



March Study Guide

This study paper is designed to help you navigate the "desert" phases of life—those times when God feels distant, resources feel thin, and the path ahead looks bleak. Included is a 7-section deep dive into the purpose of the wilderness.

Introduction

The word "wilderness" often conjures up images of being lost, abandoned, or punished. In our modern culture, we are addicted to the "mountaintop"—the moments of success, clarity, and abundance. We view any season of dryness, silence, or struggle as a sign that we have done something wrong or that God has turned His back on us. We have become so accustomed to instant gratification and constant connection that when the "signal" goes thin, we panic, assuming the desert is a place of death rather than a place of development.

However, a careful look at Scripture reveals a startling pattern: the wilderness is God's favorite classroom. From Moses and the Israelites to David and Elijah, the desert was never an accident; it was an appointment. It is the place where the noise of the world is filtered out so that the whisper of God can be heard. In the wilderness, we are stripped of our self-reliance and forced to confront what we truly believe when all the comforts of life are stripped away. It is not a detour on the way to the Promised Land; it is the very road that leads there.

In this study, we will look at the life of Jesus, who was "led by the Spirit" into the desert. This distinction is vital: Jesus didn't end up in the wilderness because He failed; He went there because He was ready to grow. Over these seven sections, we will explore why God allows "dry" seasons, how to distinguish between being lost and being led, and how to survive the temptations that only arise when we are hungry and tired. Let's redefine the desert not as a graveyard for our dreams, but as the birthplace of our purpose.



Section 1: Led, Not Lost

Core Scripture:

Matthew 4:1 — "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

The Concept:

Notice the phrasing; the Holy Spirit did the leading. Being in a difficult season doesn't mean you missed a turn or made a mistake. Sometimes, God intentionally steers us into a quiet, difficult place to do a work in us that couldn't be done in the "green pastures."

Everyday Application:

Think of a professional athlete going to "training camp." It's isolated, it's grueling, and it's away from the fans. They aren't there because they are being punished; they are there because the season ahead requires a level of strength they don't yet have.

Food for Thought:

If you knew God intentionally put you in this "dry" season, how would your attitude toward your current problems change?

Section 2: The Purpose of the "Dry" Season

Core Scripture:

Deuteronomy 8:2 — "Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness... to humble and test you to know what was in your heart."

The Concept:

The desert is a mirror. In the "good times," it's easy to act spiritual. In the dry times, our true character comes out. God doesn't "test" us to see if we fail; He tests us so we can see what needs to be healed or strengthened.

Layman's Terms:

It's like a "stress test" for a bridge. You don't know the bridge is weak until you put a heavy load on it. The wilderness reveals your "cracks" so God can repair them before you reach your destination.

Reflective Question:

What has this current struggle revealed about your temper, your faith, or your dependencies?



Section 3: Identity Under Fire

Core Scripture:

Matthew 4:3 — "The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God...'"

The Concept:

Notice the devil's first words. He attacks Jesus' identity. In the wilderness, the biggest temptation is to doubt who God says you are. When things aren't going well, we start thinking, "If God loved me, I wouldn't be here."

Everyday Application:

When you lose a job or a relationship, the "voice" in the desert says, "You are a failure." But the Spirit says, "You are My child." The wilderness is where you learn to separate your identity from your circumstances.

Food for Thought:

Are you defining yourself by your current "dryness" or by God's "promise"?

Section 4: More Than Bread

Core Scripture:

Matthew 4:4 — "Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

The Concept:

The wilderness teaches us what we really need to survive. We think we need the promotion, the house, or the healing to be okay. Jesus shows us that the only essential "nutrient" is the Word of God.

Layman's Terms:

If you have a full pantry but no peace, you're starving. If you have no bread but you have God's promise, you're sustained. The desert shifts our appetite from physical comfort to spiritual substance.

Everyday Application:

What is one "survival verse" you can memorize this week to feed your soul when things feel empty?



Section 5: The Shortcut Temptation

Core Scripture:

Matthew 4:8–9 — "The devil... showed him all the kingdoms of the world... 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'"

The Concept:

The devil offered Jesus the "Crown" without the "Cross." He offered a shortcut. In the wilderness, we are often tempted to take matters into our own hands rather than waiting for God's timing.

Everyday Application:

This is the temptation to lie on a resume to get the job faster, or to compromise your values to end a season of loneliness. A shortcut in the wilderness usually leads to a dead end.

Food for Thought:

Where are you feeling tempted to "force" a door open, instead of waiting for God to provide the key?

Section 6: The Ministry of Angels

Core Scripture:

Matthew 4:11 — "Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

The Concept:

God does not leave you in the desert forever. There is an "after." When the test is complete, there is a season of refreshing. God provided for Jesus only after He stood His ground.

Layman's Terms:

The rain always follows the drought. You might feel alone right now, but the "support crew" is already on standby. Your job is to endure; God's job is to sustain.

Reflective Question:

Can you look back at a past "desert" and see how God provided for you right when you reached your limit?



Section 7: Returning in Power

Core Scripture:

Luke 4:14 — "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit..."

The Concept:

This is the most important "food for thought." Jesus went into the desert "full of the Spirit," but He came out of the desert "in the power of the Spirit." There is a difference between having the Spirit and walking in His power.

Everyday Application:

The wilderness is where your "muscles" are built. You cannot lead others through a valley you haven't walked through yourself. Your struggle is actually the "fuel" for your future ministry.

Closing Action:

Don't just ask God to "get you out" of the wilderness. Ask Him what He wants you to "get out of" the wilderness. What strength are you gaining today that you will use to help someone else tomorrow?