

Following is a study guide for Bob Sorge's book, "The Fire Of Delayed Answers," in a Word document format. This study guide was written by Ryan Jones of St. Louis, Missouri. You are welcome to download it for free and use it freely for small group study and interaction.

“THE FIRE OF DELAYED ANSWERS” STUDY GUIDE

WEEK ONE: Read Introduction and Chapter One and answer study questions.

Introduction:

1. The book boils down to this: "Sometimes God delays the answers to our prayers to produce a greater maturity and fruitfulness in us." What are you believing God for that hasn't yet come to pass?

2. "The focus of this book is to explore the reasons *why* God sometimes delays his answers." If you could ask God any "why" questions right now, what would they be?

3. Look at the list of trials in the introduction. How many of those are *you* going through?

4. Be honest, how does that make you feel about God *right now*?

Chapter One: Refiner's Fire

1. Read Revelations 3:14-22. What was Jesus' solution to the lukewarm church at Laodecia? What was His promise to those who overcame their lukewarm condition?

2. What is the gold purchased in the fire? How is it purchased? Who makes the first move in this transaction?

3. Why does the fire of testing have to be so hot? Read Psalms 66:10-12.

4. Can infirmity be from God? Read pages 17-19. Do you agree or disagree with Bob Sorge's position? List three scriptures that support your argument.

5. How does the testing of the Body of Christ in general fit in with God's plan for the last days?

6. How does the testing you are going through fit in with this plan?

WEEK TWO: Read Chapters Two and Three and answer the study questions.

Chapter Two: The Perseverance of Job

1. List three mistakes Job's "friends" made, and write down what we can do to avoid making similar mistakes when counseling a believer in crisis.

2. Why does God bring His most faithful servants into a theological crisis? What purpose does it serve?

3. What theological crises has God led you into? In what ways is God "blowing your theology?" Are there any similarities to what Bob Sorge went through?

4. On page 34, Sorge writes, "When we're in the crucible, God doesn't expect all of our responses to be perfect." Think of a time

you had a "less than perfect" response to the fire of delayed answers. If you feel comfortable, share an example with the group.

5. What advice does Peter give to those who suffer according to the will of God?

A.

B.

C.

6. Read First Peter 4:17-19. Why does judgment have to start with the house of God?

7. What advice did Sordani give for determining if you are "suffering according to the will of God?" How do your current trials fit into these guidelines?

8. In what ways was Job "a changed man" after his trials?

9. In what ways have your trials changed you, for better *and* for worse?

10. We've learned in this study that God is a god of purpose. What are some goals and purposes that God spoke into your life that have become a little "smoky" in the fire of delayed answers?

11. List any specific truths from this study of Job that you will apply to your life as you wait for your delayed answers.

Chapter Three: Prison Theology

1. "There is an incarceration that is ordained of God." How do we tell the difference between godly imprisonment and satanic bondage?

2. Is there anything in your life that has you imprisoned?

3. List three things godly imprisonment can accomplish in the believer.

A.

B.

C.

4. Joseph was imprisoned not for what he did wrong, but for what he did right. How did prison change Joseph, and what was God's eventual purpose for Joseph's prison season?

5. Is there anything the believer can do to hasten his or her deliverance?

6. Read Zechariah 9:11-12. What does it mean to be a prisoner of hope?

7. Read Romans 5:3-5. What is the key to producing godly hope?

WEEK THREE: Read Chapters Four and Five and answer the study questions.

Chapter 4: David's Cave

1. Why are David's experiences especially useful for us to study?
2. What was God's purpose for David's trials?
3. What advice does Sorge give for praising God when dealing with depression?
4. What encouragement does Sorge give for those who are wrestling with depression in the fire of delayed answers?
5. Why is removal from ministry one of God's methods for character refinement?
6. What is the correct response if you've been "shelved" by God?

7. What is "broken faith?" Why is it important for broken faith to precede a great assignment from God?

8. What was God's purpose for David's "final exam" at Ziklag? What did David do that assured his passing the test?

9. Why do think David and Solomon handled their responsibilities as king so differently? Are there any insights from David's mistakes that can assist you in training your own children?

10. What was Solomon's fatal mistake and what can we do to avoid the same fate?

Chapter 5: When The Lights Go Out

1. Read Isaiah 50:10-11. What lesson do you think the prophet was trying to convey?

2. Read Isaiah 40:3-4. What do these phrases mean?
Every valley shall be exalted:

Every mountain and hill brought low:

The crooked places be made straight:

And the rough places made smooth:

3. Read Psalm 23:4. What purpose does God have for keeping us in the dark?

4. What advice does Sorge give for those who going through a season of darkness?

5. Read the scripture references in Through The Valley With The Psalms on page 81. (If pressed for time, read Psalms 47, 88, 31, 28, and 40 in that order). What are the five phases of the journey through the valley and what insights did you gain about each phase?

