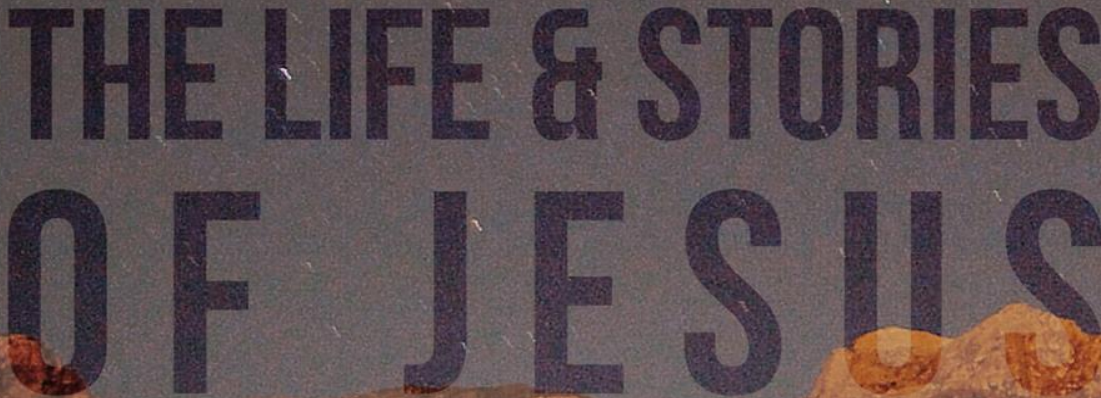




LUKE:



**THE LIFE & STORIES
OF JESUS**

and the child grew and became strong in spirit, and
he was in the wilderness until the day of his public
appearance to israel.

(luke 1:80 esv)

survival guide for **growing up** in a
spiritual wilderness

“I am deeply convinced that the Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. **This is the way Jesus came to reveal God’s love... Jesus’ first temptation was to be relevant: to turn stones into bread.** Oh, how often I have wished I could do that!... Aren’t priests and ministers called to help people, to feed the hungry, to save those who are starving? Are we no called to do something that makes people realize that we do make a difference in their lives?

Aren't we called to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and alleviate the suffering of the poor? Jesus was faced with these same questions, but when he was asked to prove his **power as the Son of God by the relevant behavior of changing stones into bread, he clung to his mission to proclaim the Word** and said, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"

+Nouwen

different paths **and** different expectations...

we tend to focus:

- careers (success)
 - social standing
 - materialistic gains
- immediate (here and now)

god focuses on:

- character (faithfulness)
- intimate and deep relationship with himself, others, and the city in which we are called to serve
 - spiritual depth and spiritual gains
 - past, present, and future

“what makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible... is
that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. it
seems easier to be god than to love god, easier to control people
than to love people, easier to own life than to love life.”

+ nouwen

senseless suffering vs.
suffering with a purpose

Wilderness seasons are:

- God initiated
- Personally initiated (disobedience or to sharpen character and skill sets)
- Trials and difficulties can initiate them

1. our goal is not to get out of the wilderness, but to let god teach us faithfulness during this season.
2. being willing to be challenged and allow god to strip you of things that you don't need.
3. trust that god has you where he wants you.
4. god doesn't send you into the wilderness unprepared.
5. you are going to learn a new language in the wilderness.

Your wilderness experience is that place where
God hides you from public view and prepares
you for “His purposes.”

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Myth: I am in a wilderness season
so God must be punishing me.

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“To be commanded to love God at all, let alone in the wilderness, is like being commanded to be well when we are sick, to sing for joy when we are dying of thirst, to run when our legs are broken. But this is the first and great commandment nonetheless. **Even in the wilderness - especially in the wilderness** - you shall love him.”

+ Frederick Beuchner

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