

A person is walking away from the viewer across a vast, undulating desert landscape. The sand dunes are golden-brown and stretch towards the horizon. The sky is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a bright sun. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a blue hood. Their shadow is cast long and dark on the sand in front of them. The overall mood is one of solitude and journey.

THE WILDERNESS SEASON.

A guide to navigating the tough
seasons of life through God's
lens.

Arise Sister

www.arisesister.com.

DEDICATION

First to God Almighty, the creator of the Universe and to you, regardless of what stage you are in life. Seasons come and seasons go but God's word is constant and will guide you through every season.

PREFACE

This short book- WILDERNESS SEASON is an encouragement to keep trusting God even in very difficult moments. Through this book, we want to intrigue a prompt attention towards understanding and navigating through lives' difficulties with faith. We are in an age where people experience a lot of mishaps which cause them so much pain. Sometimes, the pain is caused by inevitable trials we face as we live on earth. Jesus Christ said *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

Sailing through difficult seasons in life is never easy. This wilderness season short book is a piece of encouragement to navigate the hard seasons of life with the wisdom of God through the help of the Holy Spirit. This book draws inspiration from biblical narratives of great men of faith like King David, who approached the difficult seasons with reliance on God and this resulted in purposeful living.

Contents

PART I : UNDERSTANDING THE WILDERNESS SEASON.

CHAPTER 1 : A process of separation and preparation for purposeful living.....6
CHAPTER 2 : The Wilderness Refinery.....8
CHAPTER 3 : Experiencing God’s love in the wilderness.....10

PART II : NAVIGATING THE WILDERNESS SEASON.

CHAPTER 4 : Faith in God.....13
CHAPTER 5 : Focus on God.....15

- i. Remain Focused**
- ii. Holding on to God’s word.**
- iii. Prayer and Thanksgiving.**
- iv. Engaging in thanksgiving and praise.**
- v. Fellowship with brethren.**
- vi. Keep Working.**

QUESTIONS TO PONDER21

INTRODUCTION

A wilderness is a desert or other area of natural land which is not used by people (*COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers*). The wilderness is not an area where human beings can naturally comfortably thrive in. The wilderness in this short book is symbolic of the difficult moments of life. The moments when it seems impossible to thrive due to frustrating circumstances we find ourselves in. It is usually not a place where anyone will like to be.

In the Christian journey, the wilderness season is very symbolic. It is that period of heightened trials and temptations however, it is essential for our own refining, growth and fortification (James 1:12). Jesus had a great ministry ahead but he was led into the wilderness where he experienced and endured hardship before he embarked on his ministry (Luke 4).

Luke 4:1-2... *“Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became hungry...”*

Wilderness seasons are very inevitable in life’s journey and the state of one’s mind is very essential in determining the outcome of this season. This short book comprises of a series of write-ups on *“Navigating the Wilderness Season”* extracted from the ARISESISTER WEBSITE (www.arisesister.com), where we shared real life experiences on the subject matter and others as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Our anchor is the Bible- the word of God. We may not have covered every aspect of the wilderness season in this short book but we encourage every reader to take time to study and meditate on the word of God.

It is our prayer that the words of this book would help you go through those tough seasons in life with a victory mindset!

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE WILDERNESS SEASON

CHAPTER 1:

THE WILDERNESS SEASON, THE PROCESS OF SEPARATION AND PREPARATION FOR PURPOSEFUL LIVING.

Wilderness seasons are unavoidable in life's journey but the way it is approached is what makes the difference. This season is not just a one-moment season but can occur periodically in life's journey. It is true that we should seek God and pray in moments of pain and God will deliver us but sometimes, God will grant us grace to go through some pain because that pain has a purpose of refining us. Interestingly, like other seasons in the Christian journey, such seasons of heightened trials are also of essence and have a symbolic role on the path of purposeful living if approached with hope in God. Our focus in this part is on *"Perceiving the wilderness season as part of the process of separation and preparation for purposeful living."*

By separation here, we insinuate drawing closer to God and understanding our identity in Jesus Christ. Do you know your pain can be a message to you? Job 33:12-30 highlights pain or distress as one of the ways through which God can speak to someone and if this is well perceived, the person involved will draw closer to God and live to enjoy the light of life in Jesus Christ. If well perceived, our wilderness season (characterized by trials, temptation and pain) can really be a season of drawing closer to God and understanding of who we are in Christ.

