt guilty because I didn’t love Him that much. In the dark of the early morning, I would grab my Bible and sit in what I now affectionately call my “Jesus chair.” Each day I read a psalm and prayed the same prayer: God, help me know and love You. After fifteen years of sitting in that chair, waiting and doing what I knew to do, I can say I love God that much. And if I can, you can too!

Waiting on God is a good time to solidify your love for Him. You can do so by getting to know Him through reading the Bible, studying His attributes, and journaling all the wonderful new things He teaches you. You will be amazed how your love for God spills over to others. It is only when we love God that we can truly love and have compassion for His people.
WE KNOW TO LOVE PEOPLE

Our love for others is generated from our love for God. It’s easy to have blinders on when it comes to the cries of the less fortunate and sometimes even the cries of our family and friends. Life goes by fast, and most of us are really busy. Regardless, when we wait well, doing what we know becomes a priority. This means slowing down to notice and do something about the needs of others. As Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). The Greek word for love here is similar to the one used in Mark 12:30–31. Love in John 13 is the Greek word *agape*, which means “brotherly love, affection, good will, love, and benevolence.” As our love for God grows, so will our love for others. Through Him, the desire to do good for others will become second nature.

Unless we are plugged in to our community or consistently attend a local church, it isn’t always easy to see the needs of others. Once I became active in my church and got to know others, I found that loving God by loving people wasn’t overwhelming. It wasn’t just another thing on my to-do list. As we wait, God will reveal to us the people we can reach with His love. Showing love to others doesn’t need to be complex.⁵

An underprivileged child needs school supplies; you purchase a book bag and fill it with provisions needed for a successful school year.

*Do what you know to do. Work out your salvation.*

A widow is unable to care for her lawn; you enlist volunteers (including yourself) to pitch in to do the work.

*Do what you know to do. Work out your salvation.*
A member of your church is unable to drive herself to Sunday services; you leave home early each week to give her a ride. 

*Do what you know to do. Work out your salvation.*

A family in your neighborhood lost their home and all their belongings in a fire; you use your influence on social media outlets to generate assistance.

*Do what you know to do. Work out your salvation.*

When God places a burning in your heart for something new, it’s frustrating to stay put and do what seems like the same old same old. Maybe your heart is aching for something different. You want to make it happen, but God sends you back to the pasture. Maybe you are fearful of making the wrong move or you aren’t sure what God wants you to do.

Either way, we have to be ready when He says go. We have to be diligent to tend the sheep within our pasture. Let’s work *out*, not *for*, our salvation by loving God and loving others. We can have peace to wait well, even though we don’t know when He’ll ask us to take the next step. Remember, God is a personal God. Spend time with Him as you hang out in your pasture and rest in His pause. The time you spend getting to know Him will help you recognize His voice and give you the confidence to obey His instructions, even if He asks you to move.

**This Principle in Their Pause**

Ashley could have let discouragement lead her to walk away from her calling to teach God’s Word. She could have focused on other Bible studies offered in her church that hadn’t been canceled (unlike hers)
and become bitter. Instead, she turned her eyes back to the Person of her faith and submitted to follow wherever God would lead. He led her to start speaking to small groups, even some senior-adult groups.

**Samantha** got to know God better by studying His Word. As her love for God deepened, so did her love for others. She showed God’s love by mentoring youth in her neighborhood and volunteering at an assisted-living home. Because she had previously served in similar capacities, these opportunities felt like a perfect fit. Much to her delight, Samantha found that when she was lonely or discouraged, loving God and others lifted her spirits. When her soul felt weary, serving refreshed her, just as Proverbs 11:25 says: “Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered” (ESV).

**Dianna** waited for God to provide for her as she prayed. God confirmed that her new assignment was not to solve the problem but to love her husband. She helped her husband remain confident, secure, and wrapped in love as they waited for relief. As a result, he stayed the course, never wavering in his devotion to God or their family.

**Our story:** Scott continued in the saga of doctor appointments and medicines. The medicines took their toll on his mental health. The symptoms treated with one medication caused different physical health problems. My emotional health suffered as I watched him drift further from me and our life. I took care of our family while he struggled to stay present. We found small ways to love people in need and serve in our church, even though it was extremely difficult for us because we felt so discouraged.
THIS PRINCIPLE IN YOUR PAUSE

Now it’s your turn. Use the “Worth the Wait” pages in chapter 10 to examine your current wait in light of the lessons outlined in this chapter. Here are some prompts to help you get started:

What steps am I currently taking to love God more?
How do I show love to others?
Are there ways I can do more for others while staying true to the pasture God has assigned me?
Digging Deeper with David: Psalm 16

Read Psalm 16.

