

Wilderness Season: 7 Hidden Blessings

A good friend of mine is going through a challenging season. He lost his job several months ago, his severance has ended and many of his calls to prospective employers are ignored. Even though he has money in the bank and food on the table, anxiety about the future sometimes steals his sleep. At times it feels like God is ignoring his calls, too.

"You are in an uncomfortable wilderness season," I told my friend today. "But don't forget that God is in the wilderness."

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All the great heroes of faith passed through a wilderness. Abraham wandered there for years while waiting for God's promise. Moses was prepared to lead while he was in the dry Sinai desert. David hid from Saul in a wilderness—yet he wrote most of his psalms in those desolate places. And Jesus faced His biggest confrontation with Satan in a wilderness.

The wilderness is God's training ground—and no one who wants to grow spiritually can avoid that wilderness. It's a place of rigorous discipline and painful delay, and yet once we pass through it we find answered prayers and indescribable blessings. In the wilderness we are formed and shaped and hammered and chiseled. Our pride is shattered, and our faith is tested by fire.

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Do you find yourself in the middle of a spiritual desert? Is

your faith being stretched and tested so intensely that you feel like fainting? I've known that feeling, and so have all the saints led by God to endure the fiery furnace. The wilderness isn't fun, and we don't choose it willingly. Yet when God leads us there, it can bring us unexpected benefits. Here are seven of them:

– **Your hunger for God will intensify.** Psalm 63:1b (NASB) says, "My soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Palm tree roots can spread 100 feet from the base of the tree because they seek scarce water in the desert. When you are going through a dry time, remember that your roots are extending outward. Spiritual thirst causes spiritual growth!

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