

Finding God in the Desert

Desert times are fruitful times. Though they seem barren, lush fruit is being produced in our lives when we walk through the desert. “For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands. He knows your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing” (Deuteronomy 2:7).

As we see in this verse, God shows us who He is by what He does. We see His promises worked out in the lives of His people and know that the same God is working in our lives.

Moses is reminding God’s people of the ways God has been faithful and of how His hand has been on them every step of their forty-year journey in the wilderness. Can you relate to a wilderness journey? Life’s path takes all of us into desert territory from time to time. Sometimes the terrain is brutal and the sun scorching. We feel parched and desperate for a relief that seems not to come. And just like the Israelites, we can see God’s hand most clearly in retrospect.

When we are in the middle of a desert trek, God’s hand seems absent, blinded as we are by the glaring circumstances. But when we emerge from that leg of the journey, we can look back and see that God has watched over our every step. The journey was hard and went on longer than we thought we could bear. But here we stand. All the way through the desert, just when we thought we couldn’t last another day, God’s mercy met us in some observable way: a kind word, an unexpected provision, provision, a “chance” encounter. The assurance of His presence always came.

The desert has things to teach us. We learn things there that we can’t learn anywhere else. We see the careful provision of our Father in a different light. His love stands out in stark relief against the background of the desert’s barren

landscape. In the wilderness, we come to the end of ourselves. We learn in new and deeper ways to cling to him and wait for him. When we come out of the desert, the desert lessons stay with us. We take them with us into the next stretch. We remember the God who led us through the desert, and we know that He is with us still.

The Lord will sanctify your desert times and make them to be fruitful in your life.

RESPOND

Looking back, what do you know of God now that you would not know if you had never walked a desert?

Are you in a desert now? Can you see glimpses of God's provision?

Jennifer Kennedy Dean *is an author, speaker, conference leader and executive director of the Praying Life Foundation.*