

STOP WAITING FOR PERMISSION STUDY GUIDE



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STOP WAITING FOR PERMISSION STUDY GUIDE

Harness Your Gifts,
Find Your Purpose, and
Unleash Your Personal Genius

**STEPHEN
CHANDLER**



WATERBROOK

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INTRODUCTION

I believe with all my heart that God designed you for a purpose and filled you with potential. I also believe that by living your purpose and working to realize your potential, you can attain greatness. I wrote my book, *Stop Waiting for Permission*, to inspire people like you to reach for your God-given greatness.

As much as I enjoy inspiring people, however, I want more: I want you to actually *become great*! This guide is designed to take you step by step through a process of soaking in God's Word, reflecting on your pursuit of greatness, and living into the principles of *Stop Waiting for Permission*. I wrote it with you in mind, in prayerful hope that you'll be intentional about setting aside time, mental energy, and spiritual space to begin your journey toward greatness.

You *can* work through my book and this guide on your own, but just like the quest for greatness itself, it's work that is best done in good, godly company. Whether it's with your significant other, a family member, a couple of close friends, or a book group, you'll find that dialogue, feedback, and encouragement from others—not to men-

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tion their prayers—will amplify your efforts. I recommend reading each chapter of *Stop Waiting for Permission* on your own, working through the corresponding session in this guide either on your own or with another person, and then coming together to share what you're discovering along the way.

Don't rush through it. I truly believe that prayerful, thoughtful, intentional engagement with the process I've laid out here will launch you toward the purpose you were created for. I can't wait to see what our great God does in, for, and through you!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a companion to the book *Stop Waiting for Permission*, and it can be used individually or in book clubs, discussion gatherings, and other kinds of small groups. Using this guide alongside the book will help you (and your group, if you're part of a discussion group) to get the most out of this content.

This guide consists of ten study sessions, and each session can be completed in a week, as is common for small groups. However, if you prefer to work through this guide on your own, you can certainly take the journey at your own pace.

READING SCHEDULE FOR *STOP WAITING FOR PERMISSION*

If you haven't already read the book *Stop Waiting for Permission*, do so as you work your way through these sessions. The book chapters flow with the sessions. So you'll read chapter 1 before session 1, chapter 2 before session 2, and so on, ending with chapter 10/session 10 (there isn't a session for chapter 11).

Session Format

Every session will begin with a brief introduction (or re-introduction, if you've already read the book) to the topic for that session.

Soak It In

Read the biblical passage referenced in this section in the Bible translation of your choice. Then try reading the same passage in at least one additional version such as The Living Bible (TLB) or the New King James Version (NKJV). You can access multiple versions online or through an app such as YouVersion.

Each time you do this, first read the passage silently, then read it aloud a second time, and if you feel so inclined, rewrite it in your journal. Sometimes repeating a passage and then writing it down can help you retain it. Once you've read the passage and thought about it, respond to the questions or prompts that follow.

Reflect on It

The deeper questions in this section will encourage you (and your group) to dive into the core theme of the session in a way that might stimulate further thought and discussion.

Live into It

Every session will give you space to start thinking about how to apply the lessons to your life. This section might include an activity, questions to consider, or prompts to do something about what you learned.

Pray It Out

Every session will end with a prayer that you can read and pray individually or with your small group.

LEADING A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

If you're working through this study in a group setting and you're the facilitator of your group, here are some simple guidelines that can help make this ten-week journey through *Stop Waiting for Permission* more rewarding. Each session has enough content for sixty to ninety minutes of group time, depending on how long your group likes to spend in deeper discussion of each topic, Scripture passage, question, and application.

If you're part of an established small group going through *Stop Waiting for Permission*, your group is probably familiar with how to review content in studies like this one. It may not be necessary to prescribe every detail of the meetings, though this brief refresher may help you prepare for the discussions.

Review & Pray

Before meeting with the group, read the chapter of *Stop Waiting for Permission* associated with the study session (read chapter 1 before session 1, chapter 2 before session 2, etc.) and complete the session in this study guide. Then

pray for each person in your group and for your upcoming time together.

Group Members

Encourage every group member to read the assigned chapter of *Stop Waiting for Permission* and complete the session in this guide before the meeting each week.

Getting Started & Introduction

Once your group members have arrived, take a few minutes to settle into a place free of distractions, where you can sit comfortably for sixty to ninety minutes. Then, when you're ready to get started, ask a group member to read the session's introduction aloud.

Soak It In

Ask someone else to read the Scripture passage named in this section of the study session, then ask each person to share the initial thoughts they wrote down or anything that came to mind as the passage was read aloud.

Reflect on It

Encourage discussion of the questions in this section, and remember to take your time. Don't rush the answers. Try to make sure no one person answers every question or dominates the discussion, and seek to get everyone involved, if you can. If someone isn't actively participating, try to draw them into the discussion gently. If you can create a safe space for honest reflection and discussion, your

group time (and relationships with one another) will be more valuable.

