



*Stuck
in the
Middle*

JOHN BEVERE

Introduction

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what He reveals, they are most blessed. —Proverbs 29:18 MSG

The wilderness is a place where you're not where you used to be, but you're also not where you want to be. You're somewhere between the two, and you feel lost! Maybe others around you seem to have progressed further along than you have. Perhaps you're overwhelmed by the feeling of stagnation—gripped with uncertainty, wondering why you're here and not there. Disillusioned, many in this season become stuck—feeling unable to move from their present position or place.

Does it feel like I could be describing you? Are you stuck in the middle, feeling lost in an endless maze?

If you feel this way, I hope you can find comfort in knowing that you're not alone. God is with you—He has never left your side. And He has a purpose for your present season. The reason you feel stuck is because you can't see the forest for the trees—you've lost sight of the big picture. This is a common occurrence—and a crucial intersection along your journey to your promise fulfilled.

At this point, many become discouraged, giving up on the promise God gave them. They fail to realize that between a promise and its fulfillment, there is always a process. Within this process, God prepares you for what He has prepared for you. Once you receive a promise from God, you'll immediately be ushered into a process, with the ultimate goal of promotion. Understanding the necessity of the process is crucial to realizing the promotion.

God wants you to obtain all He has destined for you. God has not forgotten you, nor has He forsaken you. God knows where you are and is keeping a close watch over you. The following chapters will offer insight into the purpose of the process, an understanding of how to navigate it, and encouragement to stay the course.

Let's journey together!

—John Bevere

Trust the Process

Between a promise and its fulfillment, there is always a process. A process is defined as, “A series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.” The process is a transitional period with three distinct stages: a start, a middle, and an end. I want to identify these stages as: promise, process, and promotion. The path to promotion always goes through a process—a series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end.

Let’s look at the process of a car wash as an example. If you have ever been through an automated car wash, you know it can be an unnerving experience. As you approach the car wash entrance, you are required to select the type of wash you want and pay for it. Most car washes offer a variety of options to choose from, ranging from basic to detailed. Each option promises that your vehicle will be thoroughly cleaned.

Once you’ve decided on the wash you want and paid for it, there is an awkward pause—the calm before the storm. Suddenly the garage door opens, and you are signaled to move forward. You are closed in as you proceed into the garage. This is the middle stage of the process, and once you’re in, there is no backing out. You are then required to drive forward until your vehicle’s front tires are aligned with the track system that will guide your car through the wash. Once you’ve correctly placed your vehicle onto the track, you then must put your car in neutral and take your foot off the brake.

As the car wash begins, your vehicle will be moved forward by the track system. As the vehicle’s driver, you are not required to do anything during this time, except yield to the car wash process. While you patiently progress through the wash, your vehicle

begins to shake as it is bombarded with powerful water jets spraying it, soap foaming, huge brushes circulating your vehicle, and all the while sirens are buzzing.

In the midst of it all, you may ask, “What did I get myself into? I hope this thing will let me go!” Once the wash is completed, there is absolute silence—the end of the process. Relieved that it’s finally over, you are then signaled to make your exit as the garage door opens. Mission accomplished—your car is clean!

The process God takes us on to bring about the fulfillment of His promise is like that of a car wash; it requires full commitment until the end. We must trust the process and allow it to transport us to its desired destination.

The process has a purpose. Paul confidently wrote, “I’m fully convinced that the One who began this glorious work in you will faithfully continue **the process** of maturing you and will put His finishing touches to it until the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ!” (Philippians 1:6 TPT).

Our responsibility is to be as convinced as Paul was and trust the process God is taking us through, convinced He will complete what He started. In this time, we must not rush or abort the process; rather, allow God to accomplish His purpose through it. The primary purpose of the process is for God to prepare you for what He has prepared for you. This will involve character development.

Maturity of character will ensure that not only do you obtain the promise, but that you also retain it. The apostle James exhorted, “So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way” (James 1:4 MSG).

Imagine if you tried to abort the car wash halfway through the process. Not only would the wash be incomplete, but you would risk damage to your car (and possibly to you). Similarly, when we try to abort or rush the process God has for us, progress is halted and growth is stunted. The result is that we prolong God’s plan for promotion.

God is ordering your steps. The process has specific actions and steps for you to take along the way. For this reason, Jesus taught, “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34 MSG).

