



Date: _____

Series: Seeing God Through Suffering
Summer Year 2, Lesson 11

Joseph... Waiting on God

Take Home Point: *Wait on God... no matter how long!
*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Genesis 37-50, Joseph

Key Verses: Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God – those whom he has called according to his plan."

We will help kids know:

- God permits us to undergo difficult circumstances but can use them for his kingdom and our good.
- God caused good to happen through bad circumstances in Joseph's life, even though he had to wait a long time.
- When facing difficult times, we too, should wait on the Lord and trust him.




We will help kids feel:

- Comfort in difficult times, knowing that God can use those difficult times for good.
- More secure knowing they can trust God will work their lives.
- Empathetic towards others in their group as they listen to the difficult times some friends have gone through.

We will help kids do:

- Discuss difficult times they have faced while enduring the physical challenge of holding their arms outstretched.
- Examine the Bible event from Joseph's life and how he waited on God.
- Make sand hourglasses to remind students to wait on God in hard times.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Students will be challenged to endure the physical “burn” of holding their arms outstretched while discussing difficult times they have faced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a sample of the craft sand timer for this lesson, or a sand timer from the kitchen or a game
Large Group 	4 9 10	Overview Brief Drama Sketch: “How Long, God, How Long?”---Two teens or preteens present a two-minute sketch as an attention grabber. Interactive Storytelling: Kids interact in the retelling of the Bible event about Joseph suffering through years of abuse. They observe how God turned Joseph’s years of suffering into an opportunity for good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign printed with the girls’ response to the leader’s prompt (<i>p. 17</i>) sign printed with the boys’ response to the leader’s prompt (<i>p. 18</i>)
Small Group Application 	4	Students recall the events Joseph endured while suffering. They discuss how they, too, may have to wait to see God’s plan during difficulties. They make a sand timer to remind them at home to <i>*wait on God... no matter how long.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> two 8 or 12 oz. empty plastic bottles (water or soda) per child duct tape sand labels (<i>p. 16</i>) <i>Option (see p. 17)</i> two condiment cups with lids scissors glue sand

Small Group Warm Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

As kids gather: *Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.*

Supplies: *a sample of the craft sand timer for this lesson, or a sand timer from the kitchen or a game.*

Today I'm going to give you a challenge to see which one of you can hold your arms up and out to your sides for the longest amount of time.

Have kids hold their arms straight out with elbows locked and palms facing down. Begin all together. Use the sand timer to challenge kids to last longer. During the contest, have kids discuss a difficult time they have gone through such as experiencing an injury, illness, difficult family situation, or troubles with friends or at school.

As kids begin to drop their arms, continue discussing and celebrate who held theirs up the longest. Let everyone have a chance to share and then say:

When you were talking and your arms were outstretched, did your muscles begin to "burn?" Did your arms feel heavy?

That struggle can remind us of difficult times we have gone through. One of the hardest things about going through difficult times is having to wait for an answer or solution. Sometimes God does not answer our prayers or rescue us right away. Sometimes, on purpose, he asks us to wait so that we exercise our faith and determine to trust him to see how he will work it out for good.

If time, ask the following:

Can anyone think of a time when you asked God to help you and God did help, but it took a long time of waiting?

Have that student share his/her story with the group.

Today we will learn to **wait on God... no matter how long.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview

Brief Drama Sketch: “How Long, God, How Long?”—Two teens or preteens present a two-minute sketch as an attention grabber.

Interactive Storytelling: Kids interact in the retelling of the Bible event about Joseph suffering through years of abuse. They observe how God turned Joseph’s years of suffering into an opportunity for good.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Genesis 37-50 in their Bibles to recall all the bad things that happened to Joseph. The subtitles above the Scripture passages may give them answers.

