



Into the Wilderness – Understanding & Embracing the Dark Times of Your Life

Words translated as “wilderness” occur nearly 300 times in the Bible. Wilderness seasons are brutal, but God is powerfully at work in the wilderness seasons of our lives. The only question is, do we have eyes to see it?

In order for God to give us the choice whether or not to trust him, He must present us with a moment of crisis, and, since he wants us to seek help from Him, he brings us through the wilderness to remove all other help first. When we’re in a wilderness season, it’s easy to lose sight of God’s protection, provision, and preparation. We might even wonder, “How can I trust God’s goodness when I’m in this desolate place?” But remember Jesus! He went through the ultimate wilderness—the desolation and humiliation of dying under the curse of God. If that is the measure of God’s love and commitment to us, we can trust him in our own wilderness seasons. Let’s journey together!

Highland Colony Men’s Roundtable

www.MensTable.com

Making Sense of the Wilderness! – Romans 5:1-5

A Man Understands how God uses the wilderness to shape and train.

January 16, 2020

Bible Verses: I Peter 4:1,2; Romans 5:1-5; Genesis 16:6-16; Exodus 2:11-15

Music: Amy Grant It Is Well With My Soul Live on Studio B

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A4aaElenRI>

Resources: *Walking with God through Pain & Suffering* by Timothy Keller. *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* by Diane Langberg.

Videos: Band of Brothers - All The Interviews With The Soldiers Of Easy Company

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMUbf0ItDT0>

Henry Cloud on Growth and Suffering -

Restoring the Shattered Self – A Christian’s Counselor’s Guide to Complex Trauma by Heather Davediuk Gingrich.

Into the Wilderness: “God, what are you doing?”

1. **Chosen** → It is well documented of God in the Bible to lead His chosen people into the solitude and loneliness of the wilderness or desert. God’s desire is to gather a people into a holy city or kingdom, set apart for himself.
2. **Rich Meaning** → God’s range of use of the solitude and loneliness of the wilderness is wide.
 1. **Discipline** – to teach and train His chosen.
 2. **Care** → Prove His providential care of His chosen.
 3. **Devotion** → Renew or reboot His chosen’s devotion to Him.
 4. **Worship** → Restore the focus of His chosen’s worship.
 5. **Trust** → Develop trust through communication with His chosen.
 6. **Grace** → Demonstrate grace and closeness to His chosen in time of need.
 7. **Relationship** → Firmly Establish relationship with His chosen.

Into the Wilderness: Two Faces of Wilderness

3. **Running Away** → Running from one’s problems into what is seen as a safe haven.
4. **Driven against one’s will** → Taken to a place that you did not want to be or create.
5. **Moses & Hagar** → Parallel stories that illustrate God’s use of the wilderness. Both ran away from oppressive situations and family conflicts involving confusing roles. Moses ran from certain punishment for murder, after finding himself caught between his Jewish heritage and his royal Egyptian status gained through his adoption. Hagar, impregnated in place of the master’s wife, had been abused by Sarah, so she ran away into the wilderness. In both cases, Hagar and Moses encountered God, understood God by new names, received a promise, and were told to return to their difficult situations (Genesis 16 & Exodus 2-3). Hagar returned to be a slave, and Moses returned to take his place with the enslaved Israelites, and to free them from Egypt.
6. **Leaving Your Life Behind** → If entering the wilderness is one’s own choice, God takes advantage of the moment, He sends us back into the very problems from which we are running. If the wilderness experience is orchestrated by God, it leads to a more profound transformation.

Into the Wilderness: The Reason for the Season.

