

Pray First | How To Love Waiting On God | Notes - *Psalms 40:1-5*

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When we learn to enjoy prayer, we approach life with more patience, experience much more peace, and offer real help to those for whom we pray.

The prophet Jeremiah was not a popular guy; he was appointed to reveal the sins of the people and the grave consequences of ignoring them. He ultimately became a metaphor for the plight of the people. We find him in Jeremiah 38:6 trapped in an empty but muddy cistern, facing persecution for his ministry.

Like Jeremiah, we all find ourselves in the muck. Our muck is that of sin, defeat, bad habits, and difficult circumstances. Yet, are you choosing this muck over prayer? Are you staring at your phone or some other distraction while in the muck? Are you finding things to do in your muck that merely entertain and distract you? What if I told you that prayer is the way out of the muck?

Prayer Is Critical To The Long Game

Life is a Long, Difficult Ride. There are many trials before you.

1 Peter 4:12 (NLT) Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through...

We have to plan for the long game. We may have 70, 80, or 90 years to deal with issues of the body, brain or heart. Don't be the person left saying, "If I knew I was gonna live this long, I would have taken better care of myself." Don't wait until it is too late to have a relationship with Jesus.

Psalms 40:1-2 (NLT) I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. 2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

We Need God's Help. Our quick solutions are not enough. There are no magic beans or silver bullets that will solve life's problems. But there is a way to connect with God, with mission control. There is a way to talk with the one who knows all and is present everywhere.

Psalms 40:3-4 (NLT) He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. 4 Oh, the joys of those who trust the Lord, who have no confidence in the proud or in those who worship idols.

We Need Joy More than Mere Happiness. Being distracted in our pit of muck is clearly not working. Suicide has increased 25.4% in Wyoming from 1999 to 2016. We can't find joy in ourselves.

Psalms 40:5 (NLT) O Lord my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them..

We Have a Much Larger Purpose than we Can Imagine. This isn't about our glory and fame or collecting the most stuff. This isn't about who has the most difficult life either. Look at your life with a heavenly perspective and realize that life is about far more than the muck that distracts us.

Prayer Is A Good Time!

In Prayer, We Learn to See what the Father Sees. John was invited from a season of personal worship and waiting upon God to enter into heaven.

Revelation 4:1 (NLT) Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, "**Come up here, and I will show you** what must happen after this."

In Prayer, We Come to Terms with Today. Elijah thought he was the only one who cared. But in 1 Kings 19, he found out there were 7,000 others just like him in his love of God. This is why we

must learn to wait on God. Here in His presence, here in the waiting, we grieve until we let go. Here in His presence, here in the waiting, we rejoice! I'm not alone. Here in His presence, here in the waiting, we are born again!

In Prayer, We Birth Hope for Tomorrow. Elisha wanted more than his mentor Elijah. Elijah's last day on earth was spent trying to leave Elisha behind, but Elisha wasn't having it. He wanted something great for his future.

2 Kings 2:9 (NLT) When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away." And Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

What do you **want**? Is there anything for which you live in high **anticipation**? Do you have any God-sized dreams? Is there anything you are hoping for in your life that it will take Divine intervention?

Hebrews 9:28 (NLT) so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are **eagerly waiting for him**.

How To Enjoy Waiting On God

Make Your Appointment. Papa is always in. He is waiting for you to wait for Him. So, when is this going to happen? When are you going to pray? Make a standing appointment; schedule time in your day to be with your Father. If you don't, YOU WON'T. Prioritize that block of time and don't let anything come before it.

Shut The Door. . . Literally. Time in prayer is time to focus. Ask God to sanctify your imagination and teach you to pray. Load your imagination with bible images (Isa 6, Rev 5, Heb 8-9). Imagine Moses or Elijah on that same mountain.

Matthew 6:6 (NLT) But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Learn to Stay in Prayer as Long as Possible. This is where the real work is happening. Build up your prayer time. Do it until you love doing it. And KNOW THIS - This is where the war is waged against the enemy.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *What are some ways you have been "stuck" in your spiritual growth? How have you gotten "unstuck" in the past? In what ways have the difficulties in life caught you off guard?*
- *How does prayer help you with your struggles and your faith?*
- *Review **Psalms 40:3-4**. Has God ever filled you with joy and amazement? Please share.*
- *Review **Psalms 40:5**. What purpose does God have for your life? How is God's purpose for you larger than the ones you think of yourself?*
- *Do you think John was amazed at the vision of Revelation and why? Do you think Elijah was encouraged to find that he was not really alone and why? Do you think Elisha was glad that he stuck with Elijah on his last day? Why?*
- *Share something in your life that you would like God to do that would be a miracle?*
- *Discuss the three steps offered as a way to enjoy waiting on God. Which is the most difficult? Which is the most encouraging? Share with the group your intention to add more prayer to your life.*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*