

A Valley Means a Wrong Turn

10 Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe, Part 9
July 30th, 2017

When faced with a “valley experience,” there are generally two options: **STICK IT OUT** or **MOVE ON**

What Does A Valley Mean?

Many Christians believe a long-term valley, the kind we can avoid or wiggle out of if we so choose – not those out of our control – could **NEVER** be a part of God’s long-term plan

Many assume that God’s leading always takes us to the **MOUNTAINTOP**; therefore, a lingering valley means a **WRONG TURN** (which is to be gotten out of ASAP)

Proverbs 19:3 (GN) “Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid actions and then blame the LORD.”

James 1:2-4 (NIV) “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Most understand hardships are a natural part of life, but something **CHANGES** when the deep and lengthy valley is **OUR** valley

Why Am I HERE? (There are different kinds of valleys)

- **GOD Sent Me Here**

The distinguishing trait is **OBEDIENCE** that appears to have backfired

Examples: God sent Jacob’s family into Egypt to live with Joseph, Jesus after His baptism, etc.

When God puts us in deep weeds, we’re right where **GOD** wants us to be, even if we aren’t where **WE** want to be

- **I MESSED UP**

This is a self-induced darkness that follows a **REBELLIOUS** or **FOOLISH** decision

Examples: The nation of Israel and King David

It’s almost always easy to find the **CONNECTION** between the wrong turn and the valley

God wants us to know **WHERE** we went wrong; it’s the only way we’ll ever get back on track

- **This Is BEYOND My Understanding**

This valley or trial makes **NO SENSE** at all, i.e. “Who knows why?”

Examples: Job’s story and a strange event after Israel occupied the Promised Land

How Should I RESPOND?

- “God sent me here” valleys always call for **HANGING TOUGH**

In this case wiggling out or running away is **NEVER** a good option

Examples: Jonah, Abraham, and Daniel

Even if obeying God’s clear leading is what puts us in a bind or keeps us in a bind, **CONTINUING** to obey is still the only thing to do, even if it seems to make things **WORSE**

Never judge the appropriateness of obedience by the short-term or even lifelong results; judge it by **ETERNITY**

- “I messed up” valleys call for a serious **CHANGE IN DIRECTION**

These valleys are almost impossible to get out of until we do two things: (1) take personal **RESPONSIBILITY**, and (2) make some serious **CHANGES**

We must start heading in a **DIFFERENT** direction – not just feel sorry – but actually start **DOING** things differently

Example: The nation of Israel under the control of the Ammonites

Judges 10:16 (NIV) “Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And He could bear Israel’s misery no longer.”

“I messed up” valleys never get better as long as we **BLAME** others or God & keep **MESSING UP**

“I messed up” valleys don’t go away the **MOMENT** we start heading in the right direction; sometimes they take far **LONGER** to get out of than they did getting into

- **“This is beyond my understanding” valleys call for walking in CONTINUED obedience to God**

Even when we don’t understand or things don’t make sense, obedience to **GOD** is the answer

Example: Daniel and Joseph

- **Refuse a SHORTCUT no matter what kind of valley you are in**

Example: Jesus when tempted by Satan in the desert

The key to successfully resisting is to determine **AHEAD OF TIME** that we won’t take one of the enemy’s shortcuts no matter how inviting it looks

If you wait until you are at the crossroads to make up your mind, you will lose the **BATTLE** with temptation

There are always two ways out of every trial; the enemy’s shortcut, which always involves compromise or disobedience, and the way of **ESCAPE** God promises to all who walk with Him 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NAS) “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

The enemy’s shortcuts usually work **WELL** in the short run but **NEVER** in eternity; God’s path of escape (a pathway called faith & obedience) **SOMETIMES** work well in the short run, but they **ALWAYS** shine bright in the light of eternity

What Can I LEARN?

- A valley of injustice helps us identify with the **SUFFERINGS** of Christ
- A valley of pain prepares us to **EMPATHIZE** & **SUPPORT** others who face the same thing
- A valley of suffering teaches **OBEDIENCE** and **TRUST**
- A valley of self-induced hardship can serve as a **WARNING** to never go there again

As you ask for insight into what you could learn, rather than constantly look for ways to get out, the **LIFE LESSONS** open up more

James 1:3-5 (NIV) “...because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

As long as you have to go through valleys, you might as well get **SOMETHING** out of it Hebrews 5:8 (GN) “But even though He [Jesus] was God’s Son, He learned through His sufferings to be obedient.”

My Next Step Today Is:

- I am in a valley. I will ask & seek answers for these three questions:
Why am I here? How should I respond? What can I learn?
- I am interested in taking “Financial Peace University” beginning this Monday, July 31st at 6:30 pm
- I am interested in joining a small group and would like help finding a group right for me

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Most understand hardships are a natural part of life, but something _____ when the deep and lengthy valley is _____ valley

Why Am I _____? (There are different kinds of valleys)

• _____ **Sent Me Here**

The distinguishing trait is _____ that appears to have backfired

Examples: *God sent Jacob’s family into Egypt to live with Joseph, Jesus after His baptism, etc.*

When God puts us in deep weeds, we’re right where _____ wants us to be, even if we aren’t
Where _____ want to be

• **I _____**

This is a self-induced darkness that follows a _____ or _____ decision

Examples: *The nation of Israel and King David*

It’s almost always easy to find the _____ between the wrong turn and the valley

God wants us to know _____ we went wrong; it’s the only way we’ll ever get back on track

• **This Is _____ My Understanding**

This valley or trial makes _____ at all, i.e. “Who knows why?”

Examples: *Job’s story and a strange event after Israel occupied the Promised Land*

How Should I _____?

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In this case wiggling out or running away is _____ a good option

Examples: *Jonah, Abraham, and Daniel*

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to obey is still the only thing to do, even if it seems to make things _____

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- **“This is beyond my understanding” valleys call for walking in _____ obedience to God**

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The key to successfully resisting is to determine _____ that we won’t take one of the enemy’s shortcuts no matter how inviting it looks

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There are always two ways out of every trial; the enemy’s shortcut, which always involves compromise or disobedience, and the way of _____ God promises to all who walk with Him 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NAS) “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

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