Furthermore, the wilderness season if well approached can also serve as that season of fortifying our trust in God and preparing us for *what lies ahead* (in line with purposeful living). Let's look at the story of King David. In the book of Samuel, we notice that David who was anointed king by Samuel seemed to always be in the background. When Samuel met Jesse and his sons, David was absent and when David's brothers went to war, David was still absent. The question is what was David doing in the background? 1 Samuel 17: 28 (NIV) says *"When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."* Oh wow! The anointed David was in the wilderness taking care of sheep. In the eyes of men, David was not qualified for battle and was fit for the wilderness but in the eyes of God, the chosen place to train David for battle was in the wilderness. How was David trained for war in the wilderness?

1 Samuel 17:34-36 (NIV) *“But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The final outcome of the battle was that David killed the giant Goliath.*

The wilderness may be filled with so much hardship that the only way out is total dependence on God. While enduring the hardship in the wilderness, David may not have known God was using this season to prepare him for the battle that lies ahead. Besides nurturing his skills in the wilderness, David had learnt to depend solely on God in every situation even amidst the highest levels of adversity. Defeating Goliath was a public expression of David’s encounter of God as the mighty deliverer during the wilderness season. David said *“The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”* 1 Samuel 17:34-36 (NIV). **Your genuine expression of God is an outcome of your encounter with God.**

Later on in David’s life, we notice another wilderness experience when David was escaping from the death threats of Saul. In 1 Samuel 23 we see David seeking God for directives to sail through the difficult moments and the place where David found refuge was in the wilderness strongholds and the hills of the Desert of Ziph. God protected David in the wilderness and David even made covenants with God while in the Wilderness. David actually had different wilderness experiences and one remarkable thing is that God knew about everything David was going through. God did not immediately take David out of the wilderness but He directed David on how to sail through that season such that David maximized the purpose of the season which was part of the journey to becoming King. Even David, the man God called *“a man after His (God’s) heart”* experienced wilderness seasons.

Are you in a wilderness season? Is the pain overwhelming? Do you know your pain can be a message from our Savior Jesus Christ to come to Him and watch Him turn your pain to gain? Amidst the pain, it may be wise to seek counsel, seek therapy, medical aid etc. But above all, seek God because God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them (Romans 8:28). Remember, the wilderness season may be part of the preparation process for fulfilling purpose. Don’t abort the process but depend on God to lead you through.

CHAPTER 2

THE WILDERNESS REFINERY

In the whole land,' declares the Lord, 'two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, "They are my people, and they will say, "The Lord is our God."'" (Zechariah 13:8-9 NIV)

Refining gold with flames of fire is one of the oldest and most common methods of refining gold to a desired level of purity. Though fire can be destructive, if well used, it is very productive. As we earlier established, the Wilderness Season is a season of heightened trials which occurs periodically in life's journey. These seasons of suffering or pain or trials are inevitable in life but how we navigate such seasons is what makes the difference. Can the pain during the wilderness season have a purpose?

Just like fire in proper use refines, if well approached, the pain during the wilderness season can result in refining character. On the other hand, just like fire not put in proper use can be destructive, if the wilderness season is not well approached, the pain of this season can leave one in depression, anger, suicidal thoughts which only leads to destruction.

Romans 5:3-5 (AMP) says... *"And not only this, but [with joy] let us exult in our sufferings and rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance; and endurance, proven character (spiritual maturity); and proven character, hope and confident assurance [of eternal salvation]. Such hope [in God's promises] never disappoints us, because God's love has been abundantly poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

A gold refiner passes gold through fire and when it is brought out, it is purified. The wilderness season, if approached with trust in God will only help nurture godly character in us. Reading through the biblical story of King David, we notice that his life was characterized by many of such wilderness experiences. Before David was anointed king, he was in the wilderness taking care of sheep. After he was anointed by Samuel, he still had a season in the wilderness where he fought lions and bears. On other occasions, he had to flee to the wilderness as a safe place while escaping from Saul. Even when David was king, he had to flee from His son Absalom and resided in the wilderness. Despite all the trials and pain, David still depended on God and

evidence of David's character can be perceived from the writings of David in Psalms. One thing that is outstanding about David is being a king with a contrite and humble heart.

