

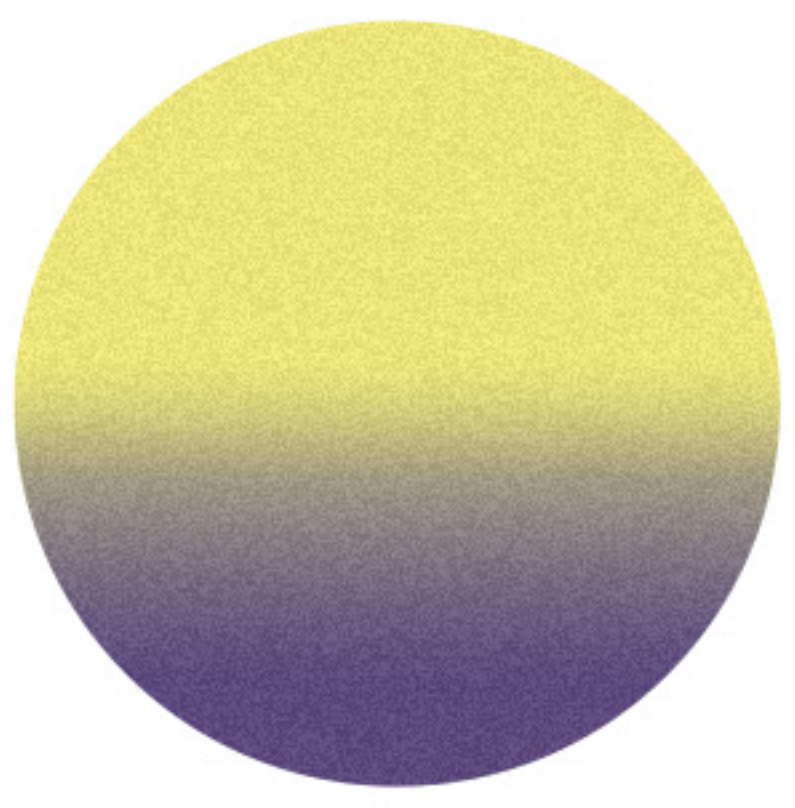
Julie spoke about the culture of consumerism that we live in that encourages to desire more, bigger, better. How easy it is to fall into the mindset of deferring our contentment to 'when I finish my studies' or 'when I get married' and other examples, for when will finally be satisfied. Psalm 23 reminds us that God is our shepherd, and we shall not want. This means he will take care of our needs, but it also means that we should not crave more than our Shepherd gives us. Desire is infinite. We are not. We need to tame our desire.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5

Switching focus to waiting, Julie said this is something that we all experience as God's timetable is not ours. To wait means to stay in a place in readiness with expectation. In Hebrew 'hope' means to wait in expectation and is associated with trust. Isaiah 40:31 says those who wait/ hope on the Lord will not grow weary.

Daniel 12:12 says blessed is the one who waits. We have to learn to wait well. Julie pointed out it is much easier to move but very hard to stand still. It is easy to fall into despair, retreat, or act presumptuously, which will never produce the desired result. To wait well we can lay our difficulties before Him and remind Him of His promises. To grow in quiet patience, which is a fruit of the Spirit and a superpower. Waiting for God brings blessing.



