

How God Steps In After You Can't Go On

Editor's Note: Bo Stern's husband, Steve, is fighting ALS, a rare terminal illness.

"Happy are the people whose strength is in You, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca [weeping], they make it a source of spring water; even the autumn rain will cover it with blessings. They go from strength to strength; each appears before God in Zion." —Psalm 84:5-6

Oh, this is beautiful!

As we seem to be in a season of losing strength in the natural, I feel the strength we're gaining spiritually, and it's true—there's happiness in it. Against all odds, we are finding happiness we haven't had before, and that's a deeply beautiful thing. God is using this valley of weeping in our lives to produce a source of spring water, hopefully for many.

I wonder: Where is this pilgrimage leading? Ultimately, heaven. I know that one. But I also think that having a heart set on pilgrimage is an attitude or a lifestyle. The KJV says, "whose hearts are set on the way," and the word "way" means a highway or a viaduct—a passageway that we move through.

It's easy to get stuck and stay stuck. Some people get stuck because of something bad someone says to them. Some get stuck because of a broken relationship. Some get stuck because of an illness or a bankruptcy or whatever. But it seems to me here that if your heart is set on moving, on growing, on learning, on getting to the next place, that you *will* go from strength to strength instead of stuck to stuck.

Steve has a heart set on pilgrimage and not just heaven. His heart is set on becoming something internally that he has never been before. He's not stuck in ALS. He's moving.

In fact, he's moving fast! Our hearts are set on letting the hard stuff become launching points for the next move of God, the next season of discovery. In order to do that, we have to value His presence more than we value comfort and more than we value our victim status.

As we respond to His movement, He fills us with His strength to endure the things we never thought we could endure. The decision to keep moving and growing through the Valley of Weeping is morning by morning and sometimes even minute by minute, but it's always worth it.

Are you stuck? Set your heart on pilgrimage. You'll find happiness and strength along the way.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of the newly-released *Beautiful Battlefields* (NavPress). She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Ore.