



A Gentle Whisper

Focus A “wilderness experience” can be described as a season marked by disappointment, frustration, suffering or challenge. God always has a specific purpose for each of our wilderness experiences.

Open What is the hottest, driest place you have ever visited?

Read After their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites lived in the wilderness for 40 years before they occupied the land God had promised to them. Ongoing circumstances that seem to run contrary to the promises of God in our lives can often feel like a wilderness. We need to recognize that the wilderness is not so much a *place*, as it is a *condition of the heart*.

The wilderness is a place of *preparation*. The Jews knew the wilderness was where you went to meet with God, examine your life, repent and straighten your path. In order to face the giants in *our* Promised Land, we must first become prepared in the wilderness.

The wilderness is a place of *frustration*. The children of Israel grew tired of its routine and sameness. Moses experienced weariness and felt unable to carry the burden of the people any longer. As He did for the Israelites, God has provision for us in the wilderness. We will never be prepared for where God wants to take us until we’re at peace with where God has us.

The wilderness is a place of *inspiration*. To “inspire” means to “breathe into.” God speaks in the wilderness. To hear the voice of God, we must be silent, be still (relax) and really listen by eliminating the noise in our lives. God speaks to us in a gentle whisper in the wilderness.

Talk

1. Think of a time or circumstance in your life that felt like a wilderness. Describe how it felt. What questions were you asking in your heart?
2. Read Isaiah 40:3 and Deuteronomy 8:1–8.
 - a. What do these passages tell us about God’s purpose, provision and promise in the wilderness?
 - b. Why does God want to “straighten our path”?
3. According to Numbers 11:4–6, “the rabble”—a group of non-Israelites who accompanied the Israelites out of Egypt—initiated criticism of God’s supernatural, daily provision of manna (food). What kind of people do you want speaking into your life when you’re in a wilderness? Why is your choice of friends so critical during wilderness experiences?
4. God intended to personally speak to the children of Israel, but they were afraid and sent Moses on their behalf (Exodus 20:18–19). It’s all too easy to stay at a distance from the presence (and voice) of God. Why might we be afraid of God’s presence and hearing His voice? What would keep us from getting closer to Him?
5. Read Psalm 46:10. How would you describe what this verse means as it plays out in your life? What must you practically do to be still before God? (Where do you go? How do you quiet your heart? Etc.)

Live

Think again to a time or circumstance in your life that felt like a wilderness experience. What did God speak to your heart in that time? How did the wilderness experience change you?

Pray

Quiet your heart before the Lord and ask Him to speak to you, especially related to any “wilderness” experiences you’re currently facing.