

Take Another Step — In Faith

Paul: Waiting but not Waiting

Another Step // Study Four

Acts 17:13-17 says, “But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. **While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.**”

Notice the words of verses 6 and 17, in bold above. Paul found himself, seemingly, being forced by circumstances beyond his control to wait in the city of Athens. But while he was there, he began to see the huge need that was in the area. So he got stuck into it! Even in circumstances and a city where he didn't want to be, Paul was still on mission and immediately joined God's work in that place.

Discuss:

- *What about Paul's sense of mission and purpose inspires you? In what ways are you encouraged that, even when his plans seemed to be put on hold, he took another step?*
- *As you reflect on this year, how might you relate to Paul's story? Do you feel like you're waiting, maybe in a wilderness season? Are you just looking to God for His next step for your life? In what ways is that difficult for you? Share amongst your group.*
- *If you are in a season of waiting, consider what opportunities you might have right now to continue to be faithful with what God has entrusted to you. Take time to encourage each other about the significance of their service, their faithfulness, and their decisions right now.*

Digging Deeper:

In the Bible, waiting on God is not passive but active! Look at the story of Abraham in Genesis 12 when God gave him a promise. It was 25 years later, in Genesis 21, that Isaac was born. After God promised that Abraham would become the family by which the entire earth is blessed, he immediately responded by moving Abraham to a completely new, and foreign, home. (Genesis 12:1) In the New Testament, Jesus tells the disciples in Acts 1:4 to wait in Jerusalem. In the midst of the unknown, their waiting involved joining together in constant prayer. (Acts 1:14)

-Discuss your observations regarding the difference between “waiting” (such as waiting for food to be served) and “waiting” on God. What are ways that your waiting is active today? Share amongst the group ways that you have gotten involved in God's work while waiting.