

A LIFE ABIDING

Waiting Well and Experiencing Abundance in Christ



GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Life Abiding: Waiting Well and Experiencing Abundance in Christ

Discussion Questions: Chapter One

1. What comes to mind for you when you hear the word *wait*? How would you characterize your ability to wait?
2. How did Gwen's explanation of the Hebrew word translated *wait* in Psalm 27 impact your understanding of what it means to wait for the Lord?
3. How would you describe the interplay of waiting and patience? What does it look like to live patiently and with expectancy?
4. How would you describe what it means to *abide*?
5. What does it look like for you personally to make your home somewhere or in someone? What effects does abiding in something have on you?
6. How does the concept of abundant life impact you? How would you describe abundant life?
7. What is your understanding of the grander redemptive arc of history? How does viewing your life through the lens of the larger picture impact your perspective?
8. What other passages of Scripture did this chapter bring to mind for you?
9. What do you hope to gain from this study?
10. How are you feeling as we begin to launch into the journey?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Two

1. Share some of your life experiences of waiting. What would you have missed in life if waiting wasn't part of it? What would others have missed?
2. Is there a particular biblical example of waiting that resonates with you?
3. Why do you think waiting is such a part of the history of God's people?
4. How have you seen God use waiting in your life? Can you point to a time that He used waiting to sanctify you or prepare you? Or a time when waiting deepened your relationship with Him? Or a time when waiting proved clarifying?
5. How do you handle times when you don't understand what God is doing in the waiting?
6. What fears does the concept of waiting surface for you?
7. Discuss Psalm 131. What does it look like for your soul to be like a weaned child with God?
8. Have you ever waited when you shouldn't have? What happened as a result?
9. What is the difference between waiting expectantly and complacency? How can we know when/how to act in any given situation?
10. Where are you currently waiting?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Three

1. List some attributes of God. What attributes of God have been especially meaningful to you in your life?
2. What helpful habits do you have for making the Bible a regular part of your spiritual nourishment?
3. What helpful habits do you have for regularly spending meaningful time alone with God?
4. What helpful habits do you have for regularly spending meaningful time with God's people?
5. Have you ever intentionally considered your personal history with God? Do you have any tangible reminders related to this history? Share some of these accounts and/or ways to remember with the group.
6. What biblical accounts of God's faithfulness are especially meaningful to you?
7. Why do you think God recounts His history with His people so often in the Bible?
8. Why do you think God commanded His people to build memorials or instituted things like the Jewish festivals and Christian Communion? Are there any Christian traditions that are particularly meaningful to you?
9. In what ways do you intentionally cultivate a mindset of expectancy for God to be at work in your daily life?
10. Where do you most tend to see evidence of God in your daily life? What are some of your favorite ways to receive a "love note from God"?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Four

1. How often do you have eternity in mind? What impact does this perspective have on the way you engage with daily life?
2. Do you agree that our central longing is for final restoration (p. 30)? Why or why not?
3. What does it look like for you to seek God's presence more than His provision? What challenges do you have in doing so? What encouragement do you have in doing so?
4. How can we seek God's face and also seek His hand to be at work in our lives?
5. How does the reality that God is *with* us impact you? Do you tend to think of Him as with you on a daily basis? How is this concept different than God merely giving wisdom or direction?
6. What value is there in our current lives? How do we deeply value the present and fully engage in our current circumstances in light of eternity?
7. In what ways do you view the present as a foretaste of eternity?
8. How can we both be confident in God and honest about our fears of the future? When have you experienced this tension? How did you handle it?
9. How can our honesty about the intensity of our earth-bound longings lead us to a deeper appreciation of God and more robust relationship with Him? What fears do you have about being fully honest about your longings? Where have you seen God meet you in those vulnerable places?
10. How can we seek God's face—both individually and as a community?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Five

