

Secrets to Turning Your Wilderness Season Into Springs of Joy

The wilderness does not have to be a lonely place for a child of God. It's an expedition God means for us to travel in partnership with one another. Israel experienced Egypt, the Red Sea and the Sinai deserts together as a very large family. "I would not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea ... [into] the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:1. 5b). It's the same for us today.

God did not intend that the members of Christ's body suffer hardship alone. We belong to one another and must feel one another's joys and pains. That is the nature of a body. "If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the part rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26). So during seasons of adversity, when pressure is unusually thick, emotions thin and relief scarce, we need the strength of our spiritual family to help carry the weight of the burden. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

During his congregation's spiritual wilderness, the author of Hebrews said, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). Once isolated in a spiritual desert, we become especially vulnerable to discouragement and deception.

Have you ever watched a wildlife documentary where lions are hunting on the Serengeti, for instance? You will often see how a lion waits for one of the poor creatures on the fringes to separate itself from the herd. The lion will single out the

one who strays away from the group because the lion knows that there is safety in numbers—and the devil knows this too. The Bible says that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Those who isolate themselves become an easy meal for Satan. In times of pain and hardship, without the support of the body, he knows that we can easily fall prey to his temptations and traps.

One day as I was reading about the armor of God in Ephesians 6, I had a revelation. The passage tells us that God has provided armor for the head, the feet, the chest and the waist, and He has also given us a shield and a sword. But then I saw something I had never noticed before: All the protection is facing forward; there is no armor protecting the back. At first, I found this very peculiar, and then suddenly, verse 18 jumped out at me, “Praying in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” This verse, which is mentioned in the context of the armor of God, says that we are supposed to be looking out for one another and defending each other in the battle. There is no back armor because we are supposed to have each other’s backs. If God equipped us in such a way that we need others to watch our backs, then it is clear He never intended that we go into battle alone. God created us to need one another. This is why if you are going through a trial, a battle or a barren season, you need to surround yourself with brothers and sisters who will pray for you and watch out for you with purpose and perseverance.

So when evaluating your resources, consider your spiritual family. Take stock of your closest comrades and harness the power of their presence and voice. Even the experts of physical survival emphasize this point. They encourage an appraisal of your team’s gifts so everyone can contribute effectively to everyone else’s survival. When we find ourselves in spiritual survival mode, we must do the same.

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*This Bible study has been taken from Daniel Kolenda's booklet
Surviving Your Wilderness and is for those who want to
discover God's way for conquering their wilderness times.*