Waiting and hanging out with God seems just fine if the waiting doesn’t take too long. But we get fidgety when God requires us to stay in one place longer than we expect. It takes patience to stay in the same pasture when we know something greater awaits. David lived this truth with excellence.

From the moment of his anointing until the day he sat on his throne, David accepted God’s boundaries. He stayed in the family pastures while playing the harp part time for King Saul. He accepted the borders of the palace when he moved there to work full time. He lived in the boundaries of caves and strongholds of the mountainous terrain as he ran when Saul threatened his life. David lived within his lines.

As with David, we can receive benefits, including portion control and security, when we live within the lines.

PORTION CONTROL

David was aware of god chasers. Just as it was prevalent in David’s day, god chasing is a pastime for believers as well as nonbelievers in our day. When we are stuck in the same place for a long time and God doesn’t seem to be paying attention to us, we can feel the urge to chase other gods.

My waits have been full of god chasing. Too often I abandoned the God with the big G for the god of the little s: shopping. If I felt
lonely, I went to the mall. If I felt unloved or unnoticed, I went to Amazon.com. Chasing this god created a mountain of debt, which I tried to hide from my husband. Can I tell you a secret? You can’t hide a mountain. It took many years before I could see the limitations and liabilities of god chasing.

David saw firsthand the trouble of god chasing. Consequently, he accepted his pleasant places and learned God was enough and provided enough. Everything that happened to David, good or bad, was portioned perfectly for him.

What happens when we run after other gods? (Ps. 16:4)

What little gods are you currently chasing?

Portion control provides contentment. David discovered that when God is all you’ve got, He is all you need.

SECURITY

God provides security as we live within the lines and guard the path toward the object of our wait. Since David was destined for the throne, sheep tending and cave dwelling could have caused him to doubt the fulfillment of this path. David’s response demonstrates his confidence in God to make happen what He said would happen.

David wrote, “You make my lot secure” (Ps. 16:5). The word secure in Hebrew is tamak, which means “something used to hold
or fasten a thing in place.” Like a hook holds a picture securely on a wall, God has your future held securely in His hands.

Is it easy to completely trust God for the object of wait? Why or why not?

David talks further about the security God provides. Read Psalm 16:7.

What are the additional ways God provides security?

When the nights were long and the answers to life’s concerns were short, David would seek God. And in the dark of night, God was faithful to provide the comfort David needed.

During the wait for Scott’s health issues to be resolved, I learned and lived a verse that profoundly changed my heart toward God:

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. (Josh. 1:8 NLT)

Take your pen and underline the words day and night. I won’t lie. I loved the promise of prosperity and success, but these benefits
were not my motivation for reading the Bible in the morning and night. Watching my husband suffer each day was heart wrenching. God’s Word was my comfort in the storm of the wait. The company I kept brought me the peace I needed. He made my lot secure.

Is it difficult to stay within the lines of your life? Make a commitment to trust God to move the lines in His perfect time. Savor the benefits of the boundaries. Meditate on His Word day and night to experience His peace. And be confident that even if boundaries are rigid and painful, staying within the lines is the safest place to live.

David makes a vow in Psalm 16:8. I believe this is how he was able to maintain his confidence in God as he lived within the lines. Write David’s vow in the space below.

________________________________________________________

Read it out loud as a prayer to God, replacing the pronoun Him with you.
I have never enjoyed exercise. Honestly, the thought of it makes me a bit nauseated. I truly admire those who are dedicated to their physical health and well-being. Over the years, I have tried to see working out as something fun—really, I have. But no program or regimen has driven me to dedication. Thankfully, I’ve found one regimen I can stomach and commit to regularly.

Though I am not a fan of exercise and would rather chow down some pizza with an ice-cold Dr Pepper five days a week, I walk two miles a day and treat myself to my favorite meal only once a week. Why? I know that a physical workout and healthy eating choices are good for me. We can choose to look at our pauses with God the same way. Though we may not necessarily enjoy times of waiting, they are good for us.

Travel back in time to a dark Carolina morning, and join me in my Jesus chair. As mentioned earlier, I had confessed to God that I did not love Him that much and asked Him to show me how to love Him more.
When God gets personal, we get the privilege of knowing Him personally.

I just knew God was so proud I had finally confessed this personal problem that He would perform a water-into-wine miracle to fix everything wrong with the people who were hard for me to love. In addition, He would give a “peace, be still” command to my turbulent circumstances. Much to my disappointment, neither of these happened. Well, let me rephrase that. Much to my benefit, God didn’t instantly change the people or hardships in my life. If He had, I wouldn’t have known the joy of experiencing Him through truly dark times. You see, in our pauses, God gets personal. When God gets personal, we get the privilege of knowing Him personally.