How did Joseph’s brothers feel about him? Why? (Genesis 37:4. *Joseph’s brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them so they hated Joseph and treated him unkindly.*)

How did they try to get rid of him? (Genesis 37:18-28. *Joseph’s brothers threw him into a well and thought about killing him. Instead, they decided to sell him to the Ishmaelites who would sell him as a slave in Egypt.*)

What happened to Joseph once he arrived in Egypt? (Genesis 39:1. *Potiphar, an Egyptian official, bought him.*)

Read Genesis 39:2-3.

Why did Joseph become a successful man while serving Potiphar?
(*The Lord was with him.*)

What scandalous event happened in Potiphar's house? *(Genesis 39:7-12. Potiphar's wife desired Joseph who refused her advances.)*

What did she do in revenge and what was the consequence to Joseph? *(Genesis 39:13-20. Potiphar's wife lied and said that he had attacked her. Joseph landed in jail.)*

How did things go for Joseph while he was in jail? Why? *(Genesis 39:21-23. Again the Lord was with Joseph and protected him and made him successful. Joseph was placed in charge of all the prisoners.)*

What happened in prison that gave Joseph hope that he might be released? *(Genesis 40:5-14. Joseph correctly interpreted a dream that Pharaoh's cupbearer would be released from prison. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him and ask Pharaoh for his release.)*

What happened instead? *(Genesis 40:23-41:9. The cupbearer forgot about him for two years until Pharaoh had a dream that needed to be interpreted.)*

What did Joseph interpret Pharaoh's dream to mean? *(Genesis 41:28-32. God had decided Egypt would have seven years of feast and seven years of famine.)*

How did God use this situation for good? *(Genesis 41:33-44. He saved Pharaoh's people by storing food during the years when there was plenty of it to use during the years when there was none. Because of his excellent leadership, Joseph became Pharaoh's number-two ruler.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

During the years of famine, Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to get food and met their long lost brother, Joseph. How did God use this situation for good? *(Joseph forgave his brothers and showed mercy to them. He was reunited with his family. The Israelites relocated to Egypt as part of God's plan for that nation.)*

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph said to his brothers, "Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it. This was to keep many people alive, as he is doing now."

Who do you think "many people" refers to?

Do you think Joseph thought, "God forgot about me," while he was in the pit or in prison? Why or why not? *(Accept any answer and discuss.)*

How do you think God used the bad circumstances in Joseph's life to prepare him as second-in-command to Pharaoh? *(Joseph learned how to be a good manager in charge of Potiphar's house and also in charge of the prison. He learned to depend on God in all his circumstances and the Lord was with him.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Today's key verse from Romans 8:28 says, ***"We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God – those whom he has called according to his plan."***

Is everything that happens in this world good? *(No.) Why?* *(Because this world is fallen and there is sin in the world. Consequences of sin mean that there is pain, destruction, and death.)* **This is not God's will. However, for those who follow him, what does he promise will happen in every circumstance of life?** *(There will be some kind of good that God can work out of it.)*

Is it possible that good can come from a bad situation even if you can't see it or understand? Why or why not? *(God could be teaching us something. God could use the way we respond to bad situations as a testimony of faithfulness that may encourage someone else.)*

While making the craft, encourage kids to share how they eventually saw how God brought good out of a bad circumstance.

Application Activity:

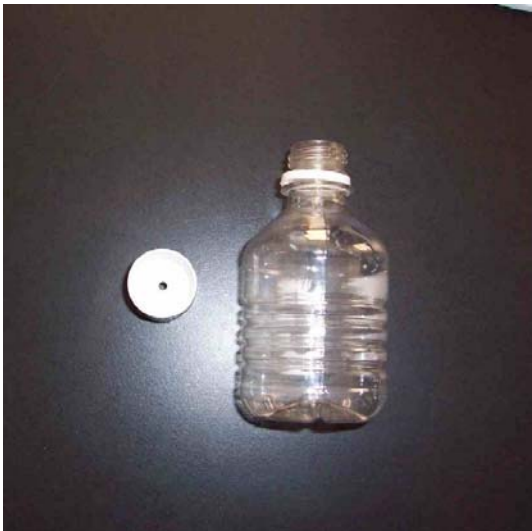
Sand-filled Hourglasses

Option 1:

