

A. INTENSE FOCUS

- Waiting on God isn't just a hard reality for believers. It is a skill to be cultivated that will benefit us if we learn to approach it with intense focus and great intentionality: Psalm 37:7, 9 -- Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass... ⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.
- This passage begins with the exhortation to "rest in the Lord." The biblical meaning of rest is "be silent, be still, tarry or wait." We enter this rest in the Secret Place of God's presence:
 - Ps 62:5 NLT--Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him.
 - Heb 4:11a AMP--Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves]
- For most of us, this rest and quiet doesn't come easy. We can ask the Spirit to make it true of us because we know that it is God's will and His best for us. (1 Jn 5:14 -15)
- As we seek to rest in the Lord, waiting on His goodness, we will experience His nearness: Ps 73:28 NAS--But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.
- Verse 7 in our passage for today uses a different word for wait than qavah. "Hul," (sounds like "whole") is the word used most often in the OT and has more diverse meanings.
- According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, hul can be translated: 1) to whirl in the dance, 2) to travail or give birth, or 3) to writhe in pain. (Strong's H2342)
- Though these definitions are dissimilar, there is a commonality among them. Each of these meanings brings to mind a mental image of an intense situation.
- These word pictures depict times when singular focus is needed. For example, a ballerina must train and focus in order to land well (which is also true of waiting!).
- A laboring mother or someone in pain must be intensely focused in order to patiently endure and make it to the other side of their situation.
- This is the type of focus we need if we are to wait well as we wait on God. We must stay present to God's presence especially in extended times of waiting.
- Our Scripture is calling us to wait in rest and in patience. Let's intensely gaze at the One on whom we wait rehearsing who He has revealed Himself to be for us:
 - 1 Chron 16:11 -- Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.
 - Ps 138:2 NLT-- I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name.
 - Heb 12:1b-2a JBP-- Let us strip off everything that hinders us, as well as the sin which dogs our feet, and let us run the race that we have to run with patience, our eyes fixed on Jesus the source and the goal of our faith.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Take a few moments to let the Spirit search your heart revealing what it is in your life that actually has your intense focus:

Are any of these things distracting you from fixing your eyes on the Lord or preventing you from resting in Him as you wait?

How would your life (inner and outer) be different if you were to rest in God and patiently on Him to do His work?

- Insights:

B. INTENTIONAL LISTENING

- If we are to wait well, we must be intentional in our relationship with God, taking time to lean in to listen to His counsel: Pr 3:5-6 MSG-- Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for GOD's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.
- This means we wait with deliberate purpose vs. merely reacting to life as it happens. We must seek God for clarity about our direction and follow in the steps He reveals: Ps 119:130-131 NLT-- The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. I pant with expectation, longing for your commands.
- Let us be faithful to be listening to Him for He promises to watch over and guide us.: Ps 37:23-24 NLT-- The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand.
- Though God speaks through various means, His Spirit primarily speaks to us through the Scripture. We listen to Him with our bibles open!
- He will take a particular verse or passage and apply it to our hearts and/or our circumstances. We know it's from God when it enlightens us and bring forth faith.
- When God gives us a personal word, let's be sure to nurture it and take it in deeply through meditation. That means we go back to it repeatedly, letting it go deep.
- See the handout "Tools & Techniques: Lectio Divina Meditation Model" for a practical suggestion on how to take a portion of Scripture from head to heart.
- God wants those precious truths to penetrate beyond mere head knowledge. It's when we take His Word to heart that we are changed by it: Ps 51:6 NAS-- Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom
- A great biblical example of waiting on the Lord with intense focus and intentional listening is the story of King Jehoshaphat when 3 enemy nations came against him.
- This account is found in 2 Chronicles 20, and it is evident that he used many of the strategies we've identified to help us wait well:
 - Be still and intentionally wait on God: vv. 3-4-- Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.
 - Hold God and His attributes above our circumstances: v. 6-- O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

- Remember the Deeds of the Lord: v. 7-- Are You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel?
- Plead the Promises of God: v. 9 (appropriating Dt 4:29-31)-- You will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.
- Intense focus on God through earnest, biblical prayer: v.12-- O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You.”
- Listen until God speaks into the situation, v. 15-- Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God’s.
- Depend upon God to work on our behalf as we wait: v. 17-- You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you.”
- Set our hearts and minds to believe God and His Word: v. 20-- Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”
- Praise the Lord, v 21-- He appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army
- Wait and see God’s goodness in the land of the living, vv. 25-26 NLT-- King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing, and other valuables—more than they could carry. There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all! ²⁶ On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, which got its name that day because the people praised and thanked the LORD there.
- Let’s fuel our faith by observing the way God acts on behalf of His people both in our own personal history or the history of His faithfulness in the Bible: Rom 15:4 NLT-- Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Are you currently practicing times of stillness to listen to God’s voice?
If not, why not?

Is there an area where you are waiting on God that you need to shift your focus from the circumstances to the truth about who God is?

Where are you on devoting time to praise the Lord?

If praise is not a regular part of your time with Him, consider how this would benefit your mind, emotions, and your level of faith:

C. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING
The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:
- PONDER THE TRUTH
Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.
- PROCESSING THE TRUTH
Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He is calling you to take. Write down your insights.