GETTING PERSONAL CHANGES OUR HEART

God spoke startling words to Samuel the day he went to Jesse’s home to anoint Israel’s next king. Samuel was looking for a man who appeared to be kingly—tall, handsome, and confident. God responded to Samuel by saying,

Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7 NLT)

David’s physical appearance at that time did not resemble a king, but his heart did. God could see his heart of obedience, kindness,
gentleness, and humility. God could see David’s heart to defend the weak from the powerful and violent. God sees your heart too. He sees our emotions, intellect, and desires. In fact, God was called El Roi, “the God who sees,” by Hagar in Genesis 16:13.

God could see my heart as I curled up in my Jesus chair morning after morning. He saw my desperation to move from my waiting and wandering to a place of peace. But unlike David, I did not have a heart like God’s. My heart wanted to be like His, but I had no idea how to make it like His. Fortunately, God knows exactly how to work with a want-to heart.

I thought my troubles, unhappiness, and lack of peace rested on the shoulders of the people and difficult circumstances in my life. It was their fault I didn’t have a heart like God’s and felt stuck in one wait after another. God met David in the pastures of Bethlehem to train him to be like Him. He met me in my home and tenderly began to reveal my heart and teach me how to have a heart like His. This is when and where He got personal.

WHAT ABOUT ME?

When we’re focused only on ourselves, it’s easy to wonder if God forgot about us. We want to ask Him if it will ever be our turn to “have it all.” Underneath these questions is a heart that needs to get personal with the Lord. God gently revealed my heart’s condition, but even truth revealed with tenderness is painful. These painful truths weren’t heaped on me all in one morning as I sat in my Jesus chair. God acts with grace and mercy. In His timing, He disclosed what He saw—selfishness, bitterness, prejudice, and anger. In these moments of
realization, I saw how my emotions were affecting those around me. For the first time, I began to think of someone other than myself.

Let me paint the picture for you. My two-year-old daughter didn’t like to nap. I could hardly see over my very pregnant belly, and my husband owned his own business, which meant long hours away from home.

From my perspective, Scott enjoyed the luxury of eating out with grown-ups and traveling on a plane to other countries for work and often for pleasure. It appeared he breezed out of our home before trouble started and conveniently returned after the trouble had subsided. It seemed to me he had it made. My perspective was strongly skewed by a focus on *self*. Whether you are a single mom struggling to get by, a young executive on the corporate fast track, or working hard with your man trying to make ends meet, it’s easy to get sucked into the “my life stinks” game and throw a pity party for one.

This self-focused mentality generated anger issues for me. I want to be clear: My anger wasn’t a result of Scott being gone so much. His absence was the prompting God used to reveal a part of my heart that needed correction. Over time, anger poisoned my heart. Unfortunately, the only other person at home when my blood started to boil was my precious daughter. You remember her—the baby I had waited for through endless fertility trials and tests.

I was miserable, and I expressed it by being rude. Sarcasm and insults made me feel better, even if they were at the expense of my own child. But my uplifted mood never lasted longer than the day of my outburst. Looking back, I wonder if my daughter picked up her habit of throwing fits from her temperamental mom. Blaire could have been crowned Queen of Tantrums—at least, in my anger, it seemed that
way. Because of her frequent tantrums, I came up with a horrible nickname for her. Each time she would whine about something a toddler “shouldn’t cry over,” I would stare down into her innocent eyes and call her a terrible name. To this day, I am so ashamed that I can’t utter the name aloud or find the fortitude to even type it.

This is not a story I tell often. Yet I want to share it with you because it’s necessary to demonstrate the depravity of my heart—and the greatness of God’s mercy and the depth of His love. Each time I press rewind and play this scene in my mind, my heart breaks all over again. The pain is as potent as if it just happened.

One day, the rustling of my daughter’s diaper and slapping of her bare feet on the hardwood floors echoed as she ran through the house. I don’t recall how things went wrong, but the happy swishing turned to sobs. Maybe a piece wouldn’t fit properly in the puzzle or Tigger refused to bounce. What I do remember is not wanting to deal with a whiny two-year-old’s tantrum.

She was crying, and I was stomping. Frustration got the better of both of us. In the midst of our own personal tantrums, my little angel responded to my anger for the first time. This is my earliest memory of God getting personal with me. He chose to reveal my heart through the sweet voice of my daughter. As with every other tantrum, I called her the name. Looking into my eyes, she said in broken toddler talk, “Mommy, please don’t call me that name.” (Insert more mommy sobs.)

