

DEVOTION

God's Endgame

by [Greg Laurie](#) on Apr 26, 2022

"No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening – it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way."

-Hebrews 12:11

If He had wanted to, God could have simply taken the Israelites directly to the Promised Land. But immediately on the heels of parting the Red Sea, God led them into the wilderness.

Why did He do that? We find the answer in Deuteronomy 8:2, where Moses said, "Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands" (NLT).

Trials often follow blessings. Sometimes we come to valleys immediately after our mountaintop experiences. Have you ever had that happen? Maybe you went to a retreat that impacted your life, and when you returned home, there were all kinds of troubles waiting for you. Sometimes difficulties even come our way right after we leave a church service.

We find a precedent for this in Scripture. After Jesus was baptized by his cousin John in the Jordan River, Jesus saw the Holy Spirit descend on Him like a dove (see Mark 1:9–11). And what happened after that? The Bible tells us, "Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan" (Mark 1:12–13 NKJV). Notice the word *immediately*. For Jesus, after the dove came the Devil.

For us, after the blessing may come the trial. That is what was happening to Israel because there are truths that can only be learned in a wilderness, so to speak. However, the Israelites were in their wilderness longer than they needed to be. God wanted them there for a time, but they made it a lot harder than necessary.

Our spiritual roots grow deep when the winds around us make us strong. That's because God's endgame is to make us more like Jesus.