1. How do the past, present, and future relate? What challenges do you experience in living fully present while also looking to the past and yearning for the future? How does viewing our lives as a whole, and in light of eternity, impact our waiting?
2. What comes to mind for you when you hear the word *obedience*?
3. What is the relationship between salvation and obedience to God?
4. How does the reality that obedience is not solely an effort of personal will impact you? In what ways does God Himself enable our obedience to Him?
5. What is the relationship between our obedience to God and our current circumstances? Why is it important to recognize that obedience to God does not guarantee a pleasant life? Why is obedience to God always the best option, even when it doesn't lead to something immediately positive for us?
6. How does your obedience to God—in small things and big things—impact your relationship with Him?
7. What are some of the challenges you've personally experienced in obeying God? Why do you think obedience can be so difficult?
8. What encourages you when it's hard to obey God's clear call?
9. Obedience is seldom a one-time choice. What helps you persist in obedience to God's call?
10. Can you think of a specific example of a time where you obeyed God in something difficult? If so, share it with the group. What impact did it have on your walk with God?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Six

1. Do you tend to think of yourself as having enemies? What enemies are in your life?
2. How does the reality of spiritual warfare impact you? How often are you aware of the spiritual world?
3. Why does it matter that we recognize the reality of the spiritual battle taking place?
4. How would you describe the armor of God? What does each piece of the armor described in Ephesians 6 mean in a practical sense for us?
5. What is the significance of truth being described as the belt of this armor? Why is truth so central?
6. When has God's Word come alive to you in an especially meaningful way? Are there any verses that are particularly meaningful to you? Share about these with the group.
7. How does regular exposure to God's Word function similarly to making deposits that later pay dividends? How does this perspective impact your approach to the Bible?
8. How often do you find security in your circumstantial reality? How can we stand firm in God regardless of external circumstances?
9. Do you agree that our deepest longings are things that reflect God's character (p. 60)? Why or why not? What specific longings do you have that reflect God's character?
10. What does it look like to wait for God, not for change? What impact does this perspective have in your waiting?
11. [BONUS: What does it look like for you to take courage in your present waiting?]

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Seven

1. What comes to mind for you when you think about prayer? What is your experience of prayer?
2. What verses about prayer are particularly meaningful to you? Share one or two of these along with a brief explanation of what makes them so meaningful to you.
3. Jesus prayed for you (John 17). What impact does that have on you?
4. What do you think it means that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us (Romans 8:26)? How does that influence your view of prayer?
5. How do you know what to pray for? How does God's Word help?
6. Why do you think it matters that we pray about the real things in our lives, and do so in specific ways?
7. How have you seen God use your prayers to shape your perspective of your circumstances?
8. Why does community involvement in prayer matter? How have you seen God use community in prayer?
9. What stories of answered prayer do you have in your life? How has God used prayer in your journey with Him?
10. What habits of prayer do you have in your life? What habits help you look for—and see—the way God is responding to your prayers? Are there any changes you'd like to see in your prayer life?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Eight

1. How have grief and loss been present in your life experience?
2. How do you generally process grief? Do you find it challenging to fully grieve?
3. Do you agree with Gwen that grieving connects us to the heart of God? Why or why not?
4. Do you agree that the depth of our grief can enhance our appreciation of the hope of the gospel? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think sharing grief in community is important?
6. Have others come alongside you in grief? How did that impact your experience of grief? Your view of God? Your relationship with others?
7. How have you come alongside those experiencing loss? What impact did that have on you? Your view of God? Your relationship with others?
8. Why do you think it matters that we acknowledge losses of all kinds, whether evidently big or seemingly small?
9. In what ways have you seen goodness in grief?
10. How does the broader redemptive narrative of history speak into our experiences of grief?
11. [BONUS: How did this chapter land for you? What encouragement or exhortation are you walking away with?]

