



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

Wilderness Increases our Need for Relationship! - I Peter 4:1-2

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

January 23, 2020

Bible Verses: I Peter 4:1,2; Psalm 95; Romans 8:15-21; I Corinthians 4:14-20; I Peter 4:12, 13; Psalm 33:1-3; Psalm 147:1

Music: It Is Well - Kristene DiMarco | You Make Me Brave

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNqo4Un2uZI>

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=AMUbFOItDTo>

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

Into the Wilderness: God’s Desire – Psalm 95

1. _____ → The wilderness is not the kind of place one normally chooses for oneself, but it is God’s favored place from which to show his care and concern. It is a place that can lead to a break from our past and a fresh start through utter vulnerability.
2. _____ → God wants us to be attuned to his ways and his thoughts. Jesus did what Israel failed to do. After 40 days of trusting God in the absence of food, he would not perform a miracle to produce food, if it meant asserting himself over and against the Father. Jesus suffered temptation and learned a better understanding of who he was by experience. He began his public ministry after being strengthened in these ways, and his disciples are meant to live just as he did.
3. _____ → God’s means of transformation is thought vulnerability. God takes advantage of the moment to lead us away from the life we seek to create and to offer us something much better.

Into the Wilderness: Growing in Your Relationship with God.

1. _____ → Every apparent purpose of the wilderness—right worship, learning the law, healing from one’s past, dependency on God, etc.—is summed up by the one purpose of growing in one’s relationship with God.
2. _____ → Something like a wilderness experience is what it takes to grow in all attachments because, under normal circumstances, activities such as collecting food, taking care of personal hygiene, and even pursuing hobbies, seem more urgent than seeking proximity with others.
3. _____ → Stress is the normal requirement to trigger the attachment processes. By processes, psychologists refer to behaviors directed toward feelings or proximity to, and security in, another. Successful bids for such feelings are of the essence in healthy, secure attachments. In other words, in order for God to give His people the choice whether or not to trust Him, He must present them with a moment of crisis. Stressful situations are not a game but a matter of freeing people to become themselves in truth.
4. _____ → Through a group process of remembrance, Israel overcame an insecure attachment. She developed a coherent narrative, a story to explain God’s treatment of her as one integral whole including laws, events, the origins of the universe, and the ultimate purpose of creation.

Into the Wilderness: Why? To Glorify God.

1. _____ → The ultimate purpose of life is to glorify God. The purpose of our suffering is the glory of God (Romans 8:17-18; I Cor. 4:17; I Peter 4:13).
2. _____ → God commands us to glorify Him because it is only by doing this that we will ever find the rest, satisfaction, and joy in Him that we were made for (Psalm 33:1; 147:1). By giving God His due can we fulfill our own design.
3. _____ → Glorifying God does not mean obeying Him only because you have to. It means to obey Him because you want to—because you are attracted to Him, because you delight in Him. His beauty is attractive.
4. _____ → A graven image of God is what we must avoid—a God who always acts the way we thought He should. We often want a God who supports our plans, how we thought the world and history should go.
5. _____ → If we glorify God, we will find a rest not based on circumstances.

ACTION: Journal this!

1. What is your greatest longing?
2. What is good about stress?
3. Who do you know that is in the wilderness NOW?

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.

Psalms 95 - 1 Come, let's shout praises to God, raise the roof for the Rock who saved us! 2 Let's march into his presence singing praises, lifting the rafters with our hymns! 3 And why? Because God is the best, High King over all the gods. 4 In one hand he holds deep caves and caverns, in the other hand grasps the high mountains. 5 He made Ocean - he owns it! His hands sculpted Earth! 6 So come, let us worship: bow before him, on your knees before God, who made us! 7 Oh yes, he's our God, and we're the people he pastures, the flock he feeds. Drop everything and listen, listen as he speaks: 8 "Don't turn a deaf ear as in the Bitter Uprising, As on the day of the Wilderness Test, 9 when your ancestors turned and put me to the test. 10 For forty years they watched me at work among them, as over and over they tried my patience. And I was provoked - oh, was I provoked! 'Can't they keep their minds on God for five minutes? Do they simply refuse to walk down my road?' 11 Exasperated, I exploded, 'They'll never get where they're headed, never be able to sit down and rest.'"

