



Day One: No Wilderness Wanderings

After finishing with last week's devotional, I stumbled upon a brilliant quote which I just have to share with you all. It takes us back to the context of the first day's devotional last week (week seven).

This devotional, (called 'His Presence Was in the Wilderness'), spoke of the 'wilderness experience' theology which seems to permeate the church. This is a theology which tells us to expect a period of time in which God's Presence feels distant, as He draws us closer to Him.

I believe that the truth is that His Presence is ever available, whether or not we are going through difficult situations and circumstances. And we can experience His Presence so richly, that we won't even feel like we're in a desert at all! The key is what we believe, because if we believe that we should expect a wilderness period of not experiencing the love and the Presence of God, that's exactly what we'll get. But if we believe that God wants us to 'know and believe' the love God has for us (John 4:16), then we'll know that He doesn't tell us to do something and then make it impossible for us to do it. Christianity is actually so simple when we just let the Word show us the way.

I was reading a classic Christian book called *The Practice of the Presence of God* which is written about Brother Lawrence, who was a monk who was well known for experiencing and enjoying the love and the presence of God.

I am neither promoting the book or agreeing with everything Brother Lawrence believed, however this quote by the publishers preface grabbed my attention:

"His conversion, at eighteen, was the result of the mere sight on a midwinter day of a dry and leafless tree standing gaunt against the snow; it stirred deep thoughts within him of the change the coming spring would bring. From that moment on he grew and waxed strong in the knowledge and love and favour of God, endeavoring constantly, as he put it, "to walk as in His presence." No wilderness wanderings, no bitter winter seasons of soul or spirit, seem to have intervened between the Red Sea and the Jordan of his experience."



So here, those who knew him or studied his life, could find no evidence of a 'wilderness period' in his life. From the time He first knew God until the day of his death, his walk was filled with the constant and increasing experience of God's love and presence. This was a man who had known and believed the love God had for him.

What does that tell us? That it's possible! That there is not a mandatory wilderness experience we have to wait years to get through until we can expect to really hear His voice. That God desires at any moment of every day, to fulfil the promise that He inherently gave us when He instructed us to know and believe the love that God has for us.

Expect to experience His love and His Presence. Pretty soon you will know and believe it and no one and no situation will ever be able to take it away from you!

Now back to where we were up to...



If you have settled for a wilderness experience before, go to God and ask Him to show you His great willingness to share His Presence with you. Believe for a constant and increasing experience of God's love and presence. And if you've already done this yet have not experienced His Presence, don't be discouraged. Just simply let the frustration or questions go, choose to believe and meditate on the Word regarding His love for you. Pretty soon, this experience will be yours. Record your prayer to God:



Day Two: Reason #2 God Created You!

The second reason you can be in no doubt whatsoever of God's individual love for you is the fact that He created you in the first place! YOU! Unique, amazing, incredible, YOU! In fact, the Bible says that He Himself actually knit you together in your mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13 – 16 (AMP) *For You did form my inward parts; You did knit me together in my mother's womb. I will confess and praise You for You are fearful and wonderful and for the awful wonder of my birth! Wonderful are Your works, and that my inner self knows right well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colours... Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.*

Psalm 139:13 – 15 (MSG) *Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God – you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvellously made! I worship in adoration – what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, the days of my life prepared before I'd even lived one day...*

He created you, and yet He didn't make you a carbon copy of anyone else. Just think about the tenderness, love, consideration and care which has gone into the creation of every single individual on the face of the planet. No two people alive – not now, in the past or yet to be born – look the same. God established a new 'mould' for every single person. Each and every person has been created with their very own combination of facial structure, bone structure, skin colour and hair colour. Every single person has their own unique set of fingerprints, cornea and vocal chords. And that is only some of the physical aspects.



If we were to start considering the uniqueness of our personalities, strengths, gifts, abilities and dreams, we would soon realise that there are so many endless combinations, God could never exhaust it. And yet He was the one who sculpted and formed every single person who is alive or has ever lived.

Does this tell us that God is the God of the individual? Can we understand that when the Bible talks about God's love for 'us', it can only mean God's love for each and every one of His precious children whom He hovered over and sculpted into life with uniqueness, purpose and destiny? God loves YOU! And He's so very glad that He made you!