1. **God’s Purpose** → Christianity is the only worldview or culture that offers meaning on the experience of suffering and evil. God accomplishes his purpose through suffering, not in spite of suffering, agony, and loss. Suffering is at the heart of the Christian faith.
2. **The HOW** → Suffering is one of the main ways we become like Jesus and experience His redemption. Our suffering, despite its painfulness, is filled with purpose and usefulness. Yet, we live in a time in which the ancient idea of suffering’s usefulness is resisted.
3. Three benefits of suffering:
 1. **Produces Resiliency** → Men who endure and get through suffering become more resilient (Romans 5:1-5).
 2. **Strengthens Relationships** → Suffering bonds the sufferer permanently into a set of deeper friendships or family ties that serve to nurture and strengthen for years.
 3. **Changes Priorities & Philosophies** → Efforts to seek God, deeper relationships, and the good of society sometimes can be directly enhanced by suffering, but our freedom and comfort never are. Trouble and trials tend to force us out of certain life agendas and into others.

ACTION: Journal this!

1. What is God’s part in your wilderness experience?
2. What part of you needs to die?
3. Is there purpose in your wilderness experience?

Bible Verses – The Message

1 Peter 4:1,2 - 1 Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. **2** Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.

Romans 5:1-5 - 1 By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us - set us right with him, make us fit for him - we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. **2** And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand - out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise. **3** There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, **4** and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. **5** In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary - we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

Genesis 16:6-16 - 6 "You decide," said Abram. "Your maid is your business." Sarai was abusive to Hagar and she ran away. **7** An angel of God found her beside a spring in the desert; it was the spring on the road to Shur. **8** He said, "Hagar, maid of Sarai, what are

you doing here?" She said, "I'm running away from Sarai my mistress." **9** The angel of God said, "Go back to your mistress. Put up with her abuse." **10** He continued, "I'm going to give you a big family, children past counting. **11** From this pregnancy, you'll get a son: Name him Ishmael; for God heard you, God answered you. **12** He'll be a bucking bronco of a man, a real fighter, fighting and being fought, Always stirring up trouble, always at odds with his family." **13** She answered God by name, praying to the God who spoke to her, "You're the God who sees me!" "Yes! He saw me; and then I saw him!" **14** That's how that desert spring got named "God-Alive-Sees-Me Spring." That spring is still there, between Kadesh and Bered. **15** Hagar gave Abram a son. Abram named him Ishmael. **16** Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave him his son, Ishmael.

Exodus 2:11-15 - 11 Time passed. Moses grew up. One day he went and saw his brothers, saw all that hard labor. Then he saw an Egyptian hit a Hebrew - one of his relatives! **12** He looked this way and then that; when he realized there was no one in sight, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. **13** The next day he went out there again. Two Hebrew men were fighting. He spoke to the man who started it: "Why are you hitting your neighbor?" **14** The man shot back: "Who do you think you are, telling us what to do? Are you going to kill me the way you killed that Egyptian?" Then Moses panicked: "Word's gotten out - people know about this." **15** Pharaoh heard about it and tried to kill Moses, but Moses got away to the land of Midian. He sat down by a well.

It Is Well with My Soul

By Amy Grant

<p>When peace, like a river, attendeth my way When sorrows like sea billows roll Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say It is well, it is well, with my soul</p> <p>You can tell someone you love 'em From the bottom of your heart And believe that it's the truest thing you've known And even if you never break the promises you make The river's gonna keep on rollin' on And if you haven't got a dollar</p>	<p>Not a penny to your name Somebody's gonna miss you when you're gone And even if you never find just a little piece of mind The river's gonna keep on rollin' on</p> <p>Keep on rollin' to the ocean Keep on rollin' to the sea Keep on rollin' 'till the love we need Washes over you and me God's love is like a river At every turn and every bend</p>	<p>And faith in Him will turn your heart around 'Cause even though we sin, there's forgiveness in the end And the river's gonna keep on rollin' on</p> <p>Keep on rollin' to the ocean Keep on rollin' to the sea Keep on rollin' 'till the love we need Washes over you and me Keep on rollin' 'till the love we need Washes over you and me</p> <p>It is well, with my soul It is well, it is well, with my soul</p>
--	---	--

Philip K. Hardin, M.A., M.Div.

