

INTRODUCTION

Surviving in the valley is different from thriving in the valley. God wants us to thrive and come out the other side stronger, wiser, more committed, and more determined. We all walk through valleys and times of difficulty in our lives. Scripture teaches us five things we need to know about valleys, starting with the experience recorded by David in Psalm 23.

First, valleys are inevitable. It is unrealistic to expect that life will be without problems, but we have no reason to fear because God will be with us (Ps 23:4). Living in this world means we will have tribulation, but the Lord has overcome the world (John 16:33). Second, valleys are unpredictable. They do not show up when we have the time and resources to deal with them. We are often unprepared and inconvenienced by these times. Third, valleys are impartial. It does not matter who you are or what you have done. Valleys happen because you are human. The sun rises and rain falls on both good and bad people (Matt 5:45).

Fourth, the good news about valleys is that they are temporary. They have an expiration date. No matter how they feel, we will get *through* them. Our affliction lasts for a moment, but it works to bring about glory (2 Cor 4:17). You can choose to be thankful during a trial, knowing that God will be glorified. Fifth, valleys are purposeful. God will use your valley for a purpose because He created you with a purpose. You can get through valleys by trusting in God's Word, refusing to panic or be fearful, and resting in the fact that God is always with you.

GETTING STARTED

1. How does the world handle going through valleys? How is that different from how Christians should handle it?
2. Which of the five characteristics of valleys stood out to you the most and why?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. Has going through a valley ever caught you by surprise or felt unfair?
2. How have the valleys in your life brought glory to God and brought you closer to God?
3. What makes it difficult for you to trust God at times and believe He is with you always?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What can you do this week to help you become more thankful to God and less fearful?
2. Who in your life is going through a valley, and how can you encourage them with what you gleaned from this message?
3. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Psalm 34:1-6; Isaiah 43:2; Matthew 5:45; John 16:33; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; James 4:14; 1 Peter 4:12.

RENEW YOUR MIND

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Psalm 23:4