Soak Time

Look around you at the endless variety of people God has created. Each and every one, God spent time over, made decisions about, formed and loved. Yet can you see even one who is just like you? How does this make you feel?

Re-read the scriptures in Psalm 139. Now close your eyes, and see God in your heart hovering over you, making decisions about you, forming you, sculpting you and making you an individual. Can you see His love for you and His pride for you as He goes about this work? What do you see?



Day Three: Reason #3 God Shows No Partiality

We can again be confident in the individual love of God for us, when we realise reason #3 - that God shows no partiality between people. He sees treasure in every single person He has created, because He put that treasure there.

Whether or not we choose to believe in that treasure and to live in the light of it is up to us. But when God sees us, that's what He sees. We are created differently, but not higher or lower than anybody else.

Acts 10:34 (AMP) *And Peter opened his mouth and said: Most certainly and thoroughly I now perceive and understand that God shows no partiality and is no respecter of persons..."*

The definition of partiality is twofold:

- Unfair bias in favour of one person or thing; favouritism. Synonyms include: bias, prejudice, favouritism, favour and partisanship, unfair preference, discrimination, unjustness, unfairness or inequality. In other words, He is not prejudiced against any of us.
- A particular liking or fondness for something. Synonyms include: fondness, weakness, soft spot, inclination, predisposition. In other words, He does not favour us over others.

At the time of Peter receiving this revelation from God, he thought they (the Jews) were God's favourites. It was almost inconceivable to him and to the Jewish people to discover that God in fact favoured the Gentiles as much as He did the Jews, as He offered salvation to both the Jews and the Gentiles. What's more, the Gentiles had done absolutely nothing to earn it! The Jews had attempted to follow God's leading and His laws through many generations and it looked to them as if they were the only ones who would ever experience the light of God's favour. But God's grace just proves that He shows no partiality to anyone. Grace is offered to ALL, which is how YOU could be saved. If that were not the case... if God did show partiality, it wouldn't be grace! And God would not be God!



Grace is clearly shown in the Bible as an attribute of God, and something which comes through Him to be offered to all. The fact that it is offered to all, without prerequisite is what actually makes it grace. Here is one of (many) such scriptures:

John 1:16 (NIV) Out of his fullness we have all received grace...

- **See:** 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Corinthians 5:10; 2 John 1:3.

God is God, and grace is His invitation to all people, regardless of who they are, and what they have done.

Titus 2:11 (NIV) *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.*

Can you see it? If God offers grace to one person, He offers it to all. If God offers love to one person, He offers it to all. It is just who He has and it is how He operates and the very fact that you are saved (by grace) proves it!



Did you receive your salvation by grace? Yes No

If God offered you the same grace as He offers everyone else, do you think that He could possibly have a different love for you than He has for others? Why?



Day Four: There is Still No Partiality

I'm going to continue on this subject because I know very well that one of the biggest lies satan repeatedly brings is the sense that God is all loving and all powerful but somehow we're not sure if that power and love extends to us. We kind of expect Him to do these great and wonderful things for others, but we're not sure we'll get to experience them ourselves. Underlying this fear is the feeling that somehow God has favourites, and we're not one of them. But this is not true. So let's continue looking at reason #3: God Shows No Partiality.

Yesterday we saw in Acts 10:34 where Peter realised that God did not offer the covenant and blessings of salvation to only one man or one group of people. He realised that the invitation to the covenant of salvation was issued to all – Jews AND Gentiles - and that the only difference was what? Whether THEY would act on it. Look at the very next verse.

It goes on to say in **Acts 10:35 (NKJV)** But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

(Note: This refers to a reverential fear and respect for God, not a fear OF Him).

In other words, God would reject no man, no matter who he was and where he came from. His invitation was not exclusive. It was – and still is – given to all. The question was whether or not they would receive it. They had to decide if they would be a 'whosoever'.

Whenever God gives the choice to mankind, we can be sure that He has already issued the invitation. Consider the many times in the Bible which states that 'whosever' or 'whoever' (depending on the translation) chooses to believe something will have it.

