

Journey CHURCH

Pastor James Greer

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Leader Guide - Session 4

Outline:

I. In the Christmas story, Augustus Caesar issued a decree, but God had a plan.

- A. Everyone was required to return to their city of origin (see Luke 2:1-3).
- B. There was no arguing his decrees, so Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem.
- C. People make decrees that disrupt lives, but God always has a plan.

II. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4 that we need to trust in God's work while we wait.

- A. The light of God has come through Christ (see verse 6).
- B. Emmanuel now lives in us by the indwelling Spirit of God (see verses 7-11).
- C. Knowing God is transforming us, we do not lose heart (see verses 16-18), viewing our troubles as momentary compared to the eternity that awaits us.

III. By trusting God in the wait, we develop character that produces faithfulness.

- A. We can find joy in our trials when we recognize how God is using them (see James 1:2-4).
- B. There is a reward for those who choose to undergo God's transforming process (see 1 Peter 3-5).
- C. God's objective is not to make our lives easier but to make our lives matter.

IV. By trusting God in the wait, we gain confidence in God's supreme provision.

- A. Trials are not for us to prove that we're enough for God but for God to reveal that He is enough for us.
- B. We can be real and say we are perplexed by what He is doing in the trial.
- C. Failure is not admitting weakness ... failure is not believing in God's strength.

V. By trusting God in the wait, we minister powerfully to a broken world.

- A. When we see Jesus, we will be glad our trials led to the salvation of others.
- B. When we share the gospel and spread God's love, we invest in eternity.
- C. Others may persecute us, but they cannot overcome the love of God.

VI. By trusting God in the wait, we lay our worship at the feet of Jesus.

- A. The Magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (see Matthew 2:11).
- B. Jesus will give us a crown when we are before Him on the last day (see James 1:12), representing our trust in God's transformative work in the trials.
- C. All that we will have to offer Jesus on that day is our worship for giving us those trials that we endured.

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Discussion:

1. When have you seen God use someone else's decrees or decisions to bring about His plans for your life? What did you learn from this experience?
2. How has God used past challenges to strengthen your character and deepen your faith? How does going through these experiences allow you to find God while you wait?
3. When have you found joy in the midst of a trial or painful season because you knew God was using it for your good? What's required for you to sustain this joy when waiting?
4. What are some ways God has shown Himself to be enough for you during hard times? How has He provided what you needed to keep going?
5. How does trusting God in the midst of your wait allow you to minister to others? What has God uniquely equipped you to offer to others because of what you've experienced?