You’re probably wondering, How could she talk to her daughter that way? And she calls herself a Christian and a Bible teacher? But maybe you can relate. It’s easy to appear one way on the outside and feel totally different on the inside. We often fool others and even
ourselves. Have you ever yelled at your kids all the way to church for making you late, then warmly shook hands with everyone in your Sunday school class? Or blown up at your spouse for not picking up his shoes, but wore a big smile for your dinner guests? Maybe you figured your family’s negligence deserved your harsh reprimands. We frequently lack the self-awareness to see the depravity of our heart.

I stooped down to my daughter’s level. My eyes brimmed with tears as I cupped her tiny face in my hands. “I’m so sorry. Mommy will never call you that name again.” And I never have.

My anger did not totally dissipate in that moment, but I experienced God supplying the power I needed to change my ways. That day and many more to follow were difficult for me. However, that moment sparked the beginning of the end to my what-about-me mentality.

Because I was in a season of waiting, I was able to get personal with God. Waiting on Him is hard, but it softened my heart. For the first time, I could see the possibility of my heart resembling God’s heart.

It’s difficult yet necessary to admit we need to change. With each in-the-moment personal experience with God, we are drawn closer to His heart. It’s the moment we choose not to listen to gossip about a coworker who got fired. It’s the moment we could prove our rightness but choose to be silent instead. The closer we get to His heart, the further we get from sin. As God’s work on our heart progresses, we eventually begin to see our new heart—the heart God sees—through the lens of redemption.

*The closer we get to God’s heart, the further we get from sin.*
WHAT HE SEES

It’s important to strike a balance when God begins to reveal our heart to us. We need to recognize our sin but also see the victory He offers. Otherwise we can get bogged down in shame, guilt, or defeat. In order to get a better understanding of what God sees when He looks at our heart, let’s revisit 1 Samuel 16:7:

The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (NLT)

Picture me leaning in, cupping my hand around my ear, and listening to the collective hallelujah we all are uttering as we read this verse. The Lord looks beyond flaws, failures, shortcomings, and all the things we tend to focus on in others. Like Samuel, we measure people by their exterior rather than the content of their heart.

Will you humor my inner word nerd for a moment? Let’s examine the original Hebrew word ra‘ah used for both see and look in 1 Samuel 16:7. It means “to see, look at, inspect, perceive, and consider.” My favorite word in this definition is inspect. God carefully and critically looks at our heart. He loves us regardless of what we have done, are doing, or will do. He looks beyond our imperfections to see our potential. Oh, I love Him so!

Even though our heart is becoming more like His through the personal work we are allowing Him to do, it may still be difficult to see what He sees. The traits of our old heart and mistakes of our past cast shadows on the changes the Lord is performing.
Maybe you are like me and have allowed lies to distort the correct view of your heart. You may be thinking, *All this sounds good, but she hasn’t lived my life.* You are right, but I have my own past full of pride, prejudices, pain, and other pollutants. We can’t become discouraged. We must be determined to defeat discouragement with the truth.

I have a bay window in my kitchen that I love to look out when I’m cooking. Maxie does her bird-watching from that window and smears her nose prints on the glass. Much like the Windex I use to clean the window, we have to wipe our viewpoint clean with the truth so we can rightly see ourselves as God does. This is the best way I know to defeat despair.

The truth is the beginning of our freedom. Here’s the truth about what God sees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You See</th>
<th>God Sees</th>
<th>God Says</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>You are a conqueror (Rom. 8:37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endless</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Your circumstances are brief (2 Cor. 4:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>You know the Lord who heals (Exod. 15:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>You are called to hope (Eph. 1:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthless</td>
<td>Valuable</td>
<td>You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccepted</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>You are welcomed by Christ (Rom. 15:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>You are created in His image (Gen. 1:26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poor Rich You have the riches of Christ (2 Cor. 8:9)
Unskilled Gifted You are gifted (Rom. 12:6)
Inferior Superior You have confidence (Heb. 10:35)
Guilty Pardoned You are forgiven (1 John 1:9)

It wasn’t until I recognized my anger and the pain it caused my daughter that I saw my failure and guilt. That wasn’t a pretty sight to see, trust me! But with God’s truth, I could see past myself. Then I could embrace His victory over my temper and His forgiveness for my meanness. The freedom I received outweighed the discomfort and shame of acknowledging my old ways.

