

DON'T WASTE YOUR WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES



- We will all at times go through wilderness experiences
- God allows us to go through wilderness seasons for a purpose. To prepare us so that we can embrace all that God has planned for our life and to develop character in our life

I will begin by looking at a passage of Scripture in Deuteronomy



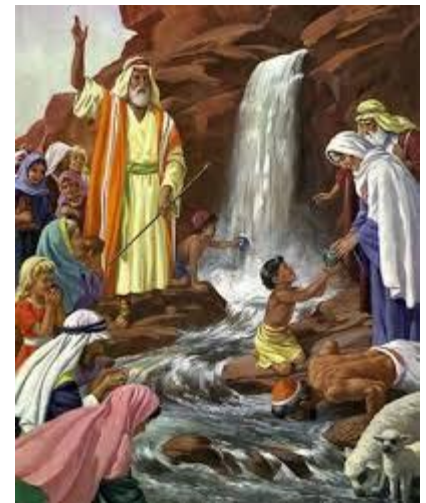
"Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. (V1) And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." (V2)

(Deuteronomy 8:1-2)

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. (V3)
Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” (V4)
(Deuteronomy 8:3-4)



“who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; (V15) who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—” (V16)
(Deuteronomy 8:15-16)



When we look at Deuteronomy 8:1 we see that;

- God wants the best for us and for us to enjoy fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11), and
- That God wants us to multiply and to possess the land (To be fruitful in our walk with the Lord)



"Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. (V1)

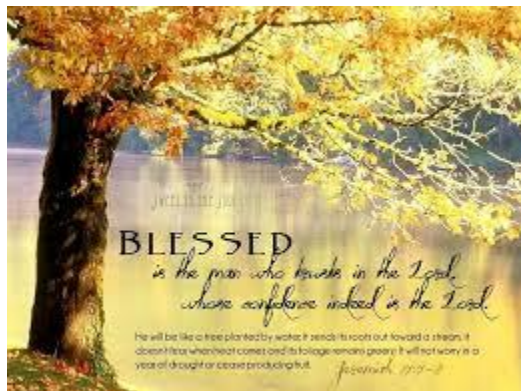
- **We need to learn to KEEP Depending on God**

**In the book of Jeremiah we read,
“Thus says the LORD:**



**“Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes
flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the
LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and
shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit
the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land
which is not inhabited.” (Jeremiah 17:5-6)**

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.” **(Jeremiah 17:7-8)**



- **God needs to first humble us and to strip us of all things before we can enter into the promised land and the fullness of God's blessings**
- When we look at Deuteronomy 8:2 we see that God allows us to go through the wilderness seasons to humble us so that we become God dependent. Our wilderness seasons are for a purpose



“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” **(Deuteronomy 8:2)**

Invariably the wilderness experiences that we go through in life precede a promotion from God.

Sometimes some of the most challenging times in our life are when we are on the point of a major breakthrough in life.

We must first be prepared and tested prior to promotion in God’s Kingdom



During our wilderness seasons;

- i) We will be forced to walk by faith as we find ourselves in situations that only God can deliver us out of**
- ii) We will be forced to forgive others who hurt us**
- iii) We will be removed from our comfort zones**
- iv) We will find that no matter what we try and do to make things work, we will see no breakthroughs in our life and circumstances. There appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel**



During our wilderness experiences;

- iv) We find that all of our usual support networks appear to have been taken away from us so that we are forced to grow in our intimacy with the Lord. Where Jesus becomes our best friend
- v) We come to the realization that we can do nothing without God's help and intervention. This is where the call of God is tested
- vi) We are forced to become God dependent. This is when we learn what it is to totally surrender our lives to Jesus**



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.” **(2 Corinthians 1:8-10)**



It is during our wilderness experiences that we are forced to die to self and to trust God totally

- The greater the ministry God has for our life the greater the wilderness period will be



- **We cannot avoid the wilderness seasons of our life if we are to fulfil God's destiny for our life**
- It is during the wilderness times that the call of God is tested. Are we prepared to persevere and allow God to do the work of change in our lives, or do we run from our circumstances and call
- **All great men and woman of God have gone through extensive wilderness experiences**

- Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness as God prepared him to lead the Children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt.



- The bible says that he was the most humble man in the world.

In the book of Numbers we read,

**“(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)”
(Numbers 12:3)**

- David spent 13 years in the wilderness after being anointed by the prophet Samuel to be Israel's next King. (1 Samuel 16:1-13)
- After being pursued by King Saul he escaped to the cave of Adullam, living there for a while. (1 Samuel 22:1-2) After 13 years of continual persecution he eventually became King of Judah on the way to becoming Israel's greatest king.
- The bible says that he was a man after God's own heart.



In the book of Acts we read,

“And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’ **(Acts 13:22)**



- **Joseph had two dreams of greatness when he was just 17 years of age**



- However before these dreams were fulfilled Joseph went through 13 years of rejection, false accusations and unjust imprisonment before he was finally promoted to a place of great authority in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh (***Genesis 37:1 to Genesis 41:40***)



- **Through this experience however, he became a great and humble, God dependent leader**

- **Joseph's great humility and God dependence can be seen in his response to Pharaoh in the following passage of Scripture;**

“And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” **(Genesis 41:15-16)**



Even Jesus Himself spent forty days in the wilderness prior to commencing His ministry here on earth. We see this in the gospel of Mark;


**“Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.”
(Mark 1:12-13)**



- For each of us our wilderness experiences will be different – But whatever they are they will invariably drive us to prayer and cause us to become God dependent.