Contentment in the waiting

From our lounge room to yours

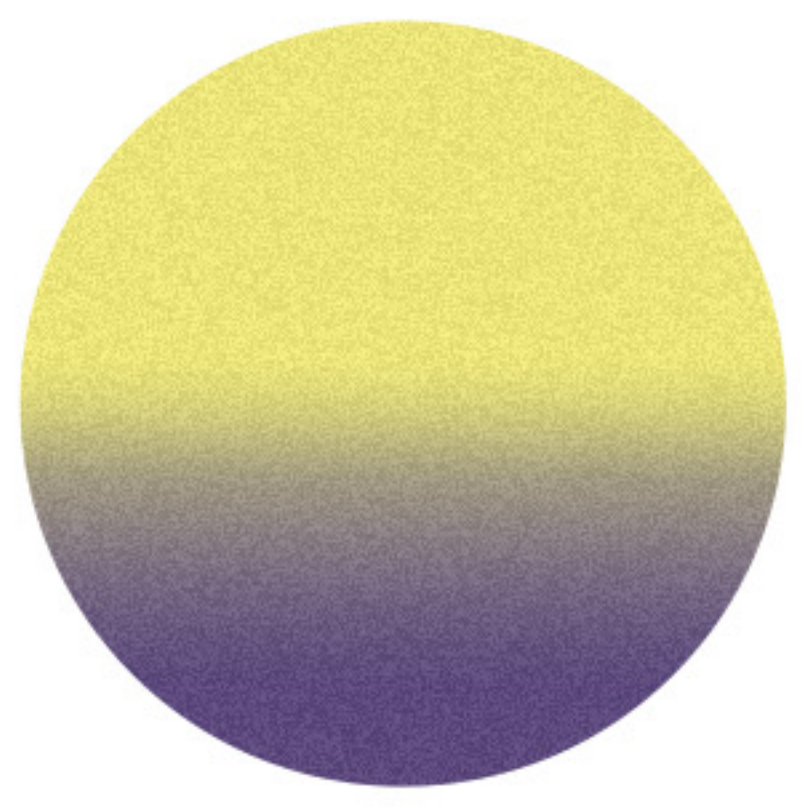
Welcome to Sisterhood Lounge Room. In this episode, Julie is joined by Lorene and Folu as they discuss the topic of contentment in the waiting.

As you watch this episode, we have highlighted the key scriptures, thoughts shared, as well as a few questions you can use in discussion with your group, or in your own devotions ... enjoy.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 (NIV)

Julie began this conversation by defining contentment to mean being satisfied and free from care, and it being like fruit that can grow in our lives. In Philippians 4:10-13, Paul teaches that he had learned to be content in regardless of the circumstances through God who gives us strength. So it is a growth process that needs to be learned again and again, and there is a choice to not be absorbed by our circumstances but rather to be absorbed by Christ. Contentment may be enjoyed despite circumstances and may transcend circumstances.



Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore, he will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Isaiah 30 v18

Q- On a scale of 1-10 how is my contentment? What can I do to take it one notch higher?

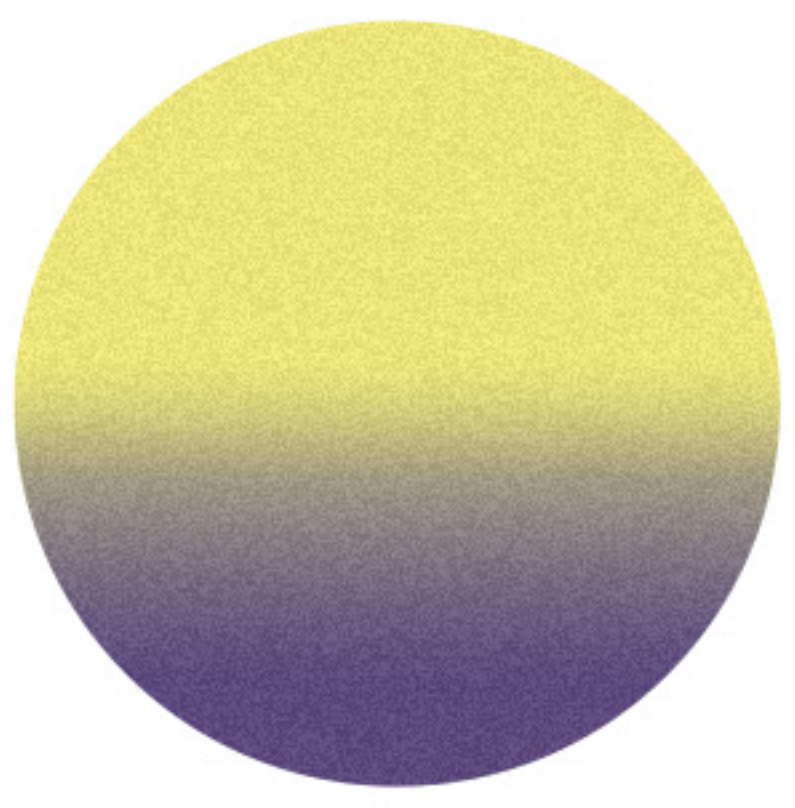
Q- On a scale of 1-10, how would I rate how well I wait on the Lord? How might I learn to wait better?

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

Julie invited Folu to share what contentment and waiting meant to her. She said it is acknowledging where you're at in your present, both in your feelings and your circumstances, and being satisfied with what you have in your hands. It is also learning how to be non-anxious and at ease with your life - a mindset that we need to continually cultivate.

