

Does A Valley Mean A Wrong Turn?

James 1:2-4

A BRIEF LOOK BACK:

A STRANGE RESPONSE:

James 1:2-4

THREE POWERFUL FOG-CUTTING QUESTIONS

❶ WHY AM I **HERE**? 3 Options

Exodus 14:1-31 & 1 Peter 4:19/ 2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:15 / Judges 1:19

- **God sent me here.**
- **I messed up.**
- **Who knows?**

❷ HOW SHOULD I **RESPOND**? 4 Things to Keep In Mind

- The Enemy will always offer a **shortcut** – **Don't take it!**
Matthew 4:1-11
- If it's a self-made mess – **Accept the consequences.**
2 Samuel 12:15-24/ Hebrews 12:5-12
- If it's a God-given assignment – **Hang tough, don't run.**
1 Peter 4:19
- No matter how you got there – The way out will always include ...
1 Corinthians 10:13/ Judges 10:6-16/ Matthew 5:37/ Psalm 15:1-2, 4/ Philippians 2:3-5
 - ✓ **Doing The Right Thing**
 - ✓ **Telling The Truth**
 - ✓ **Keeping My Commitments**
 - ✓ **Concern For Others**
 - ✓ **Concern For God's Reputation**

❸ WHAT CAN I **LEARN**? 2 Observations

James 1:2-4

- There are always **lessons to be learned.**
- Even a bad thing can be a **strengthening** thing.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of May 28, 2006

This is our final week of the Spring Quarter. Along with an abbreviated study, you will take some time to reflect on your group experience and then have communion together. Growth Groups will take a summer break and resume the week of September 17. *Have a great summer!*

MY STORY

Summer is just around the corner! Do you have any special plans, activities or prayer requests for the summer months?

This week we looked at three powerful questions to ask when encountering a valley. Which of these three questions caught your attention the most and why?

DIGGING DEEPER

The Apostle Peter's first book addresses the issue of Christians encountering persecution and valley-like experiences. In 1 Peter 5:6-10, he instructs young men how to respond to authority and deal with challenging situations. In each verse below, how could Peter's instructions to these young men help us deal with valley-like experiences?

Verse 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Verse 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Verse 8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Verse 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Verse 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Looking back at what you wrote for each verse, is there one you would find more helpful than others? Is there one that you find more challenging or confusing than the others?

REMEMBERING

An important part of making it through and even thriving in the midst of life's valleys is being aware of how God is working in you and growing you. How has your Growth Group experience this past year either encouraged, challenged or helped you stay focused on how God is working in your life and/or to live beyond life's challenges and distractions?

Jesus understands the distractions and difficulties that life brings. He knows they can keep us from remembering how much He loves us and the benefit of living life for Him. This is why Jesus told the disciples at the last supper to repeatedly come to together and take communion remembering what He had done for them. This week your Growth Group will conclude by taking communion together. To prepare for this, read the following verses reflecting on Jesus' investment and work in your life as you follow Him.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. [NIV]

Philippians 1:6

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. [NIV]