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- One of the hardest things in life to do is to _____.
- We are, by nature, impatient people.
- The apostle Paul had to go through one of those “waiting” time periods. After fleeing Jerusalem in Acts 9:30, Paul was sent to his hometown of Tarsus.
- Paul is not mentioned again until Acts 11:25 when Barnabas brought him to Antioch.
- This waiting period was probably five to eight years.
- Why did Paul have to wait patiently in Tarsus? What was God’s purpose?

First, God made Paul wait to _____ him for an effective ministry to others.

- Paul had a reputation as a brutal persecutor. Such a reputation does not fade quickly.
- After his conversion, Paul had trouble finding acceptance from both believers and unbelievers. Acts 9:13-14, 22-29
- Paul could not have an _____ ministry under these circumstances, and God knew it. Paul would have to go through a preparation time period.
- This is an important principle that we see throughout the Bible.

- ⇒ One of the qualifications of a _____ is that he not be a novice. 1 Timothy 3:6-7
- ⇒ Joseph waited for years before finally getting to the place where God could use him.
- ⇒ Moses waited _____ years before God used him to lead Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.
- ⇒ Elisha waited _____ years before beginning his public ministry.
- ⇒ Jesus Christ waited _____ years before beginning His public ministry or doing His first miracle.

- There is always a preparation time period.
- What happens when we fail to understand this truth?
 - ⇒ We will push in _____ that God has closed for the time being.
 - ⇒ Instead of serving the Lord, we will only cause _____ for the Lord.
 - ⇒ We will fail to learn important _____ that God wants to teach us.

What was another reason why God had Paul wait in Tarsus?

Come back next week to find out.