Supplies needed:

- two 8 oz. empty plastic bottles (water or soda) per child with a 3/8-inch hole drilled in the center of both lids
- Duct tape
- PVC glue or Liquid Nails
- sand
- labels: "Tough times? Wait on God!" and Romans 8:28

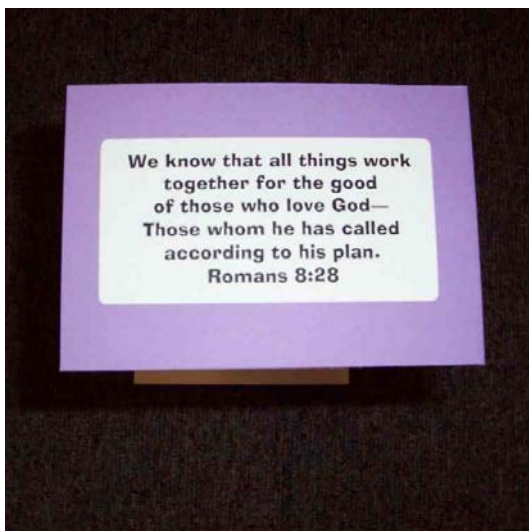
Pass out the supplies and have kids tape the caps together, re-enforcing with glue between the two caps so they don't move.



With a funnel, fill one plastic bottle to half with craft sand. Tightly screw on the taped caps and attach the other bottle.



Have kids affix each label on the bottom of each bottle.



Watch the sand move from one bottle to the other as the “hour glass” is turned upside down.

Option 2:

1. Each student needs two sauce cups and two lids.
2. Line the bottom of one cup with glue.
3. Stick the two cup bottoms together.
4. Poke four small holes through the cup bottoms spaced evenly, close to the edges. Poke a larger hole with scissors in the middle so sand can flow through.
5. Line glue around lip of one plastic lid and secure to one end or opening.
6. Add sand in the other side and secure a glued lid to that opening.
7. While these are drying, decorate labels and affix to the ends of the hourglass.

Just like Joseph going through hard times, we can learn to **wait on God...no matter how long!*

And just like God was with Joseph in all his bad situations, he will be with us. For we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for his promises, especially that he will work all things for good to those who love him. Pray for faith and strength for those going through difficult times. Also pray for empathy for others suffering.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

How Long, God, How Long? Brief Drama Sketch

Note: There will be extra people needed for this lesson. Make arrangements for volunteers to play these parts well in advance of presenting the lesson.

Purpose:

- *Grab peoples' attention and set up a need to be answered from God's word.*

Characters:

- *Two teenage girls, or girls of any age. Have them on stage with their cell phones, facing the audience but at different parts of the stage.*

Props:

- *two cell phones*

Plot summary:

The story has a simple plot line that can be remembered and acted out without memorizing lines. Ashley has been going through a year's worth of trials with volleyball. She misses a season due to an injury, and recently, she twisted her ankle and could not complete try-outs. Now, her only option for a team requires her to lie about her age, which she refuses to do. She calls Sarah and shares her story, asking the question, "How long, God, will this go on?"

Sarah ends the sketch with a note of encouragement: "As long as it takes, God will be faithful."

Story Board

Introduction

The large group presenter says,

I'd like to introduce Ashley and Sarah. Ashley has just called Sarah and is talking about the tough time she is going through.

"I'm so tired of this."

Ashley says that she is so tired of having injuries and problems with volleyball. It's lasted over a year and it's still not getting better. How long will it take to get better? Sarah asks, "What do you mean?"

“I missed last season.”

Ashley explains that last season she missed volleyball because of a knee injury. All that time, she couldn't wait for this year. She spent a whole year watching other people play volleyball when she knew that it should have been her year to shine. She had been getting much better. Sarah responds that it must have been hard to wait.

“I twisted my ankle at try-outs.”

