**WAITING AND CONTENTMENT**

Sunday School Lesson 6

*THE WORTH OF WAITING*

Psalm 37:7

1/2/2022

**Introduction:** Last week, we looked at how waiting on the Lord helps us to see real change in our lives. Thankfully, we do not have to hope for temporary or meaningless change to occur. Previously, we also looked at waiting and the leadership of the Lord, being merciful, our receptiveness, and having strength. As we start the first lesson of the new year this morning, we are going to be looking at waiting and contentment. The topic of contentment is one that every Christian should pay close attention to. A Christian who is content will be able to successfully navigate the ups and downs that come throughout this year. Contentment overcomes a multitude of issues such as lust, coveting, discouragement, and worldly entanglement. The Bible tells us in 1 Timothy 6:6 that Godliness with contentment is great gain. Paul echoed the need for contentment in the statement made in Philippians 4:11. “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Why it so challenging for a Christian to be content? After all, we have the blessings of God available to us, and we have received the greatest gift that anyone could ever possibly receive (eternal life). While there are likely several reasons that make contentment challenging, we will observe in this lesson how waiting on the Lord can affect our attitude of contentment.

1. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, WE MAY HAVE TO WATCH WHILE OTHERS PROSPER.**
2. **Notice that prosperity can be found both among the believer and the unbeliever (Psalm 73:3-12; Jeremiah 12:1; Daniel 6:28; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Ecclesiastes 7:15).** King Solomon was greatly troubled by this truth. He witnessed that success or prosperity could be found both among the righteous and the wicked. If we are going to be a content people, then we must accept this to be true, or we will find ourselves in a position of great frustration and disappointment. The psalmist was envious of the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He probably thought to himself how much easier it would be to live in willful ignorance against the things of God. Consider the child who is raised in a home with Godly discipline. It is hard for that child to watch as other kids are able to “get away with things” and “have fun.” We can be childish like that in our Christian walk. You do not have to look far to find someone who is prospering while completely ignoring the things of God. They don’t give of themselves at all to the Lord with their efforts, heart, mind, time, or wealth. Yet, they keep prospering. May we understand in 2022 that both the unbeliever and the believer may prosper here on this earth.
3. **Notice that we may even have to watch and wait in patient adversity while others are prospering (Psalm 37:7; Ecclesiastes 7:14).** We are told to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him in Psalm 37:7. Yet, the Lord in His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge gives us more in this verse to consider. He follows up the command to wait with a command to not fret because of him who prospereth in his way. This is speaking of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Undoubtedly, the Lord included this in the verse because He knows our struggles. We may find ourselves in a position of adversity while we are waiting on the Lord. After all, adversity is just as much ordained by the Lord as prospering is. It’s one thing to be content when you as the believer are prospering at the same time as the unbeliever in this world. It’s a much more difficult thing to be content when you are struggling while the wicked is prospering. This is where you must be patient in your waiting. You must keep your joy in your waiting. You must accept that God is on His throne, and your job is simply to wait on Him. A believer who is not waiting on the Lord will fail this test of contentment when the time comes for it.
4. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, WE OUGHT NOT TO COMPARE OURSELVES TO OTHERS.**
5. **Notice that we know with certainty the fate of all those who reject the Lord (Psalm 37:9; Matthew 25:41).** Discontentment for the believer that is caused by the prosperity of the unbeliever is, truthfully, a very foolish thing. Why would we ever allow ourselves to be envious over an evildoer? We know with a certainty the fate of every lost soul. The Bible tells us that all who reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour will be cast into Hell. Thus, it is foolish for anyone who is waiting on the Lord to look at the prosperity of those in this world and allow jealousy, envy, or coveting to take place. An easy way to illustrate this would be to examine a man driving a nice sports car down the highway. That sports car may be worth two or three times as much as the vehicle that you are driving. You might be inclined to want to have that sports car instead of your own. However, if I told you that the car was destined for engine failure that would result in a catastrophic crash, would you be as inclined to ride in it? The world races by us in their prosperity, but the end result is known and very sad. Why would we want that?