- It is during the wilderness seasons that we learn that only God can change our circumstances
- For some it can be continual relationship challenges, for others a season of financial lack where it seems like there will never be a breakthrough, for others it may be health issues

- To be tested by God is a positive thing
 - **A test with God means a trial that God allows us to go through to take us to the next level**
 - During trials we can react in wrong ways and lose our patience. Areas of weakness are also highlighted when we experience trials and temptations in our life.
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- **It is during trials that we are forced to cry out to God for His help – To become God dependent**

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

(Hebrews 4:14-16)



- It is during our wilderness seasons that we experience God's supernatural provision in many different ways



- **We learn that GOD is always able to meet our every single need in life, even when our circumstances seem impossible**
- It is during the wilderness times, when we see God's ability to provide our needs, that we learn to TRUST and depend on God

- **God's willingness and ability to provide our every need in life during our wilderness experiences, was clearly seen with the Children of Israel;**

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. (V3) **Your garments did not wear out on you**, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” (V4) **(Deuteronomy 8:3-4)**



During our wilderness times we learn that *God is able* to meet our needs in many different ways

- God allows us to go through the wilderness experiences in life so that we can grow in our faith and Christ-like character, so that we can embrace the fullness of what God has planned for our life as we learn to depend on Him
- **It is crucial that during our wilderness seasons that we:**
 - Do not become bitter
 - Do not get envious or jealous of others,
 - Do not become discouraged or cynical in life, and
 - Do not allow wrong attitudes to develop in our heart



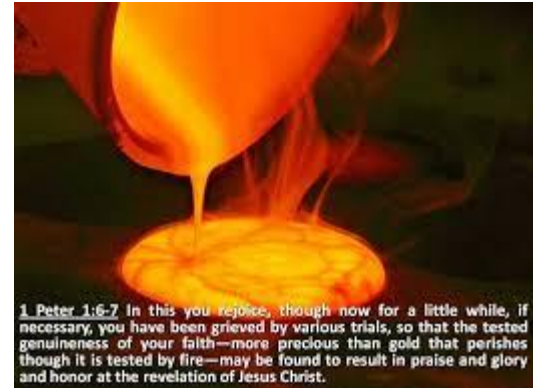
In the book of James we read,

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.” (James 1:2-4)



The Apostle Peter wrote,

“In this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.



1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. **(1 Peter 1:6-9)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:28-29)**



During our wilderness times we:



- Need to develop a thankful attitude
- **We need to keep our focus on God's promises in His Word and keep persevering in our prayers**
- We need to keep trusting God and continue doing what He last told us to do
- **We must refuse to become envious or bitter when we see others being greatly blessed by God.** We too will enter a season of God's blessings once we have gone through the wilderness season and maintained a right heart

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)



- It is during our wilderness seasons that we find out that God's strength truly is made perfect in our weakness



- **We need to simply learn to fully TRUST God at all times. He is both willing and able to help us.**
- It is through developing a childlike dependence on God during our wilderness seasons that God is able to usher us into the fullness of what He has planned for our life. We then also begin to see God's blessing and favour upon our lives in a far greater dimension.

SO IN CONCLUSION



- May I encourage you not to waste your wilderness seasons.
- **During our trials and challenges in life we must choose to maintain a right heart and to trust God.**
- As we do we will invariably see the breakthroughs that we need in our life, so that we begin to fully embrace all that God has planned for our life after we have learned to become GOD DEPENDENT.
- **God always knows what is best for us and has a future full of purpose and meaning for each and every one of us.**

- **We must simply learn to trust and obey for there is no other way to live as a believer**
- It is as we learn to let go of control of our life and to allow Jesus to be truly Lord of all of our life during our wilderness experiences, that we begin to see the fullness of God's blessings and favour upon all that we do in life

The Apostle Paul wrote,
“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)



The greatest lesson that we learn in our wilderness seasons is that we can do nothing without God's help as a believer

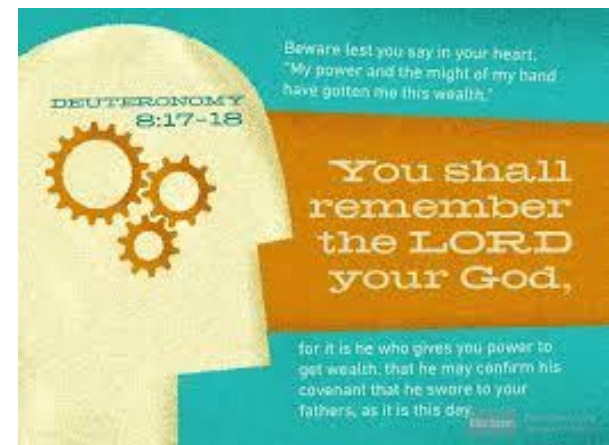


- When we let go and let Jesus be Lord of all, we truly find that His *yoke is easy and His burden is light* and that He will meet our every need in life as we simply trust Him and let Him lead
- **We also learn to enjoy the journey in our walk with the Lord. As Christians we are in a marathon**
- When we come into our time of God's blessings and favour we must simply never forget that it is God who enables us to do great things for His glory

I will finish with two more passages of Scripture;

In the book of Deuteronomy we read,

“And you shall remember the LORD your God,
for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth,
that He may establish His covenant which He
swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.”
(Deuteronomy 8:18)



Jesus Himself said,

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” **(Matthew 6:31-33)**



- God will always make a way where there seems no way
- Our wilderness seasons will invariably come to an end.
- May I encourage you to not waste your wilderness seasons, but that you would grow stronger in your walk with the Lord as you go through them
- In doing this you will begin to see all that God has planned for your life coming to pass in the days to come and begin to see the fullness of His blessings and favour upon your life

