



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: 6 Guidelines for the Wilderness – 1 Peter 4:1-2
 A Man Understands how God uses the wilderness to shape and train.

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Bible Verses: I Peter 4:1,2; Exodus 17:1-7; Proverbs 18:20, 21; Deuteronomy 31:19-21; Deuteronomy 32:46, 47; Habakkuk 3:17, 18; Numbers 11:4-6; Ecclesiastes 4:12; II Corinthians 1:1-3; I Corinthians 10:3, 4; Deuteronomy 8:1-3
Music: When My Heart Is Torn Asunder by Phil Wickman
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIYazVnnB6Y>

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.
Restoring the Shattered Self – A Christian’s Counselor’s Guide to Complex Trauma by Heather Davediuk Gingrich.
Videos: Band of brothers: Battle scene The charge
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm0C0d45yqA>

Into the Wilderness: 6 Guidelines.

1. _____ → t’s easy to not feel thankful about anything and to grumble about your circumstances when you can’t see a way out of it. This is what the Israelites did while in the desert. Consequently, this may have had a detrimental effect on them, although it probably also revealed a lot about the state of their hearts. They ended up wandering around in the wilderness for forty years. It should have only been a relatively short journey. Complaining and constant grumbling about your situation is a childish and shows a lack of faith. See Exodus 17:1-7 and Proverbs 18:20, 21.
2. _____ → When we speak out or make positive affirmations about God, even if we don’t fully believe them at the time we are saying them, we can begin to revitalize our faith in him. Later on in Deuteronomy 31:19-21, God tells Moses to write down a song, which is also known as the Song of Moses. This is towards the end of their wilderness experience. It would be easy for the Israelites to forget what God had done for them and to go back to their former ways. Therefore, this is a song of praise and thanksgiving chronicling God’s mighty deeds in leading the Israelites out of captivity and through the desert. See Deuteronomy 32:46-47 & Habakkuk 3:17, 18.
3. _____ → In Numbers 11:4-6, the Israelites began to hunger after other kinds of food to the point they were obsessed with it. They were even willing to sacrifice their freedom in order to return to Egypt to eat anything but the manna which God provided for them every day. They allowed their desire for something other than God himself to cloud their judgment and to become all-consuming that they couldn’t live without it. In effect, they had made this into an idol. This culminated in the Israelites asking Aaron in Exodus 32 to fashion them a physical idol. This took the form of a golden calf which they began to worship themselves and to declare that this had brought them out of Egypt. Quote by Tim Keller.
4. _____ → Once the Israelites left Egypt, they began to encounter difficulties in the desert. After a prolonged period of living in a constant wilderness with only manna for food, eventually they began to desire their previous state of slavery. See Numbers 11:4-6. This is one of the many places where the Israelites believed they had it better in Egypt where they were before. They began to idealize the standard of living that they had there compared to their present circumstances in the desert. As time passed, they began to have selective memories. Suddenly all they could remember was the fish and all the food they believed they had. If they had gone back, they would surely have been slaughtered. Their only choice was to continue to press forward towards the Promised Land and be content with the manna which God had provided for them.
5. _____ → It’s very easy during this time for the enemy to use your lack of community to make you feel like you’re the only one going through this and that no-one else understands. You can feel like an outcast and not a useful part of society. This makes you want to shy away from others until such time when you feel you are acceptable or presentable again. The problem is that this perpetuates a vicious cycle. We can get caught in a downward spiral by remaining isolated which simply accentuates our problem further. When we isolate ourselves, this is exactly what the devil wants. We are weaker on our own and can fall prey to the enemy’s schemes. See Exodus 17 and Ecclesiastes 4:12 and II Corinthians 1:1-3.
6. _____ → See Exodus 13:21-22 & 14:19-20. The pillar by day and fire by night was a demonstration that God was protecting his people and was continually involved in their deliverance. The pillar of cloud and fire was identified as the angel of the Lord. Quote by Corrie Ten Boom. Exodus 17:1-7 describes the incident where the Israelites were in the desert and became thirsty. They began to grumble against Moses, questioning why he brought them out into the desert to die of thirst. When we are in the desert, we need to drink. However, it’s important to drink from the right well. See I Corinthians 10:3, 4. Your own wilderness experience may not be pleasant, and these survival tips may not necessarily make the journey any quicker for you. However, know that God has not forgotten you and is working in your life. He is using the experience for your good and to work out his purposes in you. He wants you to find your identity in him alone and to make you the person you were meant to be. See Deuteronomy 8:1-3.

ACTION: Journal this!

1. What are you doing to take care of you and yours during this world-wide crisis?
2. What challenging about being at home?
3. Who do you know that is in the wilderness NOW?

Quote: In his book *Counterfeit gods*, Tim Keller defines an idol as: “... something we cannot live without ... It is anything more important than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living.”

