

Melva's Corner

HOW TO COME OUT OF YOUR DESERT PLACE

November 20, 2006

(Isaiah 43:19)

Central Truth: God has a plan for you!

There are times when we find ourselves in a spiritual "dry" spell. No rhyme or reason to it, just something that happens to us all. Some call it "depression," others are just tired and uninspired.

Sometimes it is like slogging alone through the desert under a hot sun, nothing to drink or eat, not even knowing at times what it is we need. We just know that we need SOMETHING.

Sometimes in those times we forget to pray, or we are too discouraged to pray, but take heart! The desert experience is actually a positive thing!

I would like to suggest 10 steps that may give you the encouragement you need:

1. Accept the fact you are God's creation — There are those who would like to be different and spend time and money in the process. Although it is good to take good care of your appearance, when it becomes an obsession, you can get depressed wondering why you can't look like somebody else. Remember, God loves you just as you are!
2. Accept God's forgiveness — One of the main ways to beat depression is to have peace of mind. As you find sins in your life, you must confess them. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us." (1 John 1:9)**

3. Look at yourself through God's eyes — Thank Him for His presence in your life and believe what His Word tells you about His love for you.
4. Remember Paul's words of encouragement — **"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."** (Philippians 4:13) God's power is working in you and through you even when you don't see or feel it.
5. Try visualizing how God is perfecting you — Resist the temptation to think about yourself as a failure. We all have failed in one way or another. Think of yourself as someone growing in Christ. Remember the bumper sticker: "Be patient with me; God's not finished with me yet."
6. Write down your goals and dreams — Ask God to help you with your goals. If you want to lose weight, to kick a bad habit, or improve yourself, then write down your goals; with God's help, you will be determined to achieve them. Reaching targeted goals always bring satisfaction.
7. Be positive — With Christ you should anticipate ultimate success. Avoid those who are always complaining, irritated, or criticizing. They are contagious.
8. Anticipate the abundant life God has in store for you — God has a plan for you. Romans 12 reveals this wonderful truth. The plan is flexible, giving you the option to fill in the blanks. God will help you build your life!
9. **"Seek first the Kingdom of God"** — **Matthew 6:33** makes it clear that you cannot sell out to greed or selfishness. Kingdom business should come first; God has promised to provide for your needs. Do not do it backwards. If you run after things, you will never have enough. Seek God and you will have everything.
10. Surrender your life to God and serve people — To a depressed lady, a friend suggested that she should start giving away her prize orchids to a nearby nursing home. When she died, the local paper said: "Orchid lady dies leaving hundreds of friends."

We will celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday this week. Why not prolong that feeling throughout the year? You have heard it said that happiness is a choice. Why not make it your choice?

Need more help? Here you go:

- When you are in the desert, feeling spiritually dead, God is watching over you **EVEN MORE: Deuteronomy 32:10** — "He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye."
- When you are in that "desert place" and feeling defenseless, God is protecting you, ready to do battle with anyone or anything that may do you harm. **Joshua 8:14** — "It came about when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hurried and rose up early and went out to meet Israel in battle, he and all his people at the appointed place before the desert plain. But he did not know that (there was) an ambush against him behind the city." The ambush was divinely planned for Ai's men by God to protect His people
- Satan is at the ready when you hit these times in your life; You need to be extra vigilant, using the tools God has given you, such as the Bible, friends, worship and prayer. **Luke 4:1-2** — "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry." Notice that Jesus was led around by the Spirit. Though tempted He emerged victorious.
- You can rest in Him, by knowing that God is in control and has your best interest at heart. You can further remedy any wrongs that you may have done, through confession or by making amends. **Isaiah 40:3** — A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."
- With God, all will be made new, alive, fresh as the morning. In other words, tremendous spiritual growth can happen in the midst of our dry desert. I have found this to be especially true for me. **Isaiah 43:19** — "Behold, I will do something new, Now

it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.”

- **You can look forward to a period of richness and radical joy if you rest in the knowledge that "this too shall pass". God is with us. Isaiah 51:3 — “Indeed, the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.”**

So there you have it. We can praise God in our "desert places"! We are not alone, we are protected, we are vigilant, we prepare, we are reborn, and we rejoice!

And when others wonder about the sparkle in our eyes and the spring in our step, we are more than happy to give God the glory! Happy Thanksgiving!

Scriptural References:

"Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)