Folu said that we need to develop a spirit of gratitude. We have a choice in how we live in the waiting, how we spend our energy and how we cultivate our relationship with God. Through waiting we are invited to take a front-row seat on what God is going to do next.



Sisterhood Lounge Room

Julie asked Folu to share an experience of waiting in her life. Folu said she had an expectation that her life would follow a pattern of university, marriage, and starting a family in her 20s, but it wasn't until she was in her late 30s that she met her husband. Folu said that although this wasn't the way she thought her life would be, throughout the whole time of waiting for marriage she lived a full life and invested in herself that was a preparation for a healthy partnership to come. When started dating her now husband, they didn't rush into marriage and took the time to get to know one another. Folu said it is so easy that once you get a glimpse of something you want, to rush ahead, but reminded us that we can trust God and move at God's pace, not our own.

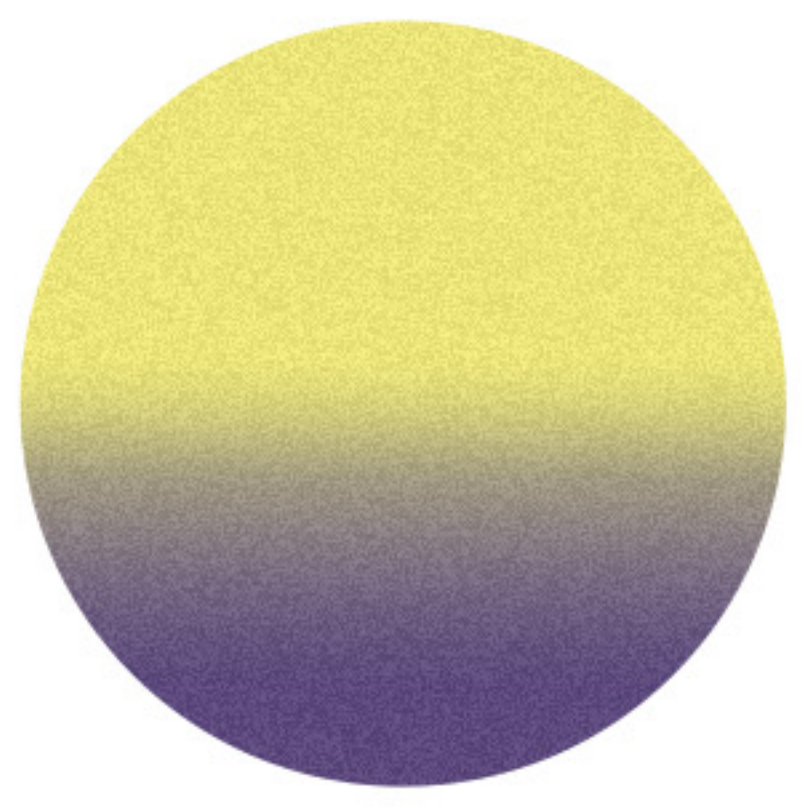
Q- How is my gratitude barometer? Writing down 3 things a day I am grateful for is a powerful practice to practice peace and contentment

Q- If I am in a season of waiting, how can I simply live life to the full?

Q- How can I strengthen my muscle of holding my ground and not rushing into scenarios' that may bear promise?

