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“Wait Management”

Mark 4

Small Group Plan

Without patience, my destructive self can easily replace my productive self. Holy does go well with hurry. God does not operate on our timetable.

Prayer is not a way of being busy with God instead of people ... [It is] standing in front of him without anything to show, to prove, or to argue, and ... allowing him to enter.

-- Henri Nouwen in Clowning in Rome

One of the striking facts in the Old Testament is how often the ideas of stillness and strength occur together ... for example, Psalms 27:14 counsels: “Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” ... Waiting builds strength, in part, by moving us away from deceptive self-reliance and toward dependence on God. ... Waiting is giving God room. It cannot tolerate trying to drag God down out of heaven on cue.

-- Howard Macy in Rhythms of the Inner Life

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Who in your family (current or growing up) could grow anything? Why?
- How was patience a part of their growth plan?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— QUIET GROWTH —

Mark 4:26-29

²⁶ He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.

- Spiritual growth is sometimes hidden and sometimes visible. Where do you see these two aspects (hidden/visible) at work in spiritual growth today?
- Where do you see the theme of waiting in this story?
- Why does patience seem difficult for some and natural for others?
- Why do so many want “quick” results?
- The farmer anticipates the harvest but is not impatient. How can a person be eager and expectant, but not impatient?
- In this story what does “the harvest” mean?

— **AMAZING GROWTH** —

Mark 4:30-32

³⁰ Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.

- Why did Jesus choose the mustard seed to represent the kingdom?
- Why is it powerful for greatness to come from smallness or weakness?
- What hope does this story give you when you feel that your life, your family or your church is insignificant?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Does knowing that the power to grow is ultimately in God’s hands cause you to rest more or work more? Explain.
- Why is it important to know that God doesn’t operate on our timetable?
- At what stage of growth are you:
A seed? Sprouting? Growing? Producing? Drying up?
- Where do you want to be?
- Describe a time you saw something small grow into something big.
- Which lesson application is the most difficult for you:
 - Waiting for God?
 - Stilling the noise?
 - Yielding control?
- Why does hurry not work well with holy?
- What does holy waiting look like?
- Close with a time of quiet, personal prayer.