Director of Business & Professional Outreach, Intl. - Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, Licensed Professional Counselor, and Certified Life Coach
563 Johnson Avenue – Fairhope, Alabama 36532

Phone: 601-925-0707

Email: phil@bpintl.org

Webpage: www.bpintl.org

Into
the
Wilderness



Into the Wilderness

Understanding & Embracing the Dark Times of Your Life

Words translated as “wilderness” occur nearly 300 times in the Bible. Wilderness seasons are brutal, but God is powerfully at work in the wilderness seasons of our lives. The only question is, do we have eyes to see it? In order for God to give us the choice whether or not to trust him, He must present us with a moment of crisis, and, since he wants us to seek help from Him, he brings us through the wilderness to remove all other help first. When we’re in a wilderness season, it’s easy to lose sight of God’s protection, provision, and preparation. We might even wonder, “How can I trust God’s goodness when I’m in this desolate place?” But remember Jesus! He went through the ultimate wilderness—the desolation and humiliation of dying under the curse of God. If that is the measure of God’s love and commitment to us, we can trust him in our own wilderness seasons. Let’s journey together!

Making Sense of the Wilderness!

I Peter 4:1-2

Into the Wilderness: “God, what are you doing?”

1. **Chosen** → It is well documented of God in the Bible to lead His chosen people into the solitude and loneliness of the wilderness or desert. God’s desire is to gather a people into a holy city or kingdom, set apart for himself.
2. **Rich Meaning** → God’s range of use of the solitude and loneliness of the wilderness is wide.
 1. **Discipline** – to teach and train His chosen.
 2. **Care** → Prove His providential care of His chosen.
 3. **Devotion** → Renew or reboot His chosen’s devotion to Him.
 4. **Worship** → Restore the focus of His chosen’s worship.
 5. **Trust** → Develop trust through communication with His chosen.
 6. **Grace** → Demonstrate grace and closeness to His chosen in time of need.
 7. **Relationship** → Firmly Establish relationship with His chosen.

Into the Wilderness: Two Faces of Wilderness

1. **Running Away** → Running from one's problems into what is seen as a safe haven.
2. **Driven against one's will** → Taken to a place that you did not want to be or create.
3. **Moses & Hagar** → Parallel stories that illustrate God's use of the wilderness. Both ran away from oppressive situations and family conflicts involving confusing roles. Moses ran from certain punishment for murder, after finding himself caught between his Jewish heritage and his royal Egyptian status gained through his adoption. Hagar, impregnated in place of the master's wife, had been abused by Sarah, so she ran away into the wilderness. In both cases, Hagar and Moses encountered God, understood God by new names, received a promise, and were told to return to their difficult situations (Genesis 16 & Exodus 2-3). Hagar returned to be a slave, and Moses returned to take his place with the enslaved Israelites, and to free them from Egypt.
4. **Leaving Your Life Behind** → If entering the wilderness is one's own choice, God takes advantage of the moment, He sends us back into the very problems from which we are running. If the wilderness experience is orchestrated by God, it leads to a more profound transformation.

Into the Wilderness: The Reason for the Season.

1. **God's Purpose** → Christianity is the only worldview or culture that offers meaning on the experience of suffering and evil. God accomplishes his purpose through suffering, not in spite of suffering, agony, and loss. Suffering is at the heart of the Christian faith.
2. **The HOW** → Suffering is one of the main ways we become like Jesus and experience His redemption. Our suffering, despite its painfulness, is filled with purpose and usefulness. Yet, we live in a time in which the ancient idea of suffering's usefulness is resisted.
3. Three benefits of suffering:
 1. **Produces Resiliency** → Men who endure and get through suffering become more resilient (Romans 5:1-5).
 2. **Strengthens Relationships** → Suffering bonds the sufferer permanently into a set of deeper friendships or family ties that serve to nurture and strengthen for years.
 3. **Changes Priorities & Philosophies** → Efforts to seek God, deeper relationships, and the good of society sometimes can be directly enhanced by suffering, but our freedom and comfort never are. Trouble and trials tend to force us out of certain life agendas and into others.

ACTION: Journal this!

1. What is God's part in your wilderness experience?
2. What part of you needs to die?
3. Is there purpose in your wilderness experience?