

WEEKLY REFLECTION

We are all waiting for something. Whether it is a career breakthrough, a spouse, a baby, or physical healing, the experience of waiting is universal. The question for us is not what we are waiting for, but rather, do we wait well? As John Ortberg puts it, "Biblically, waiting is not just something we have to do until we get what we want. Waiting is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be."

In Genesis 18, we find Abraham and Sarah in the middle of a 24-year wait for the son that God promised them. In their pain, they had already tried to take matters into their own hands with Ishmael, which led to conflict in their household and emotional distance in their marriage. Yet, when three strangers appear, Abraham does not turn inward and ignore them. Abraham models true hospitality for us. He runs to them and serves them a feast. How can we show that same hospitality in Hong Kong?

Often, we become so obsessed with the one thing we are waiting for that we put the rest of our lives on hold. We stop engaging with strangers, we isolate ourselves, and we forget that "waiting time is not wasting time." Waiting is the very process God actively uses to mold us into who He wants us to be.

When the strangers, revealed to be the LORD, renew the promise that Sarah will have a son, she laughs. It is a bitter, hopeless laugh born from years of disappointment. She had given up. She was 89 years old, past menopause, and biologically unable to have a child. But God responds, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

God met Sarah in her hopelessness and turned her bitter laughter into a laughter of joy. But He made Sarah wait a year longer, not only to give her a child, but to restore her marriage with Abraham. Ultimately, Isaac's impossible birth points us to the true Son of Promise, Jesus Christ, and we patiently await His return. Because of Jesus, we can trust God's timing, open our homes to strangers, and wait with unshakeable hope.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

In Hong Kong, we are surrounded by people but often ignore them. When was the last time you had a meaningful, or funny conversation with a complete stranger?

QUESTION TWO:

"If we wait to reach out to others from a position of fullness, we will never do it. If, on the other hand, we love others out of our own emptiness, we will—paradoxically—find we have an abundance of love to give." — Betsy Childs Howard

Why is our natural tendency to isolate ourselves and turn inward when we are hurting or waiting? What does it look like practically to serve and love others out of our own emptiness and unmet desires? How do we find the strength to do that?

QUESTION THREE:

Sarah was listening from the tent, and when she heard the promise renewed, she laughed. It wasn't a happy laugh; it was a bitter, hopeless laugh born from a dead dream. Have you ever been in a place where a promise from God felt impossible or too late?

QUESTION FOUR:

God met Sarah in her bitterness and eventually turned her hopeless laughter into joy with the birth of Isaac. How have you seen God turn a season of sorrow into joy in your own life?