Is it easy to see the condition of our heart? Certainly not. However, the ongoing pleasure we enjoy in our relationship with the Lord far exceeds the temporary pain that accompanies getting personal with Him. His ongoing presence keeps our heart from the corruption of sin and prepares our mind for opportunities to be more like Him.

GETTING PERSONAL CHANGES OUR POSITION

Throughout His life, David chose God rather than self. He determined to keep his heart close to God’s, where he could see and submit to opportunities that would be pleasing to God. In chapter 2, we talked about David’s choice to go back to the pasture even though he had been anointed king. Yes, years before David ever wore the crown, he demonstrated a life of humility. Getting personal with God will lead to a change in our position too.
Here’s an example from my life: One typical day I woke up not looking for a lesson in humility or expecting an encounter with the Lord. It was supposed to be a day filled with the simple pleasure of getting my hair cut. Maybe your simple pleasure is spending sunny spring days on the porch, drinking a fresh cup of coffee, or enjoying the company of a good friend over lunch. One of my favorite pleasures is a haircut.

My appointment was a week overdue, my roots were screaming, and I was eager to have my messy hair reshaped. Driving to the salon, I smiled as I imagined my stylist’s fingers massaging my head as she shampooed and conditioned. Oh, the bliss!

After my cut, style, and primping, I grabbed my purse to pay for my new ’do. “Before I go,” I said to my stylist, “I need to use your restroom.”

Walking in, I immediately noticed the dirty ring around the toilet bowl, nasty stains in the sink, and, well, the gross things that form around the base of the commode. Disgusted, my thoughts turned to criticisms and questions about the sanitation regulations of the salon. In the midst of my mumblings, God got personal with me. I sensed the Holy Spirit whispering things I didn’t want to hear.

“No. You can’t be serious,” I argued.

Again, He spoke. Again, I resisted. I found myself teetering. Would I follow the Holy Spirit’s direction to clean that restroom or ignore Him and simply flush, wash, and leave?

Frozen, I could not move toward the door. My only option was to yield. I took a deep breath, grabbed a handful of paper towels, and obeyed the Spirit’s direction. I wasn’t thrilled or interested in doing a good job. I wanted to hurry and get out. In the lowly position on my hands and knees, scrubbing and wiping, the Holy Spirit nudged me. “Clean as if it’s your own toilet.”
It wasn’t enough that I had obeyed and cleaned the bathroom. God wanted my heart to be right. So I cleaned with greater fervor, as if sanitizing my own home. As I worked to change the bathroom, the Lord changed me.

Waiting well demonstrates a willingness to adjust our perspective.

UNDERSTANDING THE "H" WORD

C. S. Lewis wrote, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.” Many other authors have written about humility as well. Bible verses sing its praises. God desires it from us. Yet many of us don’t readily embrace it. The truth is, opposing humility invites God’s opposition. Scary thought, huh? The apostle James put it plainly: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6 NLT).

The Greek word for oppose is antitassomai, which means “to resist or be in battle against.” Let’s insert the definition in the verse: God resists or goes to battle against the proud. My resistance of God’s call to be humble bids His resistance against me. Whew! I can hardly handle those words. While opposition comes against our pride, grace and kindness are lavished on our lives when we think more of others than ourselves.

Let’s be honest—who enthusiastically volunteers to be last or longs to be the least? Who revels in the thought of their smallness? I most certainly did not want to clean the restroom in my hair salon, but my pride turned to humility as I thought about the next person who would use the facilities. As I shined the chrome faucet, I became
more concerned with pleasing the Lord than the humble position I had taken by cleaning a public bathroom. The humility drew my heart close to God. David drew close to God as he cared for the sheep and carried food to his brothers on the front line of battle. As we wait on the Lord, we slow down and have time to learn lessons about humility we miss when we’re busy trying to end our wait. Pleasing God one day compels us to please Him another day with a humble heart.

**GETTING PERSONAL CHANGES OUR VIEW—ABOUT EVERYTHING**

Thinking about yourself less is challenging at best. The closer we draw to God in our wait, the more capable we are for the challenge. Conquering selfish thoughts and behavior initiates a domino effect, and cooperating with God’s work in our life starts with getting personal with Him. This nearness to the Lord leads to a softened heart. Humility transforms our mind-set from “what about me?” to “what about others?” As we take an interest in others, our wait becomes secondary. Naturally, this changes our view of the world.