Live into It & Pray It Out

Give the group time to talk about what they each wrote in the application section and to share ideas about how to apply what they've learned to their daily lives. Pray together to close your time.

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SESSION 1

Why You Should Want Greatness

BASED ON CHAPTER 1 OF
STOP WAITING FOR PERMISSION

TAKEAWAY:
WHEN IT COMES TO GREATNESS,
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR
PERMISSION.

When it comes to greatness, too many people are just waiting to get lucky. They stand around day after day in the proverbial waiting room in the hope that someone else will fail to show up and forfeit their position inside.

Why would you do that when you can reserve your own place of greatness? There *will* be a seat at the table with your name on it, if you only call ahead and give your name. I want to show you how to prepare your life for the greatness God has planned for you.

You may have already accomplished some things other people consider great. They're impressed. Your influence is wide, your responsibilities are significant, and your list of accolades is long—but you still feel unfulfilled. You find yourself standing around, wondering, *Is this it? Is this all there is?* If that's you, I want to show you how to orient your drive and gifts toward the deeper purposes of God, where true greatness awaits.

Soak It In

Read Matthew 20:17–28 at least twice through, aloud if possible, from at least two Bible translations.

Spend a minute or two thinking about the passage. Who stands out to you? What are they doing or saying that captures your attention? Why do you find that interesting? Write and/or talk about what you notice.

Reflect on It

1. When you read about James and John asking to be great, how do you feel about their ambition? Why do you feel that way?

2. In Matthew 20, do you identify more with James and John or with the other disciples? What do you imagine you'd be feeling if you were in their place? Why?

3. Many things can hold people back from realizing their potential for greatness. From the list below, check the limitations you resonate with most:

- ☐ They're full of potential but short on drive.
- ☐ They're driven but lack direction.
- ☐ They're paralyzed into inaction by fear and doubt.
- ☐ They don't believe they deserve greatness.
- ☐ They don't see room for themselves or someone like them among those who are great.

Where do you think those limitations come from?

What feelings, beliefs, or attitudes would you add to the list?

4. God has hidden greatness inside you. Your job is to knock down walls of fear, insecurity, and false humility to reveal what he has placed in you. When we search out what God has hidden, we increase our influence and fulfillment—our glory.

Proverbs 25:2 says, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.” Is it fairly easy or difficult to think of yourself as royalty? Why?

Imagine what it would look like to treat your pursuit of godly greatness as a royal quest. How would thinking of it that way change your overall mindset?

Live into It

There is a place where everything that makes you who you are is welcomed and celebrated, where your gifts, passion, and purpose collide to leave a mark beyond your wildest imagining. In this place, you experience fulfillment by using your unique personal genius—yes, it exists!—to bless your family, friends, community, and world.

Use your holy imagination to begin envisioning this reality. In your place of greatness, how do you spend your time? Where are you? Who is with you? What kind of challenges do you face? What feelings do you experience most often? Why?

Take your time, and consider these questions for a few minutes, hours, or even days. Write about or sketch your place of greatness in the space below. Share your musings

with one or two others.

Pray It Out

Great God, I believe You're calling me to greatness.

Or at least, I want to believe it.

I'm not sure yet what true greatness looks like,

but I will follow where You lead.

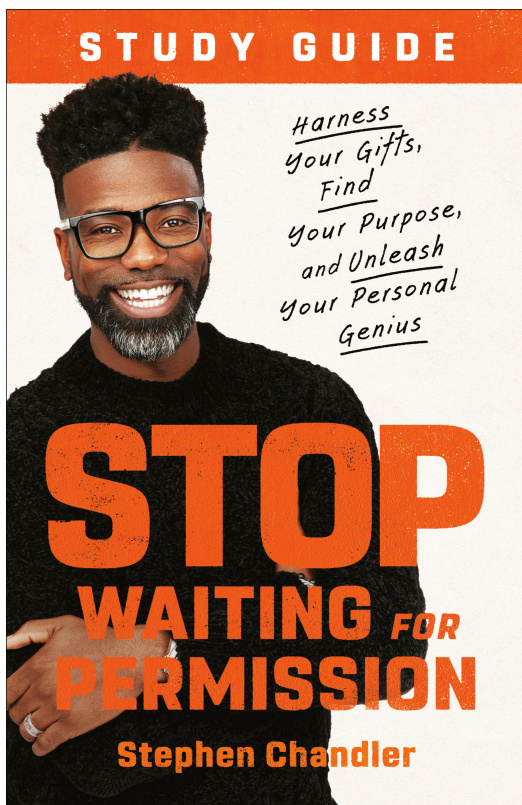
Help me respond in faith, not fear,

and dare to dream Your dreams for my life.

I want to please You and

bring You glory and honor in everything I do.

Amen.



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