

3 Reasons You Might Be in the Wilderness Right Now

We all walk through peaks and valleys—and we all have our **wilderness** experiences. But there's a big difference between being a voice crying in the wilderness in obedience to God and finding yourself stuck in the wilderness, going around the same mountain over and over (and over).

I've experienced both realities, and I can tell you the former is liberating because you know you are smack-dab in the center of **God's will**. The latter is frustrating because you know you're absolutely missing it somewhere.

Of course, if you don't have a revelation of why you are in the wilderness—if you are antsy for your big ministry debut, even though it's not God's timing—then you could be frustrated even in the will of God.

So, how do we interpret our wilderness experiences? With the help of the Word of God and the **Spirit of God**. I'm offering up a few possibilities here. There may be others. The important thing is not to play guessing games about the season you find yourself in. You need **revelation** and understanding that you can hang your faith on while you go through the wilderness so you don't faint and give up.

1. Unbelief and Rebellion Will Leave You Wandering in the Wilderness

Sometimes you find yourself wandering in the wilderness year after year after year. It feels like you are going around the same mountain over and over (and over). That may be because you are. Remember, it was a three-day journey from the Red Sea to the **Promised Land**, but the Israelites wandered around in the wilderness, circling Mount Seir, for 40 years.

Why did it take so long? One reason was unbelief. The Father was prepared to take them into the Promised Land after two years, but 10 of the 12 spies Moses sent into the Promised Land brought back an evil report of unbelief (Num. 14). God waited until all the unbelieving men of war died, just like He said He would (Deut. 2:14).

Psalms 78:17 also notes that the Israelites rebelled against God in the **wilderness**. And Hebrews warns readers, "Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years" (Heb. 3:8-9). If you have been in the wilderness for years, ask the **Holy Spirit** if there is unbelief or rebellion in your heart.

2. God Is Waiting for His Perfect Time to Reveal You

John the Baptist seemingly spent much of his life in the wilderness. Luke records this about John: "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke 1:80).

John was the one Isaiah prophesied about: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" (Is. 40:3). We know John did just that, as Mark pulled out Isaiah's words when introducing John, who "came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:4-5).

John's public ministry lasted only months after the day of his manifestation to Israel. Herod murdered him, but not before he fulfilled his ministry as a forerunner of Christ. Now, John was not in the wilderness because of anything he was doing wrong. John's manifestation to Israel was a matter of God's timing.

Think about it: John was prepared in the wilderness. He received revelation in the wilderness. He learned humility and obedience in the wilderness. He built a strong relationship with God in the wilderness.

If you find yourself in the wilderness right now, take heart—it may be that God is preparing you for something marvelous. Take the time to get to know Him because that relationship will serve you well after your revealing.

3. God Is Positioning You for Greater Power

The **Holy Spirit** Himself may drive you into the wilderness for a season. That's what happened to Jesus. Matthew records, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1).

Satan offered Jesus three temptations that are common to man today. Jesus did not bite on the devil's bait. He wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to send the enemy packing. He resisted the devil's temptation, and the devil fled. But look what happened next: "Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region" (Luke 4:14).

Jesus was already baptized in the **Holy Spirit**, but he gained power through His wilderness experience. He went into the synagogue and essentially declared His public ministry. When He left there, the first thing He did was cast out a devil. The next thing was healing people, followed by preaching.

If you find yourself in a period of temptation, use the Word of God and the power of the **Holy Spirit** to resist the devil, and know that God wants to take you to a higher place.

David spent much of his life in the wilderness, either tending sheep or running from Saul. David did what other wise men have done during wilderness times: He got closer to God. When you

land in the wilderness, check your heart and take joy in fellowshiping with God like David did in Psalm 63 when he was in the wilderness of Judah: “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory” (vv. 1-2). Amen.

Jennifer LeClaire *is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including The Making of a Prophet. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.*