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## ***Waiting: The space between what is and what could be***

Featuring  
***Kim Heinecke***

*Session 1: Pinpointing the Desire*

*Session 2: Purpose of the Delay*

➔ ***Session 3: Preparing for Action***

*Session 4: Patience to Wait*

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To view the accompanying videos for this series,  
go to <https://ariseministries.net/waiting>

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*What initial image comes to mind when you think about waiting? Do you picture a sleepy, sad-faced woman sitting idle and looking bored? For the follower of Christ, a season of waiting means taking certain actions. Whether we know the timeline for our wait or not, we can take an active role in navigating seasons of delay. In this week's session, we'll discover how to prepare our minds and hearts for action as we wait.*

1. In seasons of waiting, what action do you generally take? Select all that apply.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> manipulate the situation | <input type="checkbox"/> complain                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> look for a shortcut      | <input type="checkbox"/> focus on trusting God           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare to receive       | <input type="checkbox"/> take matters into your own hand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pray expectantly         | <input type="checkbox"/> decide God forgot you           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____              |  |

2. How does it change your disposition when you know the timeline for your wait? Explain your answer.

*We've agreed we don't like to wait. Not many people do. Human nature compels us to move ahead, be active, and take matters into our own hands when we feel like we've waited long enough. Unfortunately, patience is never developed in the presence of immediate gratification.*

*Let's look at a familiar story from the Old Testament. Although the main idea of the story is common to us, the details are sometimes overlooked. Noah and his family were warned of an impending flood-producing rainstorm that would last 40 days and 40 nights. What they weren't told is that they would spend approximately a year cooped up with one another sharing a living space with every kind of animal in the world.*

3. You can read the entire story in **Genesis 6-8**. Consider the timeline of events as described in the Bible.\*

If you were on the ark, at what point do you think you would have grown tired of waiting for the end? Explain your answer.

*\*Note: Biblical scholars have varying opinions on the timeline, but this is a good estimate for purposes of our discussion.)*

Day	Scripture	Timeline Activity
0	Gen 7:7-9	Noah enters the ark
7	Gen 7:10	The flood begins
40	Gen 7:12	Rain fell for 40 days and 40 nights / ark floated
110	Gen 7:24	The ark rested on Mt. Ararat
243	Gen 8:5	Mountains become visible
283	Gen 8:6-12	Noah begins to send a series of ravens and doves out
314	Gen 8:13	Noah removes the covering of the ark
370	Gen 8:14	Noah and his family leave the ark

*Noah was prepared to endure 40 days on the ark because God had given that particular number. Maybe he knew it would be longer, or perhaps he was thinking that was the total length of time to which he was committed to his floating zoo. Knowing the end date makes waiting more bearable, doesn't it. It's like waiting for a baby to be born, or waiting for summer to end. We have an idea of how long those take, so the period between what is and what will be is more tolerable. However, the timeline for Noah and his family to escape had likely gone past what he planned for. We experience the same emotions when life doesn't happen at the speed of our expectations.*

4. What do you imagine they did on the ark while they waited for God to bring them out? Do you think Noah's responses would have matched any you selected in question 2?

*As they waited in the ark, the old was being washed away and the new world was being formed. They saw nothing of the outside world from the safety of the ark. But something was happening in the days between the adrenaline of the first raindrop and the celebration of exiting the ark.*

*If they had left the ark on day 42, they would have drowned. If they had left on day 150, or even 300, they would have starved. But they waited on God's appointed time and he painted a welcome home sign across the sky in vivid colors to remind them of his faithfulness. We can be assured God is always working in our lives, even when we don't perceive it.*

**KEY THOUGHT #1:**  
*Something is happening even when nothing is happening.*

5. Read these scriptures. What assurance do you find that something is happening when nothing is happening?

**Habakkuk 2:3** For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

**John 5:17** <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

6. Observe when Noah sent out a raven or a dove. Read the following scriptures and note what happened each time. Mark the words or phrases that indicate Noah was waiting.

