

Day 5

Forgiveness in the Wilderness

Day 5 Scriptures:

Job 30:20-31

Job 40:1-8

Job 42:1-10

Romans 8:18-28

Phil. 2:14-15

Today devotion is a story of someone who has walked in the wilderness and almost lost themselves and their relationship with God.

“God, I’m really mad at you,” I muttered under my breath as I slammed my Bible into my nightstand drawer. It didn’t feel like home anymore, and nothing felt real. For nearly a year I hadn’t felt like myself as anxiety and depression gripped my mind.

I fought, desperately trying to reclaim who I once was—someone who saw Jesus as a dear friend, knew God in a deeply personal way, and felt the Spirit move in and out of every part of my day. But between raising four wild and wonderful kids, juggling work, and encouraging others to trust in God with their whole hearts, I had forgotten to trust Him with mine.

I was angry that God let me walk in the wilderness—this season of not feeling His presence and feeling trapped in my own mind. I hated the wilderness.

In my anger and frustration, it took me months to find the strength to open my Bible. I spent the majority of the time yelling at God. And you know what? I found that God can take it. He can take my anger. He can take my temper tantrums. He can take it all.

One day I finally found the strength to open my Bible, and I discovered myself in Job's story. Maybe I hadn't lost my sheep (okay, I never had sheep to begin with) or my children (hadn't had those either), or my house (don't have one of those either)—but I had felt the weight of the attacks of the enemy from every side. I knew that, like Job, I had the space to get angry but also to forgive God and remember His sovereignty.

Here are a few things I learned about how you can forgive God after you've been hurt. I hope these will help you walk in forgiveness as well.

1. Remember that God is always working all things together for your good. He may allow bad things to happen. God never promised sunshine and roses every day! Trouble and heartache may be heaped on you and overwhelm you to the point where you're yelling and screaming at Him, but He can take it, and He's always working toward your good.

2. Allow your offense to become an opportunity to get to know God more intimately. I can sincerely say that every dark day in my walk with the Lord has only led me closer to Him—even if I yelled and screamed the entire way through like a toddler refusing their broccoli at dinnertime. The wilderness can always bring us close to Him.

3. Be grateful, and cut the complaining. God doesn't like our complaining and arguing (Philippians 2:14). We are told to be thankful *in* all circumstances, not *for* all circumstances. I tell myself all the time—"check your attitude, please!"

4. Remember, God didn't do anything wrong, but it's still okay to forgive Him. This was the key for me to find healing. It's easy for us to blame God when things don't go our way because we think He's out to get us. But God isn't in the wrong. He's never out to hurt us or make us suffer for no reason. But it's still okay for

us to forgive Him because it can help us to begin to heal and start walking into a healthier relationship with Him.

And let me tell you—I did begin to find healing. Healing that I thought wasn't possible in those darkest, angriest wilderness days. I wasn't sure I'd ever get to the point where I'd fully forgiven God. But I can say now that I am walking in a new rhythm that feels like something I've never known. It feels fresh and different. And I would have never experienced this intimacy had it not been for that wilderness I despised so much. So maybe the wilderness isn't so bad after all.

Pray: *God, thank You for Your patience, kindness, and grace. Thank You for hearing my prayer and being able to handle my emotions—even when I'm mad or upset with You. Help me to embrace seasons of wilderness as opportunities to rediscover You and Your goodness.*