John 3:15 (NKJV) ...that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.



John 11:26 (NKJV) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?

It doesn't say that whoever believes will have... IF God decides He wants to extend the promise specifically to them. His promises and His love have already been extended and the invitations have already been issued.

One of the most incredible ways in which we were made in the image of God is the fact that He has given us the power to CHOOSE. The fact that the choice is ours is echoed throughout the Bible, and God never gives any other clauses because His choice has already been made. Our choice is the only variable in the process.

Deuteronomy 30:19 (NIV) I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Choose life. Choose salvation. Choose God's love. That's all you have to do. God has offered all things to us – including His love – and it is all contained in our salvation.

Let's stop thinking about salvation as a ticket to heaven. Our salvation contains absolutely everything that God can ever offer anyone. Jesus' sacrifice was a complete work. He didn't just die to get us an out of jail free card and then leave us to work out how to feel loved or get prosperity, healing and the other blessings spoken of in the Bible to work in our lives. The same grace which offered each and every one of us salvation is the same grace that offers each and every one of us all the precious promises of the covenant and the Kingdom of God because it is ALL contained in salvation.

All the love God has shown for any one person is contained in your salvation. All the healing that God has ever demonstrated to any one person is contained in your salvation. All the provision God has ever provided for any one person is contained in your salvation. Jesus has already done all He ever needs to do for



you to have anything and everything God has ever promised to anyone, and You already have it all. It's when you are willing to believe that you are a whosoever and you believe and acknowledge this, that you'll see it manifest in your life. Whether it is peace, healing, provision, or a knowing that God loves you, the conditions are the same.

When you choose to believe that God loves YOU, then you'll begin to experience it in your life.



'All the love God has shown for any one person is contained in your salvation.' How does this statement make you feel? Can you imagine this?

Do you believe that God's grace has already extended to you every single invitation for any single thing – including His love – that God can offer you? Do you realise that He is waiting only for you to choose? Are you expecting any other 'clauses'?



Day Five: There Never Will Be Partiality

So we can see that God has offered us grace, which in itself contains no partiality because it is available to all. But also consider this. God did not even show partiality or favouritism to Jesus. God asked Jesus to lay down His life for US! If anything, doesn't that make us look like the favourites?

We've already seen in **John 17:23 (NLT)** that Jesus said to God that the world would know that '*you love them as much as you love me.*' Imagine that! There's no difference between how God feels about Jesus and how He feels about you and I. That is an unimaginable love!

In *Romans 8:29 (NIV)* The Bible also calls Jesus '*the firstborn among many brothers and sisters*'. In other words, God sees us ALL as His children. He didn't even favour Jesus – Jesus was simply the first. He was simply the eldest. I have a question for you, and if you have more than one child, this will be easy to answer.

How do you choose one child over another? Do you give benefits to one child while neglecting, hurting or ignoring another? Can you love one child more than you love them all? Do you love your eldest child more than you love your youngest child?

I don't know about you, but the love I have for each and every one of my children is the complete measure of the love that is contained in my heart. I give all that I have to give to each one of them. I could not possibly love one less or more than another, because it's God's love flowing through me.

In fact, God's love is agape love. It's very nature is that it's endless and unconditional. When we love our children with God's agape love, this quality of love that we have for our children will be endless and unconditional. This is why we can't love one child more than we love another. We may share



particular interests and pursuits with one child more than another, but our sense of their value and worth to us because of our love for them, won't change.

And that's also why God cannot love one of His children more or less than another. His agape love is simply... love! There's no lesser or greater versions of it. It just is. Endless. Unconditional. Unimaginable. Unfathomable. And if we, as human parents, love all of our children the same, how could we possibly conclude anything else other than the fact that God – the perfect parent – loves all of His children the same! All of us! That includes YOU!

So never again lack confidence in God's individual love for you. It's impossible for Him to not love you as much as He loves Jesus and as much as He loves anyone else. It's true. Now, will you believe it?



It's time to answer this question: God loves you as much as He loves Jesus and as much as He loves anyone else. He loves you with an endless, unconditional, unimaginable and unfathomable love. Now, will you believe it? Express your heart to Him below.
