

“I Don’t Wait Anymore” chapter 6 study outline

More often than we realize, we mistake God’s *means* with God’s *end* for our life. Sometimes we think the “good life” here — maybe a marriage and family, or a purposeful job — is the goal of our lives, even if we don’t realize that we think that. It changes our hearts completely when we flip it around and see those things as simply one of God’s means to the end — Himself.

God’s people in the Old Testament, the Israelites, got it backward sometimes too. After they cried out to God to save them from slavery in Egypt and God answered, and after He sent plague after plague until Pharaoh let them go, they still missed the whole reason He had saved them — so they could have the best thing of all. “*Let my people go, that they may serve me*” (Exodus 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13).

Read Exodus 11:1-3 and 12:33-36.

- Even as the Israelites were getting their freedom, God gave them some other blessings too — silver and gold jewelry and clothing. As time went on, they would think the purpose of these treasures was to fulfill their dreams — to fit in with the lifestyle of the nonbelievers around them and even give them something to worship.

As we read the story of their journey through Exodus, we see God do amazing things along the way — part the Red Sea, provide the people with food to eat every day and lead them out in steadfast love. Why? To guide them by His strength to His “holy abode” (Exodus 15:13). They were going to get to live *with God, the one who loved them*.

As their journey went on, God appeared to Moses, and the people saw God and ate and drank in His presence (Exodus 24). And He had bigger plans — to have a place where He could dwell with them. In Exodus 25:8, He began to tell Moses His plans for the people to willingly offer up the blessings they had been given — the gold and silver and fabrics — to build a sanctuary so that “I may dwell in their midst.”

But while God spelled those plans out for Moses on the mountain, down below the people were using that gold to fulfill their own dreams — they made a golden idol to worship. God wasn’t acting fast enough, and they couldn’t see the big picture.

Read the story in Exodus 32. Are there ways we do this in our own lives?

Questions for discussion:

- What’s the “gold” in your life? Right now is it in your pocket or your heart?
- Have you prayed more in the past to *know* Him or to know *what to do*?
- Have you ever tried praying a prayer like my friend Scott’s prayer (p. 96)?
- In your own life, have you ever felt the difference between living for God and living *for* God (meaning, living to *get* God as the prize)? What does that look like for you?