Phase 1 (Psalm 47):

Phase 2 (Psalm 88):

Phase 3 (Psalm 31):

Phase 4 (Psalm 28):

Phase 5 (Psalm 40):

6. What guidance does Sorge give to avoid being double-minded in a time of trial?

7. What should the believer occupy themselves with while waiting for God's deliverance?

1. Psalm 112:4

2. I Timothy 6:14-15

3. II Peter 1:19

WEEK FOUR: Read Chapters Five and Six and answer the study questions.

Chapter Six: Jesus's Teachings on Delay

1. What is the lesson on delay from the story of Jairus?
2. What is the lesson on delay from the resurrection of Lazarus?
3. What is the lesson from Jesus washing Peter's feet?
4. Read Luke 11:5-10, 12:35-40 and 18:1-8. According to these verses, what is Jesus's direction when faced with delayed answers?
5. Read Matthew 24:45-51. What are the two temptations that must be resisted during a season of delay, especially for those in ministry?

Chapter Seven: Comfort for the Afflicted

1. Sorge wrote on page 99 that before his sickness he felt spiritual dry. He cried out for God to take him to a higher level and infirmity was God's answer. Was the delayed answer you're waiting for preceded by a similar cry?

2. Read Psalms 119: 67&71. Has the delayed answer you're waiting for made it easier to say yes to God and no to your flesh? What does Sorge suggest as the first response when affliction strikes?

3. What is the correct channel for the desperation affliction produces in us?

4. Read Luke 10:19. What is Sorge's interpretation of this verse? Explain why you agree or disagree.

5. Read Romans 5:3-4 and James 1:2-4. What is the vital ingredient on the pathway to spiritual maturity according to these verses?

6. "I never thought I was judgmental--until infirmity hit." (p. 110)
Has your fire of delayed answers made you quicker or slower to judge other people?

7. "Where there is no distress, Christianity mutates." (p. 111)
Explain this statement.

8. Read I Peter 1:7-9. What are the three purposes of affliction? To what extent are those purposes being worked in your situation?

9. What did Sorge mean when he said, "Get into the presence of God, and you may get more than you bargained for"?

10. According to Chapter Seven, what are fourteen reasons for God allowing affliction to come into our lives?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.

11. After reviewing these, has God quickened your heart that some of these may apply to you? If so, reread those sections again and write down some specific insights that will help you weather this season of affliction.

12. Read Philippians 1:6. What final comfort does Paul give to those who are in a season of affliction?

WEEK FIVE: Read Chapters Eight and Nine and answer the study questions.

Chapter Eight: Brokenness

1. What does it mean to be broken by God?
2. Why would being one of Jesus's disciples not have been much fun?
3. What is God's proven method for reducing our self-reliance?
4. Why do you think Jesus was so hard on Peter? What effect did it have?
5. What is God's ultimate objective when He tests us?
6. What did Jesus want His disciples to learn through their night of failure before the crucifixion?

7. How does God graduate "young men" into spiritual fathers?

8. What were three reasons for Paul's thorn in the flesh?

A.)

B.)

C.)

9. What was the end result of Peter's "broken faith"?

Chapter Nine: Desperate Dependence and Heart Enlargement

- What are the four levels of dependence?

A.)

B.)

C.)

D.)

2. What were the three great tests God introduced into Hezekiah's life to induce "desperate dependence?"

3. "After removing the fire from your life, God always tests the gold to see how pure it is." (page 135). How did God test the gold in Hezekiah's life ? Why did he fail the test?

4. What is an "enlarged heart ?" Why is an enlarged heart so important to God?

5. What are three principles of heart enlargement?

A.)

B.)

C.)

6. Why is it obvious the Hezekiah didn't have an enlarged heart after his trials?

7. Why did Hezekiah's heart enlargement not "take?"

8. What should our response be in order to have a successful "heart enlargement?"

WEEK SIX: Read Chapters Ten and Eleven and answer the study questions

Chapter Ten: The Assyrians Are Coming!

1. "But God always expects His people to rise above the natural plane and dwell, by His grace, in a supernatural dimension." (p.150) In what areas is God challenging you to rise above your circumstances, and what's been holding you back?

2. "When we see our job as our source of supply, we'll start making all kinds of compromises." (p. 151) What kind of compromises have you been tempted to make on the job, and what is your strategy for standing against them?

3. "At a moment of crisis, we often face tremendous pressure to make a quick decision. Our family looks at us and says, 'Well, you have to do **something!**' So we act impetuously, without waiting for God's provision, and bring heartache upon ourselves." (p. 152) In what areas are you being tempted to provide your own answer instead of waiting on God's provision?

4. Read Hebrews 4:11. How can one "strive diligently to enter that rest?" Well, which is it; "strive earnestly," or "enter that rest?" Can you provide any other scripture to back your explanation?

5. In the context of crisis, what is Sorge's definition of Faith?

6. What are the four origins of trouble?

A.)

B.)

C.)

D.)