*Humility transforms our mind-set from “what about me?” to “what about others?”*

God’s personal involvement in our life will expose sin, and this exposure disrupts our spirit. This spiritual disruption causes intolerance for the sinful things we used to enjoy; and instead, we long to be right with God. We begin to govern our choices to reflect His ways. As our heart becomes right with God, it is often wrong with the world.
SET APART

What images does the word *holiness* bring to mind? A cross? The Bible? Mother Teresa or Billy Graham? Maybe a better question to ask is what thoughts or emotions does the word *holiness* evoke? The word, as well as the concept, may make you think of personal reflection that will tempt you to breeze over this section. You might think, *I am not holy and never will be. There is no way I can be holy. Just look at the drugs I took, the abortion I had, the way I treated people, and all the sins I have committed.* If these are your initial thoughts, you’re in good company. Even the apostle Paul felt this way. In 1 Timothy 1:15, he called himself the worst sinner of all!

Notice that the verbs in the italicized thoughts above are past tense. To some degree, we have all allowed our past to shape our future. Living as less than who God created us to be makes a mockery of who Christ died for us to be. It’s vital that we believe we are holy! Why? Because God says so.

Being holy doesn’t mean we are perfect. Being holy doesn’t mean we are without sin. Being holy means that through God’s mercy, and for a definite purpose, we have been set apart from those who don’t know Him as their personal Savior. Noah was set apart or purposed to build the ark. Moses was purposed to rescue God’s people from slavery and take them to the Promised Land. Mary was set apart to give birth to the One who would provide a way for you and me to spend eternity with God. And don’t forget David, whose purpose was to be king of Israel.

Let’s examine the darkness of our past-tense life in the life-giving light of Scripture. We can draw hope from a group of people called the Corinthians, with whom Paul established a church. Instead of
sitting up and acting right, so to speak, the Corinthian people were world renowned for partying, drunkenness, and loose sexual morals. Their list of problems was a mile long; immorality and the abuse of doctrine, church government, spiritual gifts, church service, and authority ran rampant. The Corinthian church had a deserved reputation for the reckless pursuit of pleasure. It might be easy for us to think they weren’t even saved! But they were.7

Paul wrote, “He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:2 NLT). He was reminding the Corinthians of their heritage of holiness. He went on to say, “… just as He did for all people everywhere who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.” Did you notice the words all people? You and I are included in all people. According to Scripture, our holiness is not based on appearance or performance, but on Jesus’s work on Calvary.

Paul drove this point home later in his letter to this fumbling church:

• “Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin” (1 Cor. 1:30 NLT).
• “But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11 NLT).

The Corinthians were invited and welcomed into God's family, despite their unruly past. Like them, we cannot do anything that will disqualify us from holiness. We are set apart and sealed with the holiness of God when we accept Christ as our Savior. The initial
declaration of holiness is all about our position with God as His children. However, as we get to know God and yield to His leadership, our holiness progresses and our faith grows. This is a participatory process. God declared us holy based on our belief of His truth and acceptance of His Son as our Savior, but He will not control us like a puppet. The degree to which our holiness progresses is based on our participation with the Holy Spirit’s work in our life.

The “set apart” mentality works in tandem with the Holy Spirit. Together, our mind-set and the Spirit empower us to make the hard decisions necessary to ensure progress in holiness. This happens each time we choose God’s way instead of our way. Growing our love for God as we wait is a wonderful motivator to obey Him. When we do, we can deposit that victory in our spiritual bank and make a withdrawal the next time we face a “set apart” decision. The choice may concern a certain book to read, a place to visit, a relationship to maintain, or in my case, a television show to watch.

By the start of my “set apart” training, I had been watching a certain 10:00 p.m. television drama for many months. At first, the show’s story lines portrayed fairly innocent adult situations and humor. But as the seasons progressed, the situations became increasingly lewd, moving more scenes from the living room to the bedroom. My heart and mind became unsettled. I knew the Spirit was gently counseling me to change the channel. Yet I leaned on my own understanding and ignored His warning. I told myself, *The show isn’t that bad. It isn’t as immoral as that show on that other channel. No one is watching it with me. How bad can it be?*

My beloved television program coincided with a Bible study I was leading at the time. Participants were encouraged to give up
something for six weeks. Pretending to be a good Bible study girl, I committed to turn the channel at 10:00 p.m. Let me tell you, I was so proud of myself. Yes, indeed. I could effortlessly change the channel. Easy peasy. No sweat. How? Because I had set the show to record on a weekly basis. You can be sure that I planned to watch every episode I was giving up at the end of those six weeks. (I know—it sickens me too.) What a mockery I made of God’s call to holiness and being set apart.

It wasn’t until the conclusion of the six weeks that I felt the impact of my subversive recording. As I turned on the VCR (this was a while ago!) to watch the missed shows, I felt physically ill and spiritually nauseated as I heard the theme song. Without hesitation, I ejected the tape and threw it in the trash. To this day, I haven’t watched the show. (God said no to reruns too.)

