

EMBRACING THE DESERT SEASON



The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. (Isaiah 35:1-2).

Every person experiences desert seasons in their lifetime, both physically and spiritually. During desert seasons you may feel everything has come to a standstill – as if the favour you previously experienced from the Lord has stopped or departed from you. Suddenly close relationships with dear friends and spiritual companions feel distant and empty. These are the times when God considers your works and fashions your heart (Psalm 33:15). Times of desert seasons do not necessarily mean we have done something wrong.

During a desert season we can become aware of a deep desire that we do not want to live without God, and an understanding that we cannot live without Him. These seasons gently force us to give God our undivided attention. You may find you have been unexpectedly released from a busy schedule or responsibilities. You may feel without purpose especially if your previously busy schedule was a fruitful season of your life.

Endurance that pleases God

Still, desert seasons cut to the heart of our spiritual intentions and aspirations. They confront the 'I' that is on the inside. What am I leaning on for support? Do I find my identity in my ministry or what I can do for God? Have I become used to the guidance or admonishment of others after I have ministered? God wants us to lean solely on Him. He reveals the intentions of our hearts, draws us closer to Him again, and forms our hearts to be strong for the days ahead when life will not be easy. How do we endure our desert seasons in a way that is pleasing to our Lord?

Learn to sing

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her...she shall sing there. (Hosea 2:14-15). Do not yield to the natural tendency to feel depressed, even for one moment. Learn to sing with all your heart.

Lord, draw me into singing Your praises all the day long.

Feast from His hand

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (John 17:17). As Elijah was fed by the ravens, when you are in a desert season, you become aware that nothing really satisfies in this world except God. Spend time reading Scripture.

Jesus, You alone are the bread of life. Sanctify me by Your Word day and night in this season.

Resist the devil

Thoughts of worthlessness may run rampant in your mind: leaving your work in the kingdom, taking a 'normal' job, or ending your life. The voice of the enemy will tell you that everything is hopeless and there is no way out. Satan is the father of lies, and he will bombard your mind with them. The only way for you to overcome is by God's Word, as Jesus did in the desert (Matthew 4).

God I am drawing near to You, please draw near to me. Strengthen me with might in the inner man to discern the voice of the devil and resist him in Your name (James 4:7-8).

Embrace the season

But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31). Embrace your desert season wholeheartedly by the grace of the Lord Jesus. See the tremendous value of this season in your life and thank God for it.

Father, strengthen me to wait on You for as long as You want me to. Thank You for this season to renew my strength, lest I lean upon the arm of flesh and turn away from Your ways without even noticing.

Invite God to show you your heart

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. (Psalm 51:6). During this time God will show you areas in your life and heart that need to change. Cooperate with His Spirit and invite Him to change you deep on the inside. Ask Him to remove every barrier that is keeping you from Him and His purposes for you.

Father of mercy Your desire is my desire, show me my heart, cleanse me again, and let me know and love You more.

Keep a record

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." (Psalm 27:8). When God seems silent, it is to help you refocus your heart upon Him again. Write down the thoughts of your heart, your prayers, those things that seem like barriers between you and God. Keep a record of what He says to you. Take time to simply wait in His presence, listening expectantly.

Lord I seek Your face, speak to me the words of Your heart.

Pray the Word

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:11-12). Pray God's Word aloud. This is God's season with you, personally. Pray from Scripture to the Lord, sentence by sentence.

Lord, I desire diligence to believe the gospel until the end of my life. Help me not to become sluggish, but imitate those who have gone before me, to have the same patience and faith to inherit all Your promises.

Remember

Even in the driest desert, the toughest place, there is beauty. The country of Namibia is known for its desert rose: a beautiful sand rose, formed by the scorching sun and wind. Give thanks to the Lord for every season of your life, even the desert ones.