The wilderness season can be part of the Character refining process. Don't abort the process but depend on God to lead you through.

Testimony-Wilderness Experience.

I grew up in a family which was apparently blessed with financial resources. So, for most part of my life, I did not really know hardship until when some circumstances unfolded and I found myself in serious hardship especially financially. I tried my hands on different things in order to raise my income but many things seemed not to work well and even the little income I made was not sufficient to meet my needs. Some days I had to control the way I eat. I did not eat to really get satisfied but to have something in my stomach that will keep me going. Other days, because I did not have sufficient money for transportation, I had to walk. Many other difficult situations occurred but the focus is on how I navigated this season. I really had to depend on God because I had tried in my strength but nothing worked out the way I wanted. It is amazing that it was at the point of heightened pain that I learned to pray more. Some of my walking sessions (due to lack of money for transportation) turned to prayer-walks. I also understood why it is necessary to be generous especially to the poor because I had experienced and know what it means to go hungry for a single day. I learned self-control through dependence on God. For instance, before the hardship, I envied and was jealous of people prospering but when I went through this season, I learned to be patient and wait on God's timing and not being led to depression through envy because other people had what I did not have. I learned to celebrate other people because they too may have gone through seasons of pain before getting to where they are. Summarily, I can say I am not yet perfect in character but it was so evident to me that the wilderness season was an opportunity which helped me to nurture love, generosity, self-control, humility etc. My advice to someone reading this is that it is essential to trust God even in your pain. We ought to always pray and it is very okay to pray for deliverance from pain. God according to His will can deliver you or can send you people to help you out of the situation you find yourself. Nevertheless, sometimes God may grant you the grace to go through some pain and when you discern this, know that that pain has a purpose and one of which is refining character.

Chapter 3

EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE IN THE WILDERNESS

I was having a chat with a friend who has been waiting for many years after marriage to conceive. This situation caused her so much pain. At the time we had the discussion, she was still in the wilderness season, but one thing stood out from our discussion. My friend told me of how on one of the days where she experienced much pain and depression, she cried to God and as she slept that day, she heard the comforting voice of the Holy Spirit giving her words of love and hope. This was an encounter for her. My friend was amazed how amidst the pain, she encountered the love of God. We spoke of how this all-surpassing love of God which was revealed to her by the Holy Spirit during her season of so much pain was a whole message of God's love towards her which is the anchor of her faith.

Reading through scriptures, we see the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42. It was evident that she had gone through the pain of an insecure life, moving from one man to the next. In her situation, she encountered Jesus Christ who knew and told her about all the pain she had experienced and offered her more than what she wanted. Jesus gave her the word of God which ignited her faith to believe in Jesus Christ and she received eternal life. This Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus Christ's love amidst her pain embraced this love and became a great evangelist. Her testimony of grace in Jesus Christ led many other Samaritans to believe in Jesus Christ.

The pain is heightened,

The rejection is overwhelming,

The loss is hurting,

The wait is too long,

I feel like I cannot bear it any longer.

Now, I am reading this short book about the love of Jesus Christ telling me HE LOVES ME AND IS HERE TO HELP ME. Yes! You reading this did not just stumble on it by chance. God is intentional about you reading this and He loves you so much. He says,

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Just come to Jesus Christ today. It is ok to cry out and express the pain you feel to Jesus Christ but more important is to surrender the pain to Him and seek His help to overcome. Jesus can turn your pain into gain if you will not give up but remain in Him and trust Him even amidst the pain. Yes, even you reading who thinks you have messed-up your life and find yourself in hardship. I assure you that Jesus Christ can turn your life around. The love of God is all encompassing. Yes, the love of God is reaching out to you too. Sin and the adverse situations in the environment you live in can put you in a situation of wrong decisions and actions, which result in pain, disappointments, condemnation, hurts etc. Condemning your self will not help but further lead to ruin. The good news is God loves you...*God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).*

God’s love is ultimate but what is your response to this love? *“Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?” (Romans 2:4 NLT).*

What is your response to this love? Please don’t wait for tomorrow because tomorrow may be too late. You can come to God through his son Jesus Christ at this moment. Ponder on this love. Jesus Christ is waiting for you to come.

