

HERO or VICTIM - Trauma As a Tool for Transformation

Restoration of our soul comes when we begin our relationship with God through His Son Jesus. Restoration of our heart and mind continues because of this secure attached relationship. So much Christian teaching tends to focus on right beliefs and right choices as the key to personal growth but biblical evidence and modern brain science show that our *character is shaped more by whom we love than what we believe*. The Book of Isaiah will help us see how the promise of salvation would come through the Messiah. But in addition to bringing pardon for sin, intimate relationship with Jesus renovates us wholly—mind, will, and emotion. This study is about showing how we can train our brains to relate to God based on a joyful, mutual connection with Jesus which will lead to emotional, relational, and spiritual maturity.

A Man understands that our brains are wired to relate to God based on a joyful, mutual connection with Jesus which will lead to emotional, relational, and spiritual maturity.

Highland Colony Men's Roundtable
www.MensTable.com

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Bible Verses: Jonah 2

Music: Lauren Daigle - In Christ Alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ch6eXkQWU8>

Resources: Renovated – God, Dallas Willard & the Church That Transforms by Jim Wilder
How People Grow - Henry Cloud, John Townsend

Video: Brennan Manning Live At Woodcrest

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQi_IDV2bgM

"You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again." – Isaiah 58:12 – The Message

There is not much solace in a wilderness (traumatic) experience – it sucks! There are so many Biblical stories where every one of them questioned God, doubted God, or ran from God!

Elijah, Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jonah, David, Samson, Hosea, et al....and Jesus!

All true saints go through a wilderness experience (trauma) in their life; some more than others and nobody would choose it and we all want to avoid it or run from it.

The experience of every great traveler on the spiritual path, is that the wilderness (our trauma) is a place through which we must travel in order to *reach a place of greater intimacy with God*.

In the wilderness we question everything we ever learned - How can a loving God allow this to happen to me? Have I been fooling myself all these years? Does God really exist? Why doesn't He show Himself, and take some kind of action, and mount a rescue mission?

JONAH: From Victim to HERO.

1. _____ → The story of Jonah kicks off with the clear calling of the prophet to Nineveh, but Jonah refuses and runs away on a ship. When the storm comes, he hides below deck sleeping. Even after called up by the crew men, they have to cast lots to point him out as the troublemaker - the one who has offended the gods. Finally, he accepts responsibility and this moment marks his acceptance of the call. Yet his running away had brought him right to the edge of the threshold between safety and uncertainty – literally between dry steady ground and stormy waters.
2. _____ → Jonah's chance for proving his worth comes as God once again calls him to Nineveh. As the big fish spits him out, he rises seemingly from the dead resurrected as a new prophet. This time he heeds the call and obeys. He preaches to the city and the entire city turns to God and is saved.

THE TRANSFORMATION PUZZLE - TRAUMA WILDERNESS

Probably the two most significant miracles that occur in our hearts in the wilderness are these:

1. The first miracle we experience is the realization that _____ - every believer eventually discovers the reality of God's love in the desert.

2. The second miracle we experience is _____ - As everything else in our life is stripped away, we see Christ! And the more "we feast of the Living Word" the hungrier we become, and the more we want to know Him in deeper ways.

"In Spiritual formation we are aiming at a character and life that is so shaped that the deeds of Christ routinely and easily come from what is inside." - Dallas Willard

Soul searching and _____ are the things that takes place in the wilderness.

We all want a predictable God; that if we're good, He won't allow bad things to happen to us! We're not into having a God who lets bad things happen to reasonably good people... so the wilderness experience makes us ponder whether we can trust and love God when bad things happen to us.

Another lesson we learn in the wilderness, is that we learn to give up our illusion of a God that will make life easy for us... a God that will do what we want Him to do... a God of our own liking and making.

Five Things _____

1. Life is hard.
2. You are not that important.
3. Life is not all about you.
4. You are not in control.
5. You are going to die.

The 16th century Spanish mystic “St. John of the Cross,” writes in his notable work *The Dark Night of the Soul* - “Souls begin to enter into this dark night when God draws them out from being beginners.”

The ultimate purpose of the wilderness is not only to develop a deep transforming faith, but to develop a profoundly energetic and

By the way, there are “no religious crutches” for us to lean on in the desert; “no religious activities” in which to hide our true condition. The truth is, we do not need religion; we need to “know Christ intimately” — and intimacy only happens when we are completely alone with Him in the wilderness, where there is nobody else to turn to except Him. “I will never leave you nor forsake you”. Forsake literally means _____!

Four Observations about the Wilderness

1. God always takes care of His people in the wilderness.
2. If you remain in the wilderness (trauma), you will eventually die _____.
3. The wilderness has but 1 goal: to sift us, reduce us, and strip us down to Christ alone - _____
4. The wilderness is a symbol of “new beginnings.”

There are 10 stop points on the journey to wholeness (Christian maturity) from George Barna’s book Maximum Faith

1. Ignorance of the concept or existence of sin.
2. An awareness and indifference to sin.
3. Concerned about the implications of personal sin.
4. A decision to confess sin and ask Jesus Christ to be savior. **It is worth noting that about 2/3rd of American “Christians” are stuck in one of these four stops.**
5. A commitment to faith activities (aka Churchianity) - Another quarter of Americans are at this stop. **This means that nearly 90 percent of Americans are stuck at one of the first five stops and are not experiencing the other five stops that bring maturity.**
6. **A prolonged period of spiritual discontent. (Wilderness experience)**
7. An experience of personal brokenness.
8. A decision to surrender and submit fully to God.
9. Enjoying a profound intimacy with the love for God.
10. Experiencing a profound compassion and love for humanity.

In general, Christians in America are not experiencing what God intends for them. Put another way, mostly what we have today is another religion called Churchianity – it is not the God of the Bible, it is not the God revealed in and through the Living Word, His son Jesus Christ!

Every believer eventually discovers the reality of God’s love in the desert.

ACTION: Journal This

1. What are the most hurtful and damaging experiences/relationships of your life?
2. What did you learn about handling emotions in your family?
3. What has most helped you to heal from past hurts?

Bible Verses – The Message

Jonah 2 - 1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. **2** He said: “In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. **3** You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. **4** I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’ **5** The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. **6** To the roots of the mountains I sank

down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit. **7** “When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. **8** “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. **9** But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’ ” **10** And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

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