7. What "Assyrians" are coming against your life right now?

8. As you look at the list in question 6, what are the most likely origins of this trouble in your life?

9. How will that shape the way you respond to this crisis?

Chapter Eleven: The Dance of the Two Camps

1. In your own words, what is "the dance of the two camps?"
2. The Hebrew word for "the dance of the two camps" is **Mahanaim**. Read Genesis 32. Who was Jacob wrestling with? *Why?* (There *is* no definitive answer, just give it a shot.) Does the blessing this "man" imparted to Jacob have any pertinence in this debate between quietness and striving?
3. "When you get zealous for God, nobody will hate you more than the 'Christian' who has no fervency for Jesus." (p.163) Are there any areas of your life where your exertion to fulfill the will of God is being resisted by fellow believers?
4. Summarize the position of the Quietness camp. List a scripture or two (other than the ones quoted in the book) that supports this viewpoint.
5. Summarize the position of the Confidence camp. List a scripture or two for that viewpoint as well.

6. According to I John 2:12-14, what are the three levels of spiritual maturity? From these verses and your personal experiences, what are some of the key characteristics of each?

A.)

B.)

C.)

7. In the conclusion of the chapter, what change of heart took place that helped Sorge achieve a balance between the Quietness and Confidence camps?

8. In what ways does the "heart surgery" God is carrying out in your life right now parallel Bob Sorge's experiences? Did this chapter give you any guidance on how to conduct yourself during your personal troubles?

WEEK SEVEN: Read Chapters Twelve and Thirteen

Chapter Twelve: Waiting For Delayed Answers

1. Read Luke 18:17 and Matthew 11:12. How do you reconcile the difference between those two verses? Do you have any examples in your life where they were *both* true at the same time?

2. Think about Moses' wait before he led the Israelites out of bondage. Why does God make His servants wait so *long*? Do you think the glory Moses experienced was worth a *forty year* wait?

3. Why does God wait until we're totally broken before He visits His grace upon us?

4. What did God rebuke the nation of Israel for in Isaiah 40:27? Have you ever been guilty of having the same attitude?

5. Read II Kings 6:24-33 and 7:1-20. Why do you think God waited so long before answering King Jehoram's prayer so miraculously?

6. What sin did Israel commit in Psalm 106:13-15, and what was their punishment?

7. For a believer waiting on God, what is the difference between a *logos* word and a *rhema* word, and what impact should that difference make as we wait on God?

8. Sorge points out that a believer cannot decide *when* God will speak, or *what* God will speak. We simply have to wait. What else does he say waiting on God is?

A.)

B.)

C.)

D.)

And what does he say waiting on God is *not*?

A.)

B.)

C.)

D.)

9. Read I Samuel 13:5-14. Why did God have Samuel wait until it was "too late" with Saul?

10. "Sometimes we pray for a visitation from God, expecting the fire to fall. When a famine hits our life, we don't realize that God has just answered our prayers." (p. 191) Whoa! How do you reconcile *that* with a loving God who meets all our needs?

Chapter Thirteen: Quieted by His Love

1. What are the top three temptations for those who waiting for God to answer?

A.)

B.)

C.)

2. What are three important facts about quietness?

A.)

B.)

C.)

3. Read Romans 8:35-37. What force empowers us to overcome these trials?

4. Read I John 4:15-18. In the context of these verses, explain the statement, "To the degree that I love him, to that degree fear no longer has room in my soul."

5. "'Would Jesus purposely offend me?' someone might ask ...The answer is, yes. He not only would, but He will." (p. 200) Explain this statement.

6. What is the "love test?"

7. In describing Peter's love test, Sorge writes, "The purpose of the test was fulfilled when Peter failed." (p. 204) Explain this statement.

WEEK EIGHT: Read Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen and answer the questions

Chapter Fourteen: Confidence In His Ways

1. Read Isaiah 30:19-26. From the context Sorge provides, how do you think the fulfilment of this verse was different than the nation of Israel might have originally interpreted it?

2. What confidence does verse 26 provide for those who are waiting for delayed answers?

3. What was the lesson of Paul's thorn?

4. "If God wants to deliver us from all trouble, then why are so many saints not delivered from their troubles?" What is Sorge's answer to this question?

5. Why is it necessary to believe God for good *in this life*, and not in "the sweet by and by?"

Chapter 15: Don't Cast Away Your Confidence

1. Why is the enemy so determined to attack your confidence?

2. What are two temptations Satan uses to get us to "cast away our confidence?"

A.)

B.)

3. Why is it important to pass the "purity test" while you're waiting on God?

4. Why does the enemy often speak to us in first person ("Why am *I* working so hard to serve God--He never does anything for *me!*"), and what is his objective by doing so?

5. What is the most militant thing you can do against the kingdom of darkness? (Daniel 11:32)

6. What are the right conditions for faith to grow in our hearts?

A.)

B.)

C.)

D.)

7. Why did Jesus describe faith as a mustard plant, and not an oak tree?

8. Why does Sorge believe that God has called him to declare his impending deliverance in the midst of his affliction?

9. What is the best way to maintain confidence in God while you are waiting on Him?

10. Turn back to the questions for Chapter 1 and look at your answer to question 4. Answer that question again now, in light of what you have learned during this study.

11. What are the most important truths you have learned from *The Fire of Delayed Answers*?

12. Are you waiting with greater expectancy because of what you have learned?