How can I come?

Scripture says *“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” (Romans 10:9-10)*

Before going ahead to read the next part of this book, you can join us to say this prayer of faith, not just jokingly but let it be from your heart.

“Lord God, you are a great and loving father. Lord, I acknowledge my sins and wrong doings. I come to you this day to cleanse me of my sin and make me whole. I believe in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for my sins and I commit my life to you this day. Take my heart, cleanse

me, consecrate me and use me for your glory. Thank you Lord for saving me. Through the name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior, Amen.”

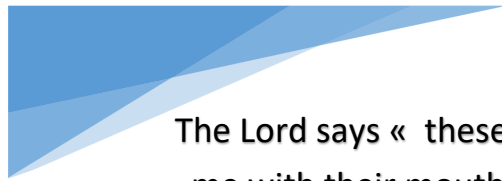
If you genuinely made this prayer, believe God has heard you and you are welcomed to the family of believers. We encourage you to grow in faith by studying and meditating on the word of God daily, making prayer, praise and thanksgiving a lifestyle, strive to flee evil and bad habits, fellowship with other believers to grow in knowledge of the word of God and seek spiritual guidance.

Testimony-Wilderness Experience

*I never knew that a wilderness season can also be a season of spiritual dryness. Every time I heard about wilderness seasons, it seemed to me like a period when you lack finances, or are unable to make the right decision about something. In fact, the wilderness season is mostly associated with finances. However, I recently went through a very rough wilderness season which had nothing to do with finances. I was in a place where I felt my spiritual life was dry. I prayed for hours, played soul touching music, but my prayers were still dry and I felt empty within. Honestly, it was difficult for to me understand what was wrong. I used to hear the voice of God so clearly, receiving instructions for myself and messages for other people but not anymore. I kept asking God for forgiveness for sins I never even knew I had committed. To be honest, I could not recount any such sins that could really make me dry like that. As far as I was concerned, I was doing my best in serving God. Going on outreaches, participating in church, encouraging brethren with the word, attending fellowship meetings, etc. One day in my quiet time, I decided to take another approach. Rather than praying for forgiveness, putting my requests before him or telling him how badly I wanted to sing in a choir, go on different outreaches, amongst others, I decided to just soak myself in worship, telling him how grateful I am for his love for me. I just spoke love words to God and told him how much I wanted to just be his baby. Then I heard His still small voice. Wow! After a long time. He asked me to take a pen and book and listen to what He has to say. He told me that the reason many people are dry inside even though they have the reputation of being spiritually high is because they are busy doing things for Him and forget the very basic place of time with Him. In their time with him, they come with a list of things and even miracles they want to see in their assemblies but forget the one desire he has for us. This desire is the reason He created us. To have “**FELLOWSHIP**” with him. He wants to relate with us as a man relates with His friends so that He can reveal His plans for us and for others. But we are busy doing what He has not assigned us to do at that particular time, even though it is “church work.”*

I was taken aback. I immediately apologized and He told me He just wanted me to come back to the place of intimacy with him. He asked me to cut down on some of the activities I was doing which to me was active kingdom chores to tick my name in His good book. That was the reason for my dryness. This spiritual dryness affected my job as I panicked over little things which I should have taken dominion over. I gave in to fear in the face of decision making because I could not hear the Holy Spirit. Thank God I adjusted and I was restored.

Dear reader, is it possible that you are the cause of your wilderness season? You desire signs and wonders even in the church you founded but it is not happening the way it did before because you have lost genuine *Fellowship (KOINONIA)* with the one who gave you the supernatural abilities in the first place. Please come back to Him for who He is and not for what He has and is able to do for you.



The Lord says « these people worship me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. their worship is based on nothing but human rules.

Isaiah 29:13

PART II: NAVIGATING THE WILDERNESS SEASON

CHAPTER 4

Navigating the Wilderness Season with Faith in God.

The wilderness season may be a very difficult period. Notwithstanding, in the Christian journey it is a necessary period of refining when approached with faith in God and understanding that God's Grace, made manifest through Jesus Christ is sufficient to take us through every and any circumstance we have in life (Romans 12:8-10). We also bear in mind that God's plans for us are good and give us a future hope (Jeremiah 29:11) and God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them (Romans 8:24).