When God prompts us to say no to something, we can trust that it is for our good and His glory. It may not be easy or even make sense at the time. But rest assured, our call to holiness is the path to God’s peace as we wait for His plan.

**STAY STEADFAST**

David remained humble, even after Samuel anointed him with oil. He demonstrated humility by going back to the pasture to do what he knew until he knew something else to do. The pastures of Bethlehem were the perfect classroom to make his heart soft and his character strong. The physical anointing of oil was a symbolic representation that he was set apart to accomplish a great purpose; however, the oil was only a symbol. Like you and me, David had to
grant God access to his heart to cultivate holiness. David was ready to move toward his future as king of Israel only because he allowed God to work in his present.

We often interpret our seasons of wait as inconvenient, an interruption on the way to the ultimate outcome. Might I suggest we view our wait as an intermission rather than an interruption? It’s kind of like an intermission in a really long movie, although I’m not suggesting a wait is a time of fun with popcorn, pretzels, and a giant Icee.

My mom, daughter, and bestie and her momma watched the three-and-a-half-hour drama *The Sound of Music* in the movie theater. As the word *intermission* rose to center screen, I felt relief. Don’t get me wrong, I love the movie, but I had been sitting so long that I was getting fidgety. Plus I really needed to use the ladies’ room. The intermission gave me the opportunity to refresh myself and pause my thinking. It was exactly what I needed to stay focused and engaged with the rest of the movie. Sometimes God’s greatest work happens during intermission.

Maggie experienced an intermission when her husband, James, asked their oldest son to leave their home. They prayed that their son would become a godly man, work hard for honest wages, and someday lead a family of his own. But Caleb had a different idea about how his life would be, and he wanted to live by his terms. Though his parents offered grace and godly guidance, Caleb refused to obey their guidelines. As the head of their home, James told his son he could no longer live there. With a broken heart, Maggie supported her husband’s leadership and watched her son pack his bags. Her intermission started the day the locks were changed.
As she waited, she focused on the Person of her faith. Maggie invested time in young women in her church by teaching a class on biblical marriage. As she grew her relationship with God, her commitment to pray for Caleb never waned. For five years, she prayed. For five years, she waited. For five years, she carried his Bible in her purse.

Maggie used her intermission as a time of refreshing and connecting with the Lord. Because she determined not to view her wait as an interruption, she could fully engage in a renewed relationship with her son when, out of the blue, she received the text that said, “I’ve packed my bags. I’m ready to come home and follow the Lord.”

Though waiting can often feel like a placeholder we impatiently long to be done with, it is beneficial. We get to know God, love Him and others more, and grow in humility and holiness. By not giving up and letting God determine the how and when, we experience divine encounters with Him we might otherwise miss.

**This Principle in Their Pause**

**Ashley** achieved great results in her work life. But teaching Bible study didn’t come as easily as she had pictured in her mind. It was hard to step out in faith. Women didn’t rush to sign up for her Bible study just because it was listed in the Sunday bulletin and posted on the church website. Cancellation of her study humbled her to her knees. She asked God to search her heart and uncover her self-centeredness. She realized she had sought to lead the Bible study and obey God in her own strength. Ministering to women would require
continuous humility and obeying God in His strength. She learned to remain willing, stay humble, and keep watching for God to reveal Himself through each part of the journey.

Samantha knew her questions of “how long?” and “why not now?” could drive her nuts. To take her mind off herself, she invested in other marriages by babysitting for couples. As she did, she prayed for the kids and their parents, which connected her heart with the Lord’s. Samantha began asking the Lord to help her (and her future husband) live out the verse “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic. 6:8 ESV). This helped her put aside her desires and focus instead on doing God’s will.

Dianna says that the wait tried to strip her of dignity but God used it as a way of removing superficial compassion and replacing it with His heart. It was an aspect of Christlikeness she might not have developed otherwise. Dianna clung to the verse in Matthew 25: “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’” (v. 40 ESV). She says, “God became such a part of our family during those days that I felt like I should have set a plate for Him at dinnertime.”