6. **Notice that we know with certainty the fate of all those who have received Christ and are waiting on the Lord (Psalm 37:34; Ephesians 1:11; 1 John 5:13).** Just as certain as the condition of the lost man is the condition of every person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ. Our eternal destination is settled and sure. We are destined for Heaven. There is nothing in this world that can possibly change that outcome for us. As we wait on the Lord, let us hold on to the promises that we have been given. Let us understand that we will see the end result. It would be understandable to struggle with contentment if we did not know the end result and had to watch while unbelievers prosper. I couldn’t imagine being a part of a religious system of belief that leaves ambiguity or doubt regarding what the final end of the matter is. Sadly, there are those who live in such a condition. It is no wonder why they prioritize prosperity now in this life. What excuse do we as believers have for not being content while we wait on the total fulfillment of the promises of God? Is it because of a lack of faith on our part?
7. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, WE ACCEPT THAT HE IS ORDERED AND PREPARED.**
8. **Notice that the Lord does everything in His proper order for it (1 Corinthians 14:33-40; 15:23; Psalm 119:133; 37:23; 50:21; 1 Chronicles 15:13; 2 Samuel 23:5).** As believers, we know that we ought to let all things be done decently and in order. Why is that important? It’s because God is a God of order. He is not the author of confusion. He orders the steps of a good man. He has a plan and a purpose for everything. This is hard for us to comprehend, especially for those of us who struggle mightily to be organized and structured in our day-to-day planning. There is an order to all of the animals in this world. There is an order to the weather. There is an order to the plant life. There is an order to the orbit of the earth and all of the planets. The Lord did not forget one detail when He set things in order in this world. When we wait on the Lord, we accept that He has an order for our life. Accepting that order is important for our contentment. It helps us to understand that the Lord has a perfect timing, and we just have to wait on the right time for that which He has set in order.
9. **Notice that the Lord has been preparing since the beginning, even though we have not seen the finished product yet (Isaiah 64:4; 33:2; John 14:2-3; Hebrews 11:16; 1 Corinthians 2:9).** Consider this truth that God has been preparing things for us since the very beginning! As noted above, we already know that the future is settled and sure. As we wait on the Lord, let us remember that the things which have not yet occurred are not absent due to a lack of preparation. It can be difficult to wait on those who are not prepared, as we don’t have the confidence that they will deliver the best to us. This is never an issue with the Lord. He was prepared for 2021 long before 2021 ever arrived. He is equally prepared for 2022 as it just gets started for us. He has answers to our prayers that I believe are already there and prepared for us. We have absolutely no reason to be discontent as we wait on Him. Even now, He is in Heaven preparing a place for us. It’s great that God is a God of order, but it’s also important that He is a God who is prepared. Some folks are organized, but they can’t prepare for everything. God can!
10. **WHEN WE WAIT ON THE LORD, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE IS GOOD.**
11. **Notice that those who wait on the Lord do so because they recognize that He is good (Jeremiah 14:22; Psalm 33:5; 107:1-31).** The book of Jeremiah gives us a glimpse into the thought process of those who wait on the Lord. The prophet acknowledged that the reason we wait on the Lord is because He is different than any of the gods that this world has tried to create and worship. He can do that which they cannot. He is good. He is worth waiting on. These other gods could not even cause the rain to come forth. When we wait on the Lord, it should cause us to acknowledge His goodness. Otherwise, why would we be waiting for Him? When we acknowledge His goodness, that should prevent us from becoming disillusioned by the things that take place in this world. The earth is literally full of the goodness of the Lord. Psalm 107 is a psalm completely dedicated to giving thanks and praising the Lord for His goodness. As we wait on the Lord, it is easy to see that He is good.
12. **Notice that the Lord is good to those who wait on Him (Lamentation 3:25).** Here is the simple conclusion of the matter: the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. We wait on the Lord because we acknowledge that He is good, and then He shows His goodness specifically to those who wait on Him. Is there any more proof that we need in order to cause us to wait on Him? If He is good to those who wait for Him, then why do some Christians struggle with contentment? There are only two possible answers. The first is that we are not waiting on Him, so we are dealing with problems and issues that perhaps we would not have to deal with otherwise. The second is that we have become blinded, numb, or hardhearted toward the goodness of God. Maybe a trial came that we refused to accept as a part of God’s plan. Maybe we have been too busy looking at the prospering of the wicked instead of the goodness of God. As we start 2022, let’s wait on the Lord and be a content people.