

If I Encounter Resistance, Am I Out of God's Will?

We've all heard clichés such as, “Where God guides He provides” or “What God ordains He sustains.”

And while there is an element of truth in trite adages such as these, they can often give a false impression that if someone is in God's will, everything will be easy. This misunderstanding can cause a person to constantly question God's call and His will.

What happens when the bank account is empty and challenges arise on every side? Do we then conclude that God is not with us? Should we turn back or quit when the going gets rough?

Following the call of God does not guarantee that we will not encounter difficulties and hardships. In fact, the reality is quite the opposite. Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble” (NIV). Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12 that everyone who lives a godly life will suffer. But in the midst of the suffering there is peace, and every difficulty we encounter shapes our character and brings us closer to God.

Many people are familiar with the verse “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom.8:28). But many do not realize that when the apostle Paul penned those words, he was actually talking about suffering and hardships. He was saying that even these difficulties work together for our good if we love God and *are called according to His purpose*. Being in God's will does not guarantee that we will evade trouble and adversity, but it does guarantee that every trial we face will be an agent of God's love, actively working for our good in the end.

The Scriptures are full of stories about “wilderness” experiences great men and women of God endured. The accounts of their hardships and difficulties are not simply incidental digressions. They are central elements of their stories because God used the wilderness to transform these ordinary people into heroes of the faith.

Jesus in the Wilderness of Temptation

In Luke 4 we read about the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Verse 1 says, “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” As I have already pointed out, Jesus was *not* led into the wilderness by the devil. The verse says He was led into the wilderness by the *Spirit*!

Many times when we find ourselves in a wilderness experience, we immediately begin rebuking the devil. But it may actually be God leading us into the wilderness. Why would God do this to us? Why would He do this to Jesus? It is because of the next thing I would like to point out in Luke’s rendition of the temptation story.

Luke 4:1 says that when Jesus went into the wilderness, he went in “full of the Holy Ghost.” But at the end of the story, when Jesus came out of the wilderness, it says, He “returned *in the power of the Spirit*” (v. 14, emphasis added). There is something about the wilderness that produces powerful men and women of God. The wilderness is God’s training ground, and it is often a prerequisite for promotion. Even Jesus had to go through it.

It is one thing to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have the potential to do great things for God. It is another thing altogether to have walked through the valley of the shadow of death and to emerge victorious on the other side.

There is a big difference between an army cadet in basic training and a battle-hardened veteran, between a new recruit

and a war hero who has been tested and tried and has earned his stripes and scars with valor. When you have been through the crisis of faith and experienced God's provision and power, when He has brought you up out of the miry pit and set your feet on the rock, when He has proven His faithfulness to you over and over again, you will emerge from the wilderness knowing and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit that is within you.

This Bible study has been taken from Chapter 16 of Daniel Kolenda's book, Live Before You Die. {eoa}

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