Ashley continues telling Sarah about her frustration. She twisted her ankle at try-outs and won't be able to try out for this team. “How long does this stuff have to keep happening to me?” she asks. “I've even talked to God about it. I'm so tired of waiting.” Sarah says, “It would be a bummer to miss getting on that team, but can't you try out for another team?”

“The new team wanted me to lie.”

Ashley says she did try out for another team that was a little bit younger. They wanted her on the team, but wanted her to fill out the form and say she was younger than she really was. Ashley just couldn't lie about her age, so she didn't make the team. Now she wonders if there will be any team for her, or if she'll have to wait another year before she can play. How long does this go on? Sarah encourages her and says, “At least you still have friends that will be with you.”

“My friends are on the other team.”

Ashley says that most of her friends were on the other team and she won't see them as much and may lose some of their friendship. How long will it be until she can be on the same team as them? She says she is so tired of waiting.

Conclusion

Ashley asks Sarah, “Oh, Sarah, I've asked God to help and I don't hear an answer. How long do you think I have to wait?” Sarah responds, “I suppose you've got to wait as long as it takes. But I know this, even though you have to wait, God will never let you down.”

Seeing God Through Suffering

Interactive Storytelling

Presenter:

This leads us to the question every person asks, “Where are you, God, when I'm suffering?” God promises to always be with us, but sometimes we just don't understand what he is doing.

Today let me introduce you to a man who had lots of suffering, but through it all, God used it to help him and all of his people.

To assist me in telling the Bible event, I need audience participation.

Choose a boy volunteer and a girl volunteer to hold up signs at the appointed times.

Throughout the story, I will say this phrase: “God, that’s a rotten deal.”

Have the girl hold up the sign with the girl’s response.

Girls, I would like you to say: “Don’t you care how I feel?”

Then when I say: “God, how can you let things go so wrong?”

Have the boy hold up the sign with the boy’s response.

Guys, you say: “Like, bummer dude, you’re taking too long!”

Practice saying the leader’s line and then have kids respond with their lines at the appropriate time. Prompt the boy and girl holding the signs.

Bible Event

The life of Joseph is recorded in Genesis 37 through the rest of the book.

Joseph was his father’s favorite son. Unfortunately, this did not go over well with his eleven older brothers. So one day, when he went out to the field to see how they were doing, they threw him into a pit. Even though he did nothing to them, they wanted to get rid of him because they were so jealous. Did he get out of the pit? Yes, he got out of the pit, only to be then sold by his brothers to a caravan of slave traders on its way to Egypt. Things went from bad to worse.

How might you feel if you were Joseph?

Prompt the volunteers to hold up their signs at the appropriate time and continue in the same manner throughout the rest of the Bible event. Say with empathetic feeling:

Leader: **God, that’s a rotten deal.**

Girls’ response: ***Don’t you care how I feel?***

Leader: **God, how can you let things go so wrong?**

Boys’ response: ***Like, bummer dude, you’re taking too long!***

When Joseph got to Egypt, he was sold into slavery and purchased by an official named Potiphar. He was faithful and true to Potiphar. So honest in fact, that he was put in charge of everything in Potiphar’s house. It looked like God had everything under control and had delivered him even though he was still a slave. But was this God’s ultimate answer?

Then, Potiphar's wife desired Joseph while her husband was away. Joseph did the right thing and refused her. One might think he would be rewarded for being so honest, but that's not what happened at all. Instead, Potiphar's wife lied and accused him of attacking her.

How would you feel if you were Joseph?

Leader: **God, that's a rotten deal.**

Girls' response: ***Don't you care how I feel?***

Leader: **God, how can you let things go so wrong?**

Boys' response: ***Like, bummer dude, you're taking too long!***

Potiphar had Joseph thrown in jail even though he was innocent. While in jail, he showed he was trustworthy and a great leader. He prayed for a long time that God would someday release him.