Faith is "*The reality we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*" (Hebrews 11:1, NLT).

Faith is defined as trust or confidence in something or someone. The person or thing you have faith in is what makes you secure in every circumstance. For instance, sometimes when we carry babies between one to two years old, we usually play with them by throwing them upwards in the air and catching them as they fall back. This is risky sometimes because we are afraid the child may fall. Rather, whenever the children are thrown in the air they usually are so happy and laugh all through. This is because the children have faith that the elderly person throwing them in the air will surely catch them before they fall on the ground. This act of throwing in the air may look risky to people around but the child concerned keeps smiling because he/she has confidence that being in the air may look risky but the one they trust (the person who left them in the air) will not leave them there. This is very similar to what Faith in God does to believers in wilderness seasons.

Where your faith is will determine the outcome of the wilderness season. Faith in God is fundamental in navigating the wilderness season. This entails trusting God even during moments of heightened pain and trials. Apostle Paul said he was given a thorn in his flesh to torment him and he begged the Lord to take it away but God said "*My grace is all you need.*" (2 Corinthians 12:9a, NLT). Jesus Christ assures us with these words in John 16:33 "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*" With this understanding, Paul went through his days of torment with hope because of his Faith in God and the work of Christ (Grace) in him.

The wilderness is not friendly and it may be really hard to live in such conditions. During such times it is only human to worry, fear etc. Nevertheless, remaining in such mindsets like weariness and fear can only help to destroy you. For example, you can get depressed which can cause health problems and some people can even go to the extent of suicide etc. WHY THIS? The answer is usually because in the heart of the wilderness, all hope seems to be lost especially with the uncertainty of the way out. However, when we believe in God's word that Christ is OUR HOPE OF GLORY, then surely even in the wilderness we can hold on to that hope which never fails. No wonder Jesus Christ was tempted most while in the Wilderness. Probably the tempter knew how hard the wilderness is, so anyone in such situations may obviously settle for any option out of it, some of which may look attractive but can sway you away from living up to your purpose or even destroy you. Satan asked Jesus Christ to worship him while in the wilderness and he will give Jesus Christ kingdoms and authority over them which was a counterfeit way out of the wilderness. Jesus could decide to follow the devil's way out of the wilderness which looked very attractive at the moment but in every situation, Jesus had faith and hope in God. So his reply to the devil was "You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him". Jesus Christ's faith and hope in the wilderness was in God and the outcome was victory in fulfilling His purpose on earth.

You may be presently going through a wilderness season in life (difficulty, pain etc), but I believe God's Grace is sufficient to help you overcome your challenges and we know suffering may last for a moment but joy comes in the morning.

Testimony-Wilderness Experience

My brother was involved in a mysterious attack last year that almost took away his life. Excessive loss of blood, fractured ribs, internal bleeding and swollen 'blood-red' eye, were among several injuries he endured. I cannot explain the grip of fear that took me when I received the call informing me of his attack. At that second, I felt a huge rush of panic in the form of blood through my veins, thousands of thoughts ran through my mind in that single second; we had lost our mom two years ago, I was still struggling to accept the reality of her absence, and now my brother? The only person I could think of calling immediately at that moment was Jesus. I cried out to Him, and I believe He heard me, for my family and I in that instant were suddenly being ushered into yet another wilderness season. But Jesus held our hands through it all, the sleepless nights, the fear of picking up a phone call, the search for blood / blood donors, the search for medical experts (in a low-income country with poor medical facilities) etc. Jesus did it for us, He sent us help, he gave us strength to pray and

navigate that wilderness in faith. Today my brother is a living testimony of the mercies of God, of the power in the Name of Jesus, of the love and help of God. Praise God!

Chapter 5

DON'T GIVE-UP! FOCUS ON GOD.

Usually, during the wilderness season, the subsequent thing we await is a breakthrough. Waiting especially in moments of hardship is not usually easy. Sometimes the tendency may be to give up on the dreams you had. Other times during the season of hardship, you may find yourself questioning your trust and hope in God and the promises through his word to you. Does this sound like something you have been through or currently experiencing?

