



Week One: When You Feel Like Giving Up – Study Guide

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Waiting is a universal human experience, and it's difficult for everyone. Instead of coming naturally, patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Learning what to do while you wait is key to making the most of it.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Have you ever waited so long for something that you grew impatient, or even cynical, about it? What was it? Did you ever get it?

Into the Bible

- 2) Zechariah and Elizabeth had been waiting and praying a long time for a child. However, they didn't just sit around idly in hopes that God would come through; they were busy. Read **Luke 1:5-13** and write down how they had been making the most of their time.

CHRISTMAS AT THE COVE

WEEK ONE: WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE GIVING UP – STUDY GUIDE

- 3) John the Baptist (their son) was clearly going to be an unusual man. Read **Luke 1:14-17** to see what his life was to be like. In what ways was he unusual? How was God's timing for his birth perfect?

- 4) One of the great things about the Psalms is the raw emotion they portray. David also struggled with waiting and wrote about it frequently. Read **Psalm 40**, which illustrates that struggle. What are some of the benefits of waiting on, and trusting in, God from verses 1-3? What does David do throughout most of the rest of the Psalm?

How Does This Apply?

- 5) One of the big ideas of this message is that God rewards people. However, that doesn't mean God rewards people indiscriminately. God rewards dedication and obedience, those who listen, and those who pray. How can you increase in dedication? In what ways can you listen to God more closely? What's your prayer life like?

- 6) Even living a dedicated and prayerful life doesn't mean you get to pick the way He rewards you. He rewards in His way, in His power, and according to His plan. Looking back at your life, are there ways that He has come through for you and at first you were disappointed? How do you need to live your life so that you can be in position for His way, power, and plan?

CHRISTMAS AT THE COVE

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Prayer Focus

- Continue to pray for the people that made the decision to make Jesus the leader of their lives, and for those who followed Him in baptism, over the last several weeks at The Cove.
- Pray also for Christmas at The Cove and the opportunity we have to share the love of Jesus with local families and others around the world as we give locally, globally and eternally together.

Continue Learning on Your Own

- 7) There is a difference between living a life God can reward and trying to get in a position where you believe God owes you. It's easy to catch yourself trying to bribe God with your gifts and your good behavior so that He has to deliver whatever you want. It can quickly turn into manipulation and entitlement. Job found himself slipping into that realm of thinking, and God had no pity on him. The purpose of following God should never be so that He will give you things, but He is generous and gives most of us more than we need. Don't manipulate God, but put yourself in a position that He can reward you when and how He wants.

Where do you tend to feel entitled? How does that keep you from appreciating what God has set before you?

Read: **Job 38-42, Matthew 7:11, 1 Timothy 6:17, Colossians 3:5**