

A Simple Truth to Help You Win Your Fierce Spiritual Battle

Do you feel like you just stepped into the wilderness? It can be a scary place to be if you're not aware of what's actually happening in the spirit realm. The wilderness can feel lonely, cloudy, confusing and just plain stretching (read: exhausting). With it comes a battle, whether you recognize it as that or not. The onslaught of lies you may be hearing in a season like this can feel never-ceasing, like you fight one, and just when it's over another one hits you. What helps me in the wilderness is to know that the battle is for a reason way bigger than what I can see right now, and holding onto that vision gives my pain a purpose.

Where Does the Battle Come From?

The devil always stations giants right in the middle of our God-given purposes, and the Lord often endorses them. Yep, you read that Jesus' wilderness experience? It was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. It was God who was picking a fight with Satan. God lured the devil into a brawl by weakening the flesh of Christ with a 40-day fast. Then Jesus beat the devil at his own game (see Matt. 3:16-4:11). Before you freak out about the idea of God putting you in difficult place, stick with me and let me explain why it's actually a good thing.

Of course, in any war there are always two agendas operating. Often when we find ourselves in these epic battles in the wilderness, where our souls are being tested to their limits, we ask whether it was God or the devil who led us there. The answer is yes—God and the devil both have a plan for us in the “dark night of the soul,” though they intend entirely

different outcomes. The question is, with whose plan will we side? It is only after we have faced the devil in the wilderness, believed God and won our personal victory that the Lord can trust us with any kind of public promotion.

Could it be that your current battle is a test to show you just how strong you are in Christ, and therefore a way to prepare you for promotion?

Identity Is Tested

You'll notice that as soon as Jesus received God's divine endorsement in His identity and calling as the Son of God, He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to meet the devil in the mother of all battles. I want to propose to you that this was not a coincidence. The Bible is pretty silent about the 30 years leading up to this confrontation and this seems to be the first major conflict Jesus encountered. But at His baptism, the preparation of those 30 years was complete. Christ, after hearing His Father speak to Him from heaven about being His beloved Son, immediately encountered a demonic voice that questioned His identity as the Son of God.

The dogs of doom always lie waiting at the doors of our destiny.

Lean Into the Process

Between God's promises in our life and the palace of our divine purpose is always the process that molds us into the person we need to be to stay seated in the palace.

Joseph Garlington said, "God closes one door and opens another, but it's hell in the hallway." It is in the "hallway" that we need to remember the words of the apostle Paul, who was all-too-familiar with "hallway" experiences. He wrote, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ ..." (2 Cor. 2:14).

We often quote verses like this, but we forget that there is no victory without a battle, no testimony without a test and no miracle without an impossible circumstance. God leads us in triumph by leading us into battles, tests and impossibilities! It was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness. So what is it that God is calling and leading you to?

Your Identity Is Your Weapon in Warfare

So how do we partner with God's purpose for us in the wilderness instead of falling into the traps of the enemy? It all comes down to our identity as sons and daughters of the living King! Is it not true that all anxiety, fear and torment in a Christian's life can be traced back to the fact that we have forgotten who we are and/or whose we are? This brings us back to what we learned from the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. The enemy's devious strategy was to try to get Jesus to question who He was.

If you are dealing with anxiety, torment, fear, low self-esteem, depression or any other negative emotion, it is very likely that you have forgotten that the Creator of the universe loves you. Do not entertain the enemy's questions about how valuable you are. As Pastor Bill Johnson says, "Any thought that does not inspire hope is rooted in a lie." Let's stop believing lies! Let's embrace the truth and live in peace.

Today I want to encourage you to ask God for a truth about your identity in this season. Write it down, keep it on your phone, put it up on your bathroom mirror. Holding that truth in front of yourself everyday will help you come out of the hallway in victory! Are you in a wilderness season? I'd love to hear about it in the comments. {eoa}

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