**Genesis 8:6-12** <sup>6</sup> At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made <sup>7</sup> and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. <sup>9</sup> But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. <sup>10</sup> He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. <sup>11</sup> And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. <sup>12</sup> Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

*Imagine what life was like, docked on a mountain, nearly ten months past what they thought would be the end of the stressful situation. Noah doesn't just sit there with the tigers and elephants, pouting about another day of feeding animals. He waits and watches for how God will lead his next steps. He didn't give up when it felt like a never-ending situation.*

*Are you doing the same? While you wait for emotional pain to subside, are you listening for God's direction? In your seasons of waiting for relationships to be restored, are you looking to God for peace? Are you watching for the slightest movement to encourage you that he has not forgotten you?*

*Waiting can be a very busy season if it's done correctly. What can a follower of Christ do while navigating the space between what is and what could be?*

**KEY THOUGHT #2:**

*While we wait, we must take action.*

**Five Actions to Take While You Wait**

- Pray
- Observe truth by reading God's Word.
- Meditate on his faithfulness and believe.
- Learn all you can.
- Wait expectantly.

7. Read the passages. What is the instruction given? Why do you believe prayer is essential in our seasons of waiting?

**Jeremiah 33:3** Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

**Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

*Pay attention to what goes in your mind. This is important all the time, but in periods of waiting, we can be influenced by what we see and hear more easily. Beware of false truth seeking to take root in your mind. Reading and meditating on scripture is one of the most effective ways to keep our minds centered on God and to develop patience and perseverance.*

8. How often are you engaging in God's Word? Read the passages below and give at least two reasons why studying the truth of scripture is essential in a waiting season.

**Romans 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

**Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

9. It's easy to become discouraged when nothing seems to be happening. What does **Hebrews 10:23** instruct us to do?

**Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

*If it feels like holding fast to truth and believing God is a passive action, think again. It takes great effort of the mind to remain steadfast in our faith, trusting God to fulfill his purpose in our waiting. Too often we say we are waiting on God and yet we've never taken our lament to him—never poured out our soul in surrender. We call it waiting, but is it just whining to anyone who will listen?*

*Pray. Study his Word. Hold fast and believe. All of these position our hearts to be ready to receive. Waiting doesn't mean doing nothing. Many times, waiting is active.*

10. What are other ways in which you can actively wait? Check any that may be relevant to you.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read books on the subject.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seek wise counsel.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a class to learn a new skill. | <input type="checkbox"/> Find a mentor.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do research.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Establish healthy habits.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Join a small group.                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for feedback from close friends. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____                        |   |

*Finally, we must wait expectantly. Think back to Noah as he was sending bird after bird after bird to confirm his waiting was over. Can you picture him releasing the dove and saying, "Now Lord? I believe you will lead us. Is it time yet?" While we wait, we must be expectant and on the lookout for evidence God is working for our good. We know that in his time we will receive what is best for us.*

11. What do these scriptures say about being expectant? How are you challenged to change your perspective while you wait?

**Psalm 40:1** I waited patiently and expectantly for the Lord; and he inclined to me and heard my cry.

**James 1:5-7** <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup>But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>That person should not expect to receive anything from the LORD.

12. As we close this session, write a plan of action for your waiting. Will you commit to seeking the Lord more in this interval period of life? Will you actively wait for resolution by obtaining more understanding and knowledge? Include a prayer to ask God to guide you in your efforts to wait with action.



Something is happening when nothing is happening.  
Just because we can't see it doesn't mean God  
isn't working.



**LOOKING AHEAD TO WEEK 4**

Join us for the next session of **WAITING: The space between *what is* and *what could be***. In the next session, we'll identify the dangers of rushing ahead of God. What happens when we take matters into our own hands?

***Notes for Small Group Discussion:***

1. Briefly share your thoughts on the video.
2. Briefly talk about spiritual concepts you learned.
3. Share with your group a choice you need to make that will honor God.
4. Consider practical ways to find accountability with these truths.

To share your thoughts regarding this study, contact us at [info@ariseministries.net](mailto:info@ariseministries.net).

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