Please do not give up because God has not given up on you! Life is in seasons and if you keep holding on to God, you will realize there is a purpose for every season. Seasons will come and go and even the hard seasons will surely have a point of breakthrough. When you experience a wilderness season awaiting a breakthrough, I encourage you to be of good cheer and remain focused on God for He loves you and will come through for you.

If we know how to give good gifts to our children, then how much more will our heavenly father give good gifts to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11).

As you navigate this season, it is very essential that you:

1. Remain Focused.

Don't give up on God and His word. In Mark 5:24-34, the story is narrated of a woman who had bled for 12 years, had spent all she had on doctors and yet her condition grew worst. Despite her long suffering, worsening condition and the crowd that pressed on Jesus, she remained focus on the word she had heard about Jesus so she pressed on, touched his cloak and immediately she was healed. Jesus commended this woman for her faith. She did not give up, she believed Jesus Christ could heal her, she acted in faith by staying focused in her pursuit of an encounter with Jesus Christ by touching his cloak and at an instant she was healed- her moment of breakthrough. God is the same and able to do abundantly above all we could ever ask.

Don't give up, stay focused. Sometimes the moment of hardship is an opportunity to draw closer to God. In your daily routine, develop a consistent quiet time which is a moment you set aside to fellowship with God. The ultimate purpose of this quiet time is to spend quality time with God, talking and listening Him. It is a moment fundamentally characterized by thanksgiving, praise, worship, meditation on the word of God and prayer. Reading and meditating on the word of God is very essential during your quiet time as we daily listen to God speak to us through his word. As you grow in relationship with God, by the enablement of the Holy Spirit, God can use different ways to talk to you including through a still quiet inner voice/ inner intuition,

dreams, visions, circumstances etc. The essence of all these is to grow an intimate relationship with God, talking with Him, hearing what He is saying and practicing what He said daily.

Note that Fellowship with God is the essence of our living.

Sometimes because of the pain during wilderness seasons, we may be tempted to downplay our fellowship with God. Though the season is hard, one thing we need to understand is that we overcome the hardship of this world only through Jesus Christ. Even in moments of pain, let us not lose intimacy with God. God is our loving father and ready to walk with us through all moments of life and it is only in God through Jesus Christ that we can overcome the trials of this world.

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

2. Hold on to God's word.

What does the word of God say? What has God told you about the situation you are going through? Hold on to these words. A way of holding on till the point of breakthrough is constantly praying God's word and his promises over your life and the situation. For *"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfil?" (Numbers 23:19)*. Holding on to God's word also entails obedience. Obedience is an act of faith which keeps us in the right path of God's will.

3. Prayer and thanksgiving.

Prayer is a medium of communicating with God. In the place of prayer, you can present your request to God and receive his response.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7(NIV).

Heartfelt prayers please God and when we pray for God's intervention in our situation, we should expect answers according to His will. Sometimes, our response may come immediately and may not be to take us out of the wilderness immediately but to strengthen us to go through the moments of hardship. Just like Jesus prayed to God on mount olives about the suffering he was going through and God answered by sending an angel which strengthened Jesus (Luke 22:39-44). Other times, the answer may still be to wait but don't give up. Keep on praying

ceaselessly. In Daniel 10, Daniel prayed and did not receive his answer until 21 days. From the first day Daniel started praying, his prayers had been heard and while he was pressing in prayers for 21 days, a spiritual warfare was going on and after 21 days of his prayers, he received his answer. Other times, the answer may be an immediate breakthrough. A preacher once asked a question “*where is God in the midst of your problems?*” the answer he gave was that “*God is where you place him amidst your problems*”. If you go to God in prayers, even during the time of hardship, sure he will remain close to you. But if you keep God away he is where you left him. Prayer helps to relieve us of the burden we experience during the wilderness season because through prayers, we talk about our situation to God and we listen for His answers. In talking with God, we lay our burdens at the feet of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. “*Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*” (Psalm 55:22).

If we truly cast our cares to Jesus Christ, He gives us a peace that no one can fathom. With the peace of Jesus Christ, situations around us may not change but the posture of our hearts changes and we can effectively navigate the wilderness with the peace of Jesus Christ which surpasses all understanding.