Romans 8:15-21 - 15 This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" 16 God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. 17 And we know we are going to get what's coming to us - an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him! 18 That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. 19 The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. 20 Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in 21 until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

1 Corinthians 4:14-20 - 14 I'm not writing all this as a neighborhood scold just to make you feel rotten. I'm writing as a father to you, my children. I love you and want you to grow up well, not spoiled. 15 There are a lot of people around who can't wait to tell you what you've done wrong, but there aren't many fathers willing to take the time and effort to help you grow up. It was as Jesus helped me proclaim God's Message to you that I became your father. 16 I'm not, you know, asking you to do anything I'm not already doing myself. 17 This is why I sent Timothy to you earlier. He is also my dear son, and true to the Master. He will refresh your memory on the instructions I regularly give all the churches on the way of Christ. 18 I know there are some among you who are so full of themselves they never listen to anyone, let alone me. They don't think I'll ever show up in person. 19 But I'll be there sooner than you think, God willing, and then we'll see if they're full of anything but hot air. 20 God's Way is not a matter of mere talk; it's an empowered life.

1 Peter 4:12, 13 - 12 Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. 13 Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

Psalms 33:1-3 - 1 Good people, cheer God! Right-living people sound best when praising. 2 Use guitars to reinforce your Hallelujahs! Play his praise on a grand piano! 3 Invent your own new song to him; give him a trumpet fanfare.

Psalms 147:1 - 1 Hallelujah! It's a good thing to sing praise to our God; praise is beautiful, praise is fitting.

It Is Well

By Kristene DiMarco

<p>Grander earth has quaked before Moved by the sound of His voice Seas that are shaken and stirred Can be calmed and broken for my regard</p> <p>Through it all, through it all My eyes are on You Through it all, through it all It is well</p> <p>Through it all, through it all My eyes are on You It is well with me</p>	<p>Far be it from me to not believe Even when my eyes can't see</p> <p>And this mountain that's in front of me Will be thrown into the midst of the sea</p> <p>Through it all, through it all My eyes are on You Through it all, through it all It is well</p> <p>So let go my soul and trust in Him The waves and wind still know His name</p>	<p>It is well with my soul It is well with my soul It is well with my soul It is well with my soul [x3]</p> <p>It is well it is well with my soul [x3] Ahhhhhhh</p> <p>Through it all, through it all My eyes are on You Lord</p>
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Understanding & Embracing the Dark Times of Your Life

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Wilderness Increases our Need for Relationship!

I Peter 4:1-2

Into the Wilderness: God's Desire – Psalm 95

1. **God's Place** → The wilderness is not the kind of place one normally chooses for oneself, but it is God's favored place from which to show his care and concern. It is a place that can lead to a break from our past and a fresh start through utter vulnerability.
2. **Deepens Understanding** → God wants us to be attuned to his ways and his thoughts. Jesus did what Israel failed to do. After 40 days of trusting God in the absence of food, he would not perform a miracle to produce food, if it meant asserting himself over and against the Father. Jesus suffered temptation and learned a better understanding of who he was by experience. He began his public ministry after being strengthened in these ways, and his disciples are meant to live just as he did.
3. **Vulnerability** → God's means of transformation is through vulnerability. God takes advantage of the moment to lead us away from the life we seek to create and to offer us something much better.

Into the Wilderness: Growing in Your Relationship with God

1. **What It Takes** → Every apparent purpose of the wilderness—right worship, learning the law, healing from one's past, dependency on God, etc.—is summed up by the one purpose of growing in one's relationship with God.
2. **Attachment Theory** → Something like a wilderness experience is what it takes to grow in all attachments because, under normal circumstances, activities such as collecting food, taking care of personal hygiene, and even pursuing hobbies, seem more urgent than seeking proximity with others.
3. **Stress is Needed** → Stress is the normal requirement to trigger the attachment processes. By processes, psychologists refer to behaviors directed toward feelings or proximity to, and security in, another. Successful bids for such feelings are of the essence in healthy, secure attachments. In other words, in order for God to give His people the choice whether or not to trust Him, He must present them with a moment of crisis. Stressful situations are not a game but a matter of freeing people to become themselves in truth.
4. **Remembrance is Needed** → Through a group process of remembrance, Israel overcame an insecure attachment. She developed a coherent narrative, a story to explain God's treatment of her as one integral whole including laws, events, the origins of the universe, and the ultimate purpose of creation.

Into the Wilderness: Why? To Glorify God

1. **Suffering & Glory** → The ultimate purpose of life is to glorify God. The purpose of our suffering is the glory of God (Romans 8:17-18; I Cor. 4:17; I Peter 4:13).
2. **Command** → God commands us to glorify Him because it is only by doing this that we will ever find the rest, satisfaction, and joy in Him that we were made for (Psalm 33:1; 147:1). By giving God His due can we fulfill our own design.
3. **Beauty** → Glorifying God does not mean obeying Him only because you have to. It means to obey Him because you want to—because you are attracted to Him, because you delight in Him. His beauty is attractive.
4. **Projection of our Own Wisdom or Self** → A graven image of God is what we must avoid—a God who always acts the way we thought He should. We often want a God who supports our plans, how we thought the world and history should go.
5. **REST** → If we glorify God, we will find a rest not based on circumstances.

ACTION: Journal this!

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