“If we look to some created thing to give us the meaning, hope, and happiness that only God himself can give, it will eventually fail to deliver and break our hearts.”

Bible Verses – The Message

I 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.

Exodus 17:1-7 - 1 Directed by God, the whole company of Israel moved on by stages from the Wilderness of Sin. They set camp at Rephidim. And there wasn't a drop of water for the people to drink. **2** The people took Moses to task: "Give us water to drink." But Moses said, "Why pester me? Why are you testing God?" **3** But the people were thirsty for water there. They complained to Moses, "Why did you take us from Egypt and drag us out here with our children and animals to die of thirst?" **4** Moses cried out in prayer to God, "What can I do with these people? Any minute now they'll kill me!" **5** God said to Moses, "Go on out ahead of the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel. Take the staff you used to strike the Nile. And go. **6** I'm going to be present before you there on the rock at Horeb. You are to strike the rock. Water will gush out of it and the people will drink." **7** He named the place Massah (Testing-Place) and Meribah (Quarreling) because of the quarreling of the Israelites and because of their testing of God when they said, "Is God here with us, or not?"

Proverbs 18:20, 21 - 20 Words satisfy the mind as much as fruit does the stomach; good talk is as gratifying as a good harvest. **21** Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit - you choose.

Deuteronomy 31:19-21 - 19 "But for right now, copy down this song and teach the People of Israel to sing it by heart. They'll have it then as my witness against them. **20** When I bring them into the land that I promised to their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey, and they eat and become full and get fat and then begin fooling around with other gods and worshipping them, **21** and then things start falling apart, many terrible things happening, this song will be there with them as a witness to who they are and what went wrong. Their children won't forget this song; they'll be singing it. Don't think I don't know what they are already scheming to do, and they're not even in the land yet, this land I promised them."

Deuteronomy 32:46, 47 - 46 he said, "Take to heart all these words to which I give witness today and urgently command your children to put them into practice, every single word of this Revelation. **47** Yes. This is no small matter for you; it's your life. In keeping this word you'll have a good and long life in this land that you're crossing the Jordan to possess."

Habakkuk 3:17, 18 - 17 Though the cherry trees don't blossom and the strawberries don't ripen, Though the apples are worm-eaten and the wheat fields stunted, Though the sheep pens are sheepless and the cattle barns empty, **18** I'm singing joyful praise to God. I'm turning cartwheels of joy to my Savior God.

Numbers 11:4-6 - 4 The riff-raff among the people had a craving and soon they had the People of Israel whining, "Why can't we have meat? **5** We ate fish in Egypt - and got it free! - to say nothing of the cucumbers and melons, the leeks and onions and garlic. **6** But nothing tastes good out here; all we get is manna, manna, manna."

Ecclesiastes 4:12 - 12 By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped.

II Corinthians 1:1-3 - 1 I, Paul, have been sent on a special mission by the Messiah, Jesus, planned by God himself. I write this to God's congregation in Corinth, and to believers all over Achaia province. **2** May all the gifts and benefits that come from God our Father and the Master, Jesus Christ, be yours! Timothy, someone you know and trust, joins me in this greeting. **3** All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel!

I Corinthians 10:3, 4 - 3 They all ate **4** and drank identical food and drink, meals provided daily by God. They drank from the Rock, God's fountain for them that stayed with them wherever they were. And the Rock was Christ.

Deuteronomy 8:1-3 - 1 Keep and live out the entire commandment that I'm commanding you today so that you'll live and prosper and enter and own the land that God promised to your ancestors. **2** Remember every road that God led you on for those forty years in the wilderness, pushing you to your limits, testing you so that he would know what you were made of, whether you would keep his commandments or not. **3** He put you through hard times. He made you go hungry. Then he fed you with manna, something neither you nor your parents knew anything about, so you would learn that men and women don't live by bread only; we live by every word that comes from God's mouth.

When My Heart Is Torn – Phil Wickham

<p>When my heart Is torn asunder And my world Just falls apart Lord You put Me back together And lift me up To where You are</p> <p>There is hope Beyond the suffering Joy beyond the tears Peace in every tragedy Love that conquers fear I have found redemption In the blood of Christ My body might be dying But I'll always be alive</p>	<p>You have turned Mourning to dancing You have covered me with grace The struggle here May last a moment But life with You Will last always</p> <p>There is hope Beyond the suffering Joy beyond the tears Peace in every tragedy Love that conquers fear I have found redemption In the blood of Christ My body might be dying But I'll always be alive</p>	<p>When the age Of death is over And this world Has been reborn I'll be there Beside my Savior This is our great And rich reward</p> <p>There is hope Beyond the suffering Joy beyond the tears Peace in every tragedy Love that conquers fear I have found redemption In the blood of Christ My body might be dying But I'll always be alive</p>
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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@bpointl.org

Webpage: www.bpointl.org