Our story: God definitely got personal with me. For the most part, Scott turned away, not wanting to be personal with a God who wouldn’t respond to his desperate pleas for answers. But the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit was whispering to a part of Scott’s heart that he had kept closed from God, the self-reliant part that said, “I can take care of things myself.” Scott slowly began to realize he had to rely on God to be the navigator of his wait.
THIS PRINCIPLE IN YOUR PAUSE

Now it’s your turn. Use the “Worth the Wait” pages in chapter 10 to examine your current wait in light of the lessons outlined in this chapter. Start by praying the following verses from Psalm 139 (THE MESSAGE):

GOD, investigate my life;  
get all the facts firsthand.  
I’m an open book to you;  
even from a distance, you know what I’m thinking. (vv. 1–2)

Investigate my life, O God,  
find out everything about me;  
Cross-examine and test me,  
get a clear picture of what I’m about;  
See for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong—  
then guide me on the road to eternal life.  
(vv. 23–24)

Here are some prompts to help you get started:  
How can you make your heart soft toward God’s work in your life?  
In what ways is He changing your heart?  
How is He teaching you humility?
Digging Deeper with David: Psalm 40

Read Psalm 40.

David waited—and not always in the green pasture of rolling hills or the harpist’s room of a plush palace. Sometimes he waited in a muddy mess. Scripture doesn’t give the date of this occasion or let us know if David was in an actual dungeon, cistern, or grave when he penned Psalm 40. Whether David’s place of captivity was figurative or literal, there is no doubt he had to wait to be rescued. He called this place a pit.

DEFINING PIT

David was able to wait well because of his intimate relationship with God. The genesis of his intimacy can be traced back to the day of his anointing, but the depth of the relationship was a result of David’s cooperation with the Spirit’s work in his life. As Samuel poured the oil, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David (1 Sam. 16:13). David lived life relying on the Spirit of God to guide and rescue him, and every trial he endured drew him closer to God. You might say David’s godly character was shaped by every personally intense trial (PIT) he experienced.

Our waits are full of PITs. How much more enjoyable would our wait experience be if we saw our PIT as a reset rather than a setback?

ADJUSTING OUR PERSPECTIVE OF A PIT

I get it. We want our wait to be over, and we want to have thriving intimacy with God. We have to believe that despite our feelings
of abandonment our wait is in the perfect and capable hands of a God who loves us very much. His desire is to use every experience we have, including PITs, to make us more like Him. And He is trustworthy to make everything work out in our favor. He’s just that kind of God!

Adjustment #1: Believe God Loves Me Even If My Feelings Tell Me Something Else

Read John 3:16 and Romans 5:8.

In light of these verses, how did God demonstrate His love for you?

God sent His Son to die for “whosoever.” We give Satan victory when we believe anything less. Repeat after me: “I am a ‘whosoever,’ and God loved me so much that He sent His Son to die so I could live eternally with Him.” (Repeat as often as needed.) Satan deserves defeat, not victory.

Adjustment #2: Moving from My PIT and toward the Object of My Wait Is Not All on God

Read Romans 8:28.

Write out the verse in the space below.
For most of my life, I focused on and recited only the first part of this verse—the everything-will-work-out-for-my-good part. It was only a few years ago that I realized the for-my-good part had a participation clause. Underline the word who and the remaining words in the verse.

What is our role in all things working for our good?

The first part of the verse is directly related to the last part of the verse. Those who love God and are called according to His purpose will see all things work together for good. We have to take action so God can take action.

Our action is to love God and conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects His purposes. As our perspective changes, the intensity of our personal trial and the object of our wait pale in comparison to pleasing God. This adjustment could revolutionize our relationship with God!

Adjustment #3: Every PIT Can Be Beneficial

Read James 1:3.

What does our PIT produce?

As in David’s trial, if we cooperate with the Spirit’s work and live our life to please God, we can easily view our personal trial as a reset, not a setback. James, the brother of Jesus, teaches that the testing of
our faith produces perseverance. Let’s take a closer look at the word  
perseverance: “steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose in  
spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.”

Steady says we can’t stop even if the progress is slow. We keep on  
keeping on. This isn’t easy, I know. When the going gets hard,  
we want to just give up. Never mind. I don’t care anymore. The prob-  
lem with this thought is that we do still care. Oh, the benefits of  
perseverance!

**Read Romans 5:4.**

What attributes does perseverance produce?

Perseverance doesn’t sound so bad after all, does it? Staying the  
course and working through our personal trials while we wait gives  
us hope. Now I ask, who doesn’t want a little hope to hold on to?

**Adjustment #4: God Is Never Inactive While I Wait**

Though it might seem God has abandoned us or turned away while we  
suffer through our PIT, nothing can be further from the truth. Let this  
truth set you free. As we read in John 5:17, “My Father is always work-  
ing, and so am I” (NLT). God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus are  
always at work. God’s work is always good. We can take that to the  
bank and trust God as He moves us toward the object of our wait.