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Nine

1. How do you generally approach the end of a particular season of waiting? What expectations do you usually hold?
2. Why do you think time for transition is a reality of being human? What might we learn about God's design for humans from this?
3. Have you ever experienced the temptation to "return to Egypt"? Why do you think former things can feel so alluring?
4. Have you ever experienced the fear of "giants in the land"? What helps you in those fears?
5. What helps you stay grounded in biblical truth? How do you personally meditate on God's Word?
6. How can Christian community be helpful in staying grounded in truth? What practices can help us regularly encourage one another in truth?
7. How can we ensure we are being shaped by God, not by our environments? Are there personal or communal practices that you find particularly helpful in this?
8. In what ways do you usually feel most vulnerable in transition? What habits of abiding tend to be most helpful for you in this?
9. What is your experience with emotions in general? How did Gwen's aside about emotions (p. 92) land for you? Can you relate? Did you agree or disagree with anything?
10. What stood out to you from Philippians 4:4–9? Is there a particular portion that would be helpful to focus on in your current life season?

11. [BONUS: Is there a biblical narrative that has been especially meaningful in your life? If so, share the narrative and how God used it.]

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Ten

1. In what ways in abiding a foretaste of eternity? How does the reality that “Waiting lasts a lifetime, but abiding never ends” (p. 97) impact you?
2. How have you experienced God as the Vinedresser in your life? What has His pruning work looked like?
3. What is the interplay of God’s grace and our efforts in living a fruitful life? Why does it matter that our efforts come from a foundation of God’s love rather than in an attempt to earn His love?
4. Have you ever lived with a “perfect box”? How can we distinguish false or performative expectations from God’s call to holiness?
5. In what ways have you seen your own abiding in Christ result in becoming more like Him?
6. How does the overflow of our relationship with God—individually and collectively—reflect Him to the world? How does this point people to Jesus (John 17:23)?
7. In what ways is our relationship with God a witness to the spiritual realm (Ephesians 3:7–12)?
8. Why do you think God desires us to abide in Him? How does the reality that God designed you for intimate relationship with Him impact you?
9. How does the reality that abiding is not just about an individual relationship with God but also about intimacy in Christian community impact you?
10. How does God’s desire that the world know Him impact you? Why do you think God so deeply desires people to know Him and dwell with Him?

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Discussion Questions: Chapter Eleven

1. Ultimately God produces fruit in and through us, and yet we actively participate. How does this reality influence your view of God and what it means to be in an abiding relationship with Him?
2. In what ways does Jesus tangibly show us who God is? What about Jesus particularly stands out to you as you consider who God is?
3. How have you seen the Holy Spirit illuminate truth for you?
4. Why do you think the entirety of the Bible matters? Why is it important to understand each portion in context, including in context of the whole of Scripture?
5. What role do teachers have in the church? How can we benefit from spiritually-gifted teachers while also studying God's Word for ourselves?
6. How can an understanding of basic theology within the historical Christian faith serve as a helpful guardrail for us?
7. What habits do you employ to regularly test your beliefs against what God actually says? Have you ever altered your beliefs based on a better understanding of God's Word? If so, share more about that with the group.
8. How have you seen God's Word shape your mind? What impact has this had on your prayers?
9. How are obedience, love, and joy connected? How have you experienced God's love through obedience to Him? Why do you think loving others is so central to obeying God?
10. God invites us into His work and bears lasting fruit through us. How do the truths of John 15:15–17 encourage you in your abiding?

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Discussion Questions: Wrap Up

1. What comes to mind for you when you think about the concepts of *waiting* and *abiding*? Has anything in your perspective shifted as a result of reading this book?
2. What was most impactful for you in reading this book? Do you have two or three key takeaways?
3. What encouragement will you hold onto from this book? Is there a new habit you might begin? A fresh reminder of a truth you already knew? A call to prayer? A renewed vision for community? A reinvigorated hope in the grander redemptive arc? A verse you'll be holding onto? Something else?
4. How would you encourage someone else through a season of waiting? Is there someone you can encourage this week?
5. How are you currently waiting on God? Who can you ask to join you?