One day it seemed his chance had finally arrived. Pharaoh's butler who was also in jail had a dream. Joseph interpreted his dream and told the butler he would soon be restored to his position of service to the Pharaoh. Joseph asked the butler, "When this happens to you, please remember me before the Pharaoh so that I can be released from jail." But when the butler was returned to his position, he completely forgot about asking Pharaoh to release Joseph.

How would you feel if you were Joseph?

Leader: **God, that's a rotten deal.**

Girls' response: ***Don't you care how I feel?***

Leader: **God, how can you let things go so wrong?**

Boys' response: ***Like, bummer dude, you're taking too long!***

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream that needed an interpreter or someone to tell him what it meant. Then the butler remembered Joseph in prison and sent for Joseph to come and interpret Pharaoh's dream. Joseph prayed that God would show him what the dream meant. The Lord revealed to Joseph that Egypt and all the surrounding land would go through seven years of plenty and then seven years of drought. And guess what? That is exactly what happened.

Seven years of plenty came over all the land and Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of saving all the surplus food for the seven years of famine that would follow. God was with Joseph all along but waited until just the right time to reveal his plan for Joseph's life. Can you see how God was in control?

During the famine, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt from the land of Canaan. These brothers who had thrown Joseph into the pit, sold him into slavery and told their father Joseph was dead.

When Joseph saw his brothers again, what do you think he thought? I'm wondering if he didn't say to himself:

Leader: **God, that's a rotten deal.**

Girls' response: ***Don't you care how I feel?***

Leader: **God, how can you let things go so wrong?**

Boys' response: ***Like, bummer dude, you're taking too long!***

Joseph didn't show his true identity to his brothers for some time (a few trips back and forth from Canaan to Egypt) but tricked them into bringing back the entire family. After Joseph told his brothers who he was, they now realized their brother, the one they abused, was the number two ruler in all the land. They were shocked and frightened and said to him, "We are sorry, Joseph. Please don't take revenge on us and kill us."

What would you have said or done to them? Would you have punished them or gotten revenge?

If you had been Joseph, what would you have prayed for during all those years that bad things happened to you? Would it have been okay to say?

Leader: **God, that's a rotten deal.**

Girls' response: ***Don't you care how I feel?***

Leader: **God, how can you let things go so wrong?**

Boys' response: ***Like, bummer dude, you're taking too long!***

Instead, Joseph said to his brothers:

"Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it. This was to keep many people alive, as he is doing now." (Genesis 50:20.)

