

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT:        “It Takes Time”  
DAY ONE:                     “It Takes Time”

**Read:** Philippians 1:1-11 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1366)

**Read:** *Purpose-Driven Life*, pages 217-218

**Reflect:** In what area of your spiritual growth do you need to be more patient and persistent?

**Dig:** Read Philippians 1:1-11. Who wrote this letter and to whom was he writing?

According to verse 6, who initiated the “good work” in them and who will complete it? What hope does this bring?

Characterize the development of this good work as depicted in Paul’s prayer in verses 9-11 and then use Paul’s prayer as a standard to measure your spiritual maturity:

- Is your love abounding in knowledge?
- Is your love abounding in depth of insight?
- Are you discerning what is best?
- Are you pure and blameless?
- Are you filled with the fruit of righteousness?

Do you feel like you have a long way to go? That’s what this week’s theme is all about. Throughout the week we’ll look at the maturing process that some heroes of the faith went through and investigate why such a maturing process takes time.

**Apply:** On the bottom of page 218 of the *Purpose-Driven Life* we read, “The moment you open yourself to Christ, God gets a ‘beachhead’ in your life. You may think you have surrendered *all* your life to him but the truth is, there is a lot to your life that you aren’t even aware of. You can only give God as much of you as you understand at that moment.”

How much of your life—as you understand it at this moment—have you given to God? Is there an area that you *know* you are withholding? Take some time now to allow the Holy Spirit to show you such areas and pray for the strength to surrender.

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT:       **“It Takes Time”**  
DAY TWO:                   **“It Takes Time”**

**Read:** Exodus 2, 3:1-10 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, pp. 63-64)

**Read:** *Purpose-Driven Life*, top of p. 219

**Reflect:** What promises has God spoken to you that you are still waiting to see fulfilled?

**Dig:** The Bible recounts numerous examples of people who were given a promise or raised up for a certain task--and then had to wait years to see the fulfillment of that promise or calling. Today and tomorrow we'll look at two of those examples.

How old was Moses when he was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter and given a home with her? See verse 10. How many years passed before he went back to his people, interfered, and then fled to Midian? See verses 11-15 and also Acts 7:23 (p. 1244).

How many years did he spend in Midian before God called him back to Egypt? See Acts 7:30 (p. 1244) and Exodus 7:7 (p. 70).

What do you suppose was happening to Moses' character during this time?

And yet did he feel completely ready for the task before him? See Exodus 3:11, 13 and 4:1, 10.

**Apply:** With what stage of Moses' life can you most identify right now—being set apart, being educated, waiting in the desert, facing an enormous task that God is calling you to, or some combination of all these stages?

Whatever stage you are in right now, remember the admonition of Proverbs 3:5 (NIV): “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” Turn this verse into a prayer as you proclaim your trust in the Lord.

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT:

**“It Takes Time”**

DAY THREE:

**“Why Does It Take So Long?”**

**Read:** Genesis 37:2-8, 19-28, 41:41-57, 42:1-6 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, pp. 45-46, 49-50)

**Read:** pages 219-221 (top) of *Purpose-Driven Life*

**Reflect:** Rick Warren writes that “you cannot grow without a humble, teachable attitude.” (PDL, p. 220) Would the people in your life with whom you interact the most consider you to have a teachable spirit? A humble attitude? In what areas of your life do you see evidence of (a) growth and (b) lack of growth?

**Dig:** Read Genesis 37:2-8; 19-28 (p. 45) and Genesis 41:41-57 and 42:1-6 (pp. 49, 50).

What was the promise given to Joseph in his dream? See Genesis 37:6 -7.

How long did it take for the fulfillment of that promise?

During those years what events happened that molded, shaped, and prepared Joseph for the task of governing Egypt?

**Apply:** You too are being molded, shaped, and prepared. Perhaps you’re experiencing the growing pains that Rick Warren writes about. Perhaps you are wrestling with unlearning old habits and developing good habits—and you’re frustrated with the time it takes. Wherever you are in your journey, pray this prayer from Psalm 90:12, 17 (NIV): “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.”

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT:  
DAY FOUR:

**“It Takes Time”**  
**“Don’t get in a Hurry”**

**Read:** 2 Peter 1:3-11 (*Freedom in Christ*, p. 1459)

**Read:** *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 221-223

**Reflect:** Are you effective and productive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ?  
See verse 8.

**Dig:** According to 2 Peter 1:3-11, what are we lacking in order to live a life of godliness?  
See verse 3.

Does that mean we’ve arrived—that we’re perfect? Note verses 5-8.

List the virtues highlighted in these verses. Are they meant to be sequential (that is, you can’t have goodness unless you have faith) or are they all to be expressed simultaneously? What clue is given in verse 8 with respect to how they are to be expressed?

If you had to evaluate yourself in each of these areas with a 5 being “I exhibit this virtue all the time” and a 0 being “I never exhibit this virtue,” how would you do?

By what means can we possess these qualities in increasing measure? See also John 15:5 (p. 1222).

**Apply:** Claim the promise of Psalm 138:8 (NIV). “The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.” (You might even want to pray the entire Psalm.)

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT:  
DAY FIVE:

**“It Takes Time”  
Lectio Divina**

**Using the “Lectio Divina” method of Bible study (see page 2 of this booklet), meditate on this scripture:**

**“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

*Lectio divina* (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life; write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer - thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.