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

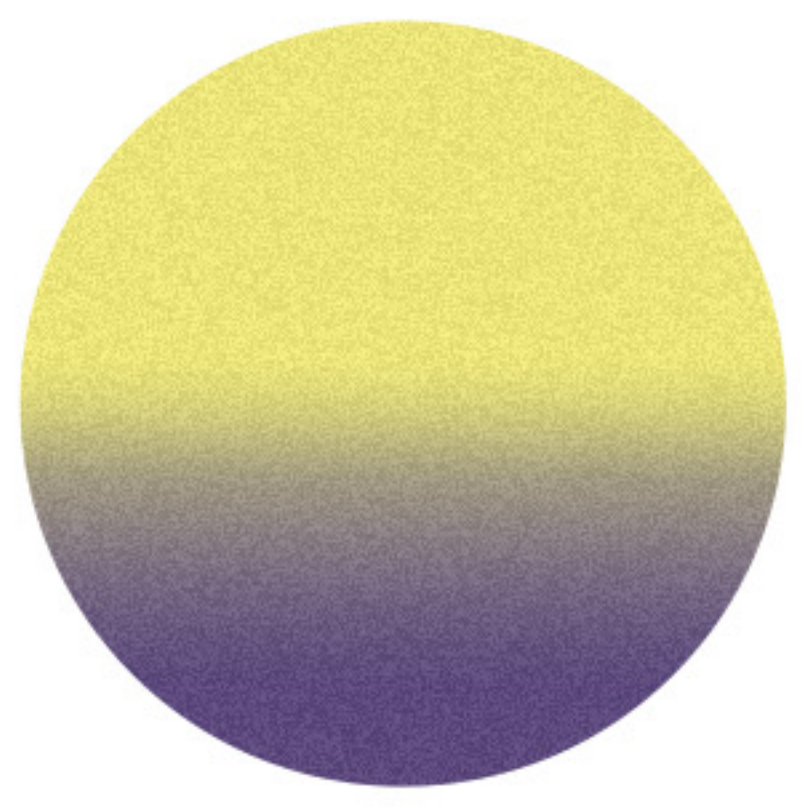


Julie invited Lorene to share her story of waiting. Lorene and her husband suffered a very painful and long 11-year fertility journey where they experienced the heartache and trauma of miscarriages and failed rounds of IVF.

Lorene said it took her years to truly believe that God could and wanted to heal her. She gradually learned to trust in God and in His timing. She learned to be content and grateful for what she had, describing contentment like a muscle that needs exercise to grow. She chose to rejoice with others when they were receiving what she was desperate for. She decided to not just watch the blessings others were receiving but to be a part of it and celebrate alongside them. She asked God for the strength to do this with generosity of heart and pure spirit.

Julie asked Lorene what prayers she prayed during this time. Lorene shared that she simply asked God to renew her hope and grow her faith. Renew her hope because with each negative pregnancy test, her hope died each month, and grow her faith because scripture says it's impossible to please God without faith, and she wanted to live a life that pleases God.

Q- Lorene described contentment as a muscle that needs exercise to grow. One exercise was to not watch but rather participate in and celebrate other's blessings. Another was gratitude. How might you need to exercise?



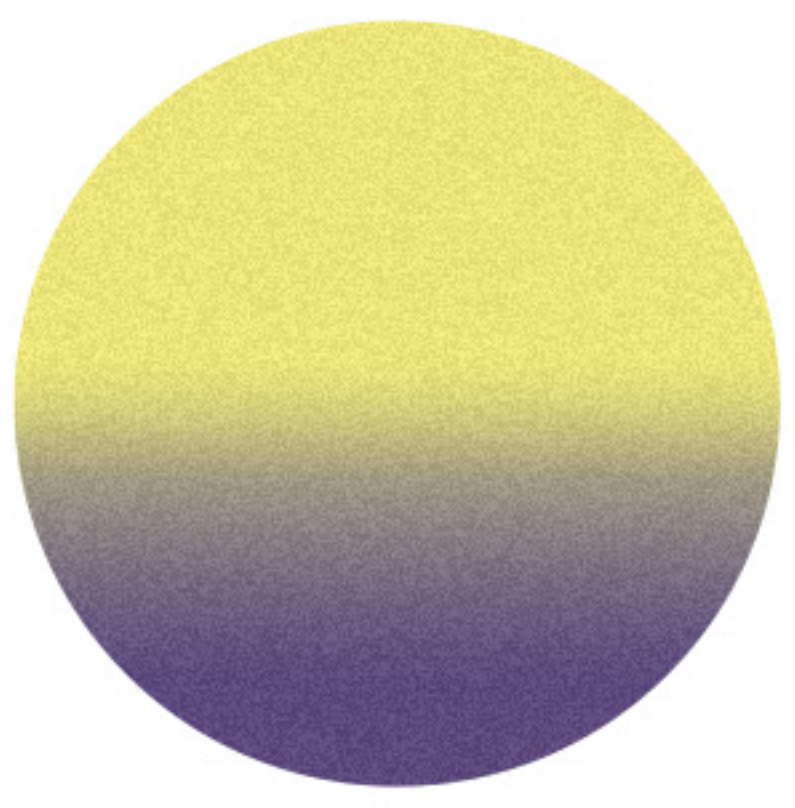
Q- Lorene demonstrates reliance on God's strength and trust in his enabling power through prayer. How might you need to pray when in painful waiting seasons?

Q- Lorene wanted to live a life that pleases God whilst waiting. What might this look like for you?