Conclusion

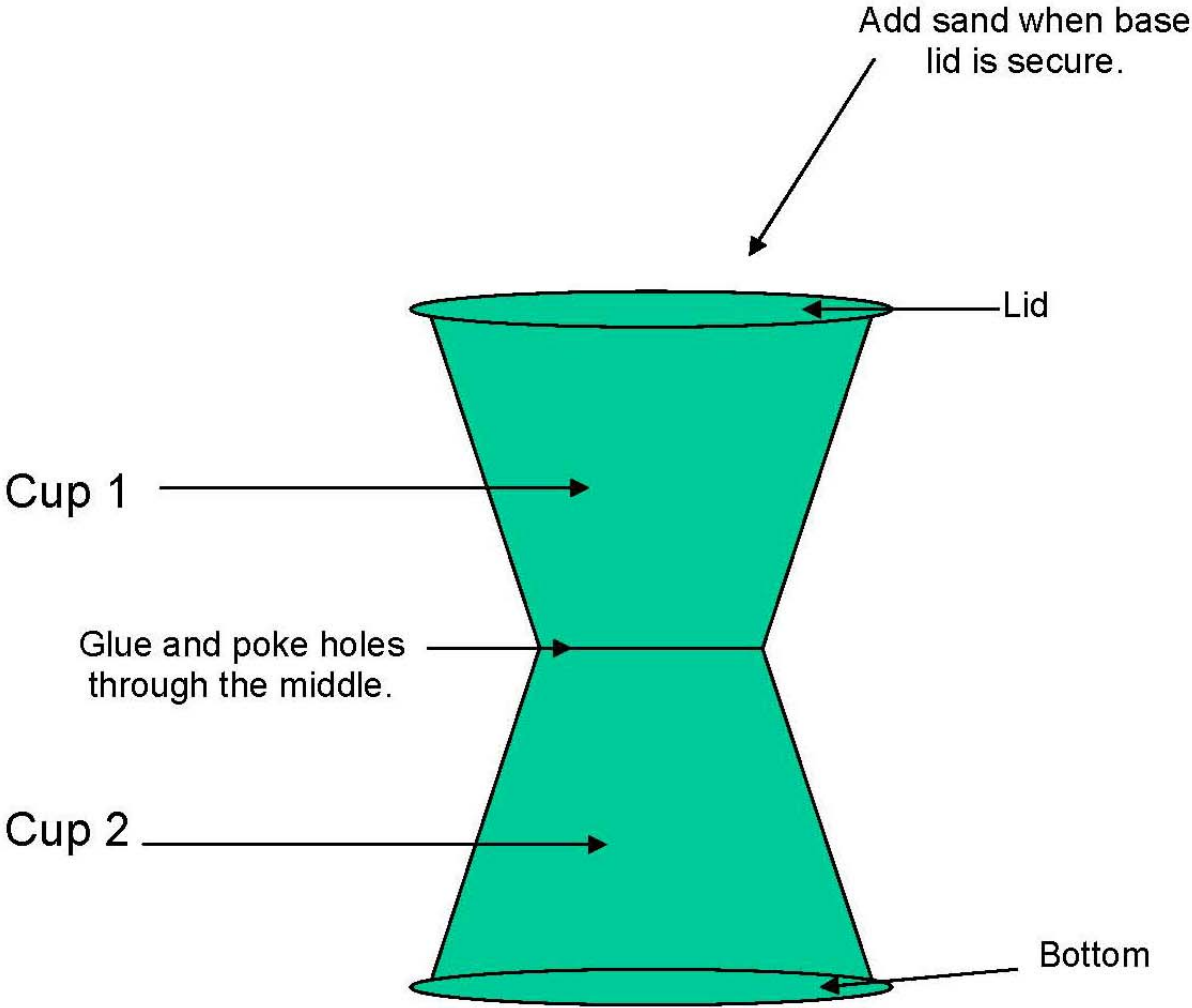
All along, God had a plan. Even though Joseph went through times of suffering, God turned those times into an opportunity that worked for his good and also saved the family.

God tells us in Romans 8:28, *“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to his plan.”*

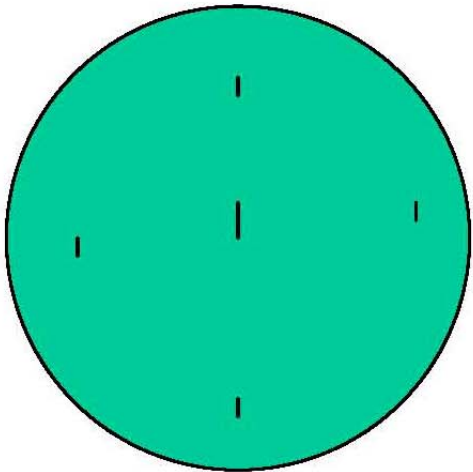
Like Joseph, we can learn to **wait on God... no matter how long.*

Let's pray:

Dear God, thank you for your promise that you will always be with us in our suffering. Help us to remember we can trust in you to work good out of bad times when we believe in Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Give us courage and strength when it seems like a long time before we see how you answer our prayers. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Top view of
holes to be
poked in the
middle.



Take home point and key verse for the ends hourglass. Print on heavy paper and trim.

End #1

Tough Times?
Wait on God.

End #2

We know that all things
Work together for the good
of those who love God –
Those whom he has called
according to his plan.

Romans 8:28

***“Don’t you
care how I
feel?”***

***“Like, bummer,
dude, you’re
taking too
long!”***