4. Engage in thanksgiving and praise.

“*But You are Holy, O You who are enthroned in (the holy place where) the praises of Israel (are offered). In You our fathers trusted (leaned on, relied on, and were confident); They trusted and You rescued them.*” Psalm 22:3-4 (AMP). To the Christian, thanksgiving and praise to God should be a lifestyle and praise in every circumstance. God is enthroned in our praises and praising God in good and bad times is evidence of trust. In 2 Chronicles 20, three armies were together against Judah and King Jehoshaphat engaged in praise and as they were praising, the Lord set ambush against their enemies and the armies of the enemies fought against themselves. King Jehoshaphat and the people of Israel praised God and God fought and won their battles. This was breakthrough for the Israelites. Sometimes when in difficult situations and waiting on God for a breakthrough, we find ourselves complaining about the situation. Complaining as much as it may seem right at the time will not help as it progressively saps away faith and strength and amplifies the devil’s negative influence over our minds and actions. On the contrary, praising and thanking God keeps our focus right, ignites faith which is pleasing to God who fights on our behalf, delivering us from adversity.

5. Fellowship with other brethren

Hebrews 10:24-25 “*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*”

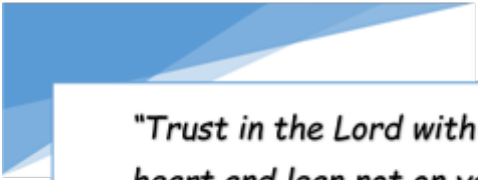
The importance of Fellowship with one another.

- It helps us build each other up, focus on Christ and His desires for us. ***Galatians 6:2, Proverbs 27:17***
- Fellowship is essential to the spiritual health of an individual Christian. It keeps us reminded of our identity in Christ.
- Fellowship with one another assures us of the presence of God in our midst. ***Matthew 18:20, Luke 22:14-20, Acts 2:42-47.***
- Fellowship helps us build strong, long lasting and genuine friendships (***Galatians 6:2***). Being surrounded by the right company is very essential in this journey of faith and in moments of hardship, these are the people whom you can talk about your pain to. Genuine godly friends are essential in our walk as they can be a listening ear especially in tough times. They can also be a great source company, comfort, and advice.
- It creates a platform for spiritual warfare and answers to prayers. ***Matthew 18:19, Esther 4:16, 2Chronicles 7:14, Joel 1:14.*** In all these scriptures, one thing that stands out is the fact that there was a call for people to gather together and pray (communal prayer i.e fellowship).
- Through Fellowship, you have someone you are accountable to and who can stand the gap and pray for you when you are weak, troubled and can't pray. ***Acts 12:5-18***
- Fellowship is a vital platform for encouragement. The wilderness season may be so hard sometimes we may need encouragements from others to go through. In fellowship, Christians are to utilize their talents, gifts and resources to serve God by serving one another. “*Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly (Romans 12:4-8)*”. In fellowship, Christians identify and help to meet the needs of one another. These needs may be financial, material etc. The Holy Spirit ignites love in the hearts of believers and meeting the needs

of others is an outcome of love for one another. So a healthy place fellowship is where we can meet other brethren who can pray with us and encourage our faith in God even amidst the hardship.

6. Keep working.

The Lord will bless the works of our hands. Keep working hard at what you are doing. Your breakthrough may be a supernatural blessing on what you are working at. Waiting on God is not a guarantee for laziness. Rather it is working hard on your path but trusting God above your abilities. Please avoid staying idle during your wilderness season. There is a saying that goes thus *“An idle mind is the devil’s workshop”*. The first thing idleness may do during the wilderness season is making you depressed and depression has a lot of negative consequences one of which is poor health. Depression can also lead you to taking up negative actions as a shortcut out of the wilderness season. Beware of depression because it can lead you off track and make you seek solutions or wrong ways out of the wilderness. Occupy yourself positively. This is very important. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Don’t give up on God for God has not given up on you. Keep your focus right! God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and He will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6.

Thank you for reading this short book. Below are some questions to meditate on.

1. What lessons did you learn?
2. Did you identify any wilderness experience in your life?
3. Based on what you learnt draw up an action plan on how the lessons from this short book can be applied in your own life.

For more material to nourish your walk with God, visit our website @ www.arisesister.com. You will find more write-ups, short e-books and devotionals. You can also connect with us via email: arisesisterministeries@gmail.com for any further questions or follow up.

Remain blessed.