Julie asked Folu what some of her key learnings have been. Folu learned that God is with us in our present, actively preparing us for our future, and that he wastes nothing. She learned to record prophecies and encouragements regarding her desire, and to test them through prayer, waiting on God, and trusting Him. She learned that in the waiting she could live an abundant life and that marriage was not the answer to a fulfilled life as Jesus said that he had come to give us life, and life to the full, that did not have stipulations attached to it.

Folu encouraged those who are in similar waiting seasons to remember that marriage is not a status symbol and does not complete you as you are already complete in Christ. She encouraged us to acknowledge our feelings and bring all of ourselves, including our emotions and desires to Jesus. Finally, she reminded us to guard against the sin of coveting and to trust that God is actively at work for good in our lives.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28



Q- Do I trust that God is actively at work in my present for good and that he will waste nothing?

Q- Have I sourced some part of my identity or believe that a future desire will somehow complete me?

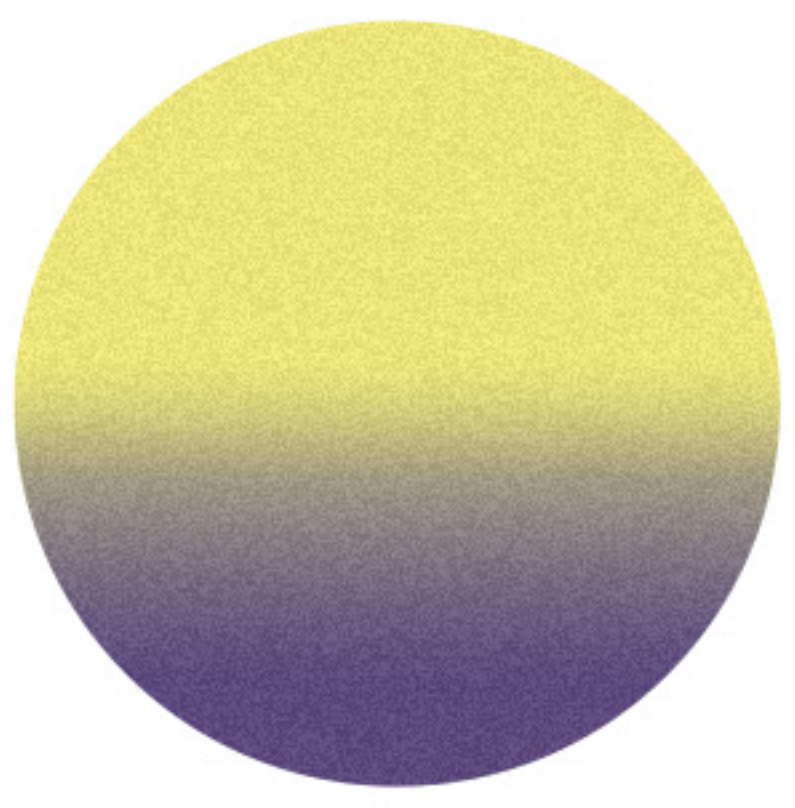
Q- What attitudes are required to actively engage in abundant living whilst in waiting?

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

Julie asked Lorene to share what was helpful on her painful waiting journey. She said that learning to be vulnerable and to confiding in the right people, was very valuable but to remember that we still have to go to the front and cry out to God for ourselves. Hebrews 11 says that He will reward those who seek Him and we have to play our part in seeking him. Lorene said declaring God's promises from scripture over her life was vital.

Julie asked Lorene to share an encouragement to those who are dealing with disappointment.



Lorene said that the grief is valid and real, and it is important to process it. When there seems to be no human solution to surround yourself with loving people who support you. She said that ultimately God's peace will be your healer, it won't happen overnight, but God is present with you in your grief. She also said it's ok to be angry at God. She shared that she has been angry sad and disappointed with God but through prayer and writing letters to Him over time, she gave her sadness to Him to carry. Through this Lorene said she grew in intimacy with God. Lorene ended by saying that the only reason she is the person she is today is because of the journey she went through.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

Q- Do I have trustworthy people in my life that I can be vulnerable with?

Q- Lorene wrote letters to God. How might I process my feelings and my grief with God in difficult seasons?

Q- Do you have a story you can share of how God worked for your good in a difficult season of waiting?

Julie concluded by sharing a poem by Lettie Cowman called Streams in The Desert: