

5

When a Time of Inactivity
Slows You Down

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WHEN HAVE
YOU FELT
FRUSTRATED
OR ANXIOUS
WHEN YOU
WERE FORCED
TO WAIT?

The
POINT ➤

Use unexpected downtime to prepare
for what's next.

➤ ACTS 1:4-8,12-14; 2:1-4

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went

up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Red traffic lights hold for thirty to sixty seconds on average.¹ During rush hour in Worcester, Massachusetts, the red light at a particularly busy intersection can last for over ten minutes!²



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is given a spiritual gift to use to serve the church.

People generally don't like to wait. This has always been the case, but it's even more true in today's culture where smart people have worked hard to eliminate wait times. We can order through the app and avoid waiting in line at our favorite drive-through restaurants, and our favorite online retailers have warehouses all over the country and can deliver many items on the same day, often within two hours.

In this culture of immediacy, we want what we want and we want it right now. And as our wait times decrease, so does our patience. Many people feel frustrated waiting to check out at the grocery store, waiting at a red light, waiting to be called back at the doctor's office, or waiting for their test grades. We need to understand that, as Dallas Willard worded it, "Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life in our day."³ God wants to use our waiting to teach us things we can't learn any other way. Jesus's disciples were also in a place where they were forced to wait, and we can learn from their experience.

ACTS 1:4-8

1 Why did Jesus tell the disciples to wait?

2 When has God worked in your life through a period of waiting?



Prayer is the expression of our dependence on God, and it aligns our hearts to His will and timing.
#BSFLInterruptions

ACTS 1:12-14

3 Why was it better for Jesus to go away?

4 In what specific ways did the disciples take advantage of their waiting?

5 How is God calling you to grow in patience and trust?

ACTS 2:1-4

6 Why was Pentecost such a special day in the lives of God's people?

7 How did the flames represent the work of the Spirit?

8 In your own words, what difference does the Spirit make in the lives of God's people today?



LIVE IT OUT



GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

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Jesus was crucified on Passover and ascended forty days later. After another ten days, or fifty days after Passover, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus's followers. Fifty days might not seem like a long time, but it probably felt like an eternity to the disciples who had lost their Teacher and were unsure of the future. Yet after this period of waiting, the Spirit came and empowered the church to carry out its mission. As Jesus's followers, the Holy Spirit is in our lives and works throughout our lifetime to shape us into the likeness of Jesus when we're patient and faithful.

>CHRIST

Lamentations 3:25 says that the Lord is good to the ones who seek Him and wait for Him. Even though waiting is difficult, God is still good to us.

9 When have you struggled to be patient for the Lord to carry out His plan in your life?

10 Take time now to meditate on this verse. Ask God to help you be patient and live according to His timing.



>COMMUNITY

You're probably waiting for some things too. Share these things with a trusted friend.

11 Ask your friend to pray for you and provide encouragement in your waiting.

12 Offer to do the same for your friend.

>CULTURE

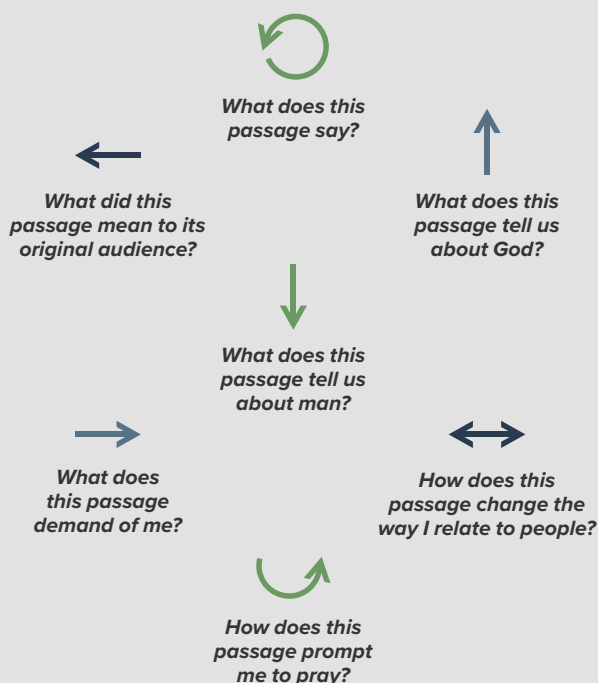
We live in a hurried culture where people are often impatient and don't allow room for boredom in their hearts and minds. Rather than allowing space for prayer or meditating on Scripture, it's almost automatic to fill every second with scrolling through social media feeds or streaming videos.

13 This week, choose to make space in your life for healthy practices like prayer and meditation, Bible reading, and listening to worship music.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Ecclesiastes was written to help God's people learn that meaning and fulfillment can never be found in the things of the world. In fact, life from a worldly perspective is absolutely pointless. Chapter 2 closes with the idea that God gives wisdom and joy to those who live in accordance with His law, and further that He is sovereign over all creation. Solomon stated here that there is an occasion or time for everything. There are certainly many occasions that we might like or try to avoid. Still, all people have experienced many things happening totally outside our control. There will be all kinds of natural occurrences, both good (like blooming flowers and the northern lights) and bad (such as earthquakes or tsunamis). Further, people will act in ways that are beautiful and helpful (like sharing with the needy) as well as selfish and harmful. Whatever the case, it's important that we understand not only that God is in control, but also that He uses all that happens in time and space to accomplish His purposes.

➤ **When have you experienced the emptiness of pursuing what the world values?**

➤ **Why is it important for us to accept that things will happen outside of our control?**

Day Two

ECCLESIASTES 3:2-3



Maybe you've heard the familiar saying that the only constant in life is change. In our lives, we will experience change, and change is not always easy. Our lives consist of different seasons, and chances are that even as a teen, you've experienced this reality. It's important for us to understand that God has a purpose for the different seasons in our lives. We celebrate when babies are born and when our grandparents are healed from cancer. We also grieve when a storm devastates our town or we lose someone we love. Different seasons bring new changes, and though some are cause for celebration and others sources of grief, we can trust that God is in control through it all. Further, when we face change from a place of trust in God, He will use it all to make us more like Jesus. Whether we resist or accept change, it's coming one way or another. Let's choose humility and trust that God is working all for the good of His people.

- **When have you experienced change that brought joy? When has change been difficult?**
- **How can we know that God has a purpose for the different seasons of our lives?**

Day Three

ECCLESIASTES 3:4-5

It would be nice if life was always smooth and easy and if every moment was filled with laughter and dancing. But we know all too well that this isn't the way life works. Thankfully, we do experience times of joy and celebration. However, we also experience stress and failure, wounds from people we trust, and loss in all kinds of ways. As we build our lives, we will have to collect the stones from the garden we're seeking to grow and throw them away, metaphorically speaking. Growth isn't always easy! We have the joy of holding tightly to loved ones for a season, but inevitably at some point, we must let them go for one reason or another. Life is filled with change, and we have a choice to either be consumed with loss or grief or to celebrate the joys we share with those we love.

- **When have you experienced the challenges that are often a part of healthy growth?**
- **What's a healthy response to change, particularly when we lose a loved one?**

Day Four

ECCLESIASTES 3:6-7

People who expect life to be happy all the time will be frustrated, overwhelmed, or bitter. We live in a changing world, and to expect anything different is to set ourselves up for ongoing disappointment. Chances are we will all have great gain. Maybe you get a special piece of jewelry from your mother, or a new kid moves into town and becomes your best friend. But at times, these things are gone almost as soon as we get them. We carelessly lose the ring, or our friend's dad loses his job and the family moves away. It can be difficult to let go of things we care so much about. However, we must understand that all things are temporary from an earthly perspective. It's important to focus not only on our own gains and losses but also to acknowledge that everyone experiences these same things. There's a time to offer words of comfort and encouragement, and there are times we should simply keep quiet and offer our presence to comfort others. Change, especially when it involves pain and loss, can tempt us to become self-centered. Instead, we should make it a point to sympathize with others, even when we struggle ourselves.

- **Why will we be frustrated if we expect life to be happy all the time?**
- **How can we know when to speak and when to be quiet when people we care for experience pain?**

Day Five

ECCLESIASTES 3:8



Scripture teaches that God is love according to His very nature and essence (1 John 4:8,16). It's not simply a characteristic God possesses; love defines who God is. Whereas humans can choose to show love or not, God cannot act in a way that is unloving. Let's not misunderstand—God can act in ways we might perceive as unloving from a human perspective, such as judging sin. However, God always acts with love toward His people. At the same time, God hates sin. He detests anything that would bring harm to His people. In the same way that God loves people and hates sin, we are to reflect these attitudes. And just as God is at war with sin and death and seeks to reconcile the humble to Himself, we are to seek these same things. As God's people, we are to love what God loves and hate what He hates. Does this define your heart?

- **What does it mean that God is love?**
- **How does your life show that you hate sin the same way God does?**