Each part of the process is intentional and orchestrated by God. In each stage of the process, it is important to be aware of the lessons God is trying to teach you. Just like each part of the car wash has a specific role to complete the wash process, each part of the process you are on has a specific function to develop you for your next stage. Without properly completing each stage, you cannot progress to the next level.

God will finish what He started. The process will require both your trust and co-operation. The Bible clearly states, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and don’t depend on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). During the process, it’s easy to lose sight of the promise God gave you, especially when things are not happening according to your plan and timeline. When this occurs, it is common to try to figure out how God is going to fulfill the promise. This can lead to unnecessary worry and reasoning.

Surrender your plans to God. You cannot be a control freak and trust God at the same time. You need to let go of the need to be in control, and allow God to do things in His time and in His way. What God originates, He orchestrates.

Corrie ten Boom once said, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” Consider the confession of trust from the Psalmist as your declaration, “I am trusting You, O Lord, saying, ‘You are my God! My future is in Your hands’” (Psalm 31:14–15). God’s ultimate plan for your future is for good and not for evil.



Father, I choose to trust You through the process. Your plans for me are for good, not for evil. You are preparing me for what You have prepared for me. You are my God! My future is in Your hands! Amen.

Tested to Be Trusted

The process will take you through a series of tests to ensure you can be trusted with greater levels of responsibility. The word “test” actually means, “A procedure intended to establish the quality, performance, or reliability of something, especially before it is taken into widespread use.” Other words for “test” include “examination, experiment, check, and trial.”

I travel thousands of miles on an airplane every year. I have complete confidence boarding a plane because I am aware that before the plane was released for widespread use, it first went through a rigorous and exhaustive amount of testing. From the earliest stages of design, these tests were done to ensure its quality, performance, and reliability to transport passengers safely to any given destination. In a similar manner, God tests us to be able to trust us. The Lord Himself said,

“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:10 NKJV). “All the churches shall know that I am He who searches deep within men’s hearts, and minds; I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.” (Revelation 2:23 TLB)

Tests expose what is hidden in our hearts. With this understanding, let’s consider the children of Israel and God’s purpose for leading them through the wilderness before leading them to the Promised Land. God Himself revealed:

“Do you remember how the Lord led you through the wilderness for all those forty years, humbling you and testing you to find out how you would respond, and whether or not you would really obey Him?” (Deuteronomy 8:2 TLB)

Notice that God tested them to see how they would respond. Unfortunately, their hearts were not right, and they consistently complained and rebelled against God, forfeiting their promotion into the Promised Land. Again, the testing happened to see how they would respond. A whole generation of Israelites remained stuck in the wilderness.

God orchestrates times of testing to see how we will respond. Tests locate a person. They reveal the true condition of your heart. How you respond or react under pressure reveals the real you. We all have life-defining moments. They are like open-book tests, but we don't know that we are being examined until it is over. Let's briefly examine some of the common tests we can expect to experience.

The obedience test. Abraham was known as a friend of God. When Abraham was seventy-five years old, God made a covenant with him. Within the agreement of this covenant, God promised Abraham his heart's desire—a son. Prior to the birth of this promised son, Abraham made several mistakes—some which were quite serious. However, through it all, Abraham remained obedient to God, fully persuaded that God would perform all that was promised.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years of age, his wife became pregnant, and their promised son, Isaac, was born. After years of waiting, God fulfilled what He had promised. One can only imagine the joy that filled Abraham's heart.

Time passed, and the relationship between Isaac and Abraham grew stronger. The life of his son meant more to Abraham than his own. His great wealth was nothing to him in comparison to Isaac—a gift from God.

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:1–2 NKJV)

Did Abraham hear correctly? This instruction seems way outside God's nature.

We now know that God was testing him . . . the test: Abraham was to sacrifice the most important thing to him—his son. Yet, through this test, we see that being obe-

dient to God was the most important thing to Abraham. As we read this account, we know it was a test, but Abraham didn't.

We never know God is testing us until we are on the other side of it. It may be possible to cheat on a school exam, but no one can cheat on a God test. Abraham's response to God's request was instant obedience: "So Abraham rose early in the morning" (Genesis 22:3 NKJV). He did not talk it over with Sarah and ask her permission or approval. There was no hesitation. Abraham heard from God and was set in his heart to obey.

God instructed Abraham to take a three-day journey. This allowed him time to ponder what he had been asked to do. If there had been any wavering within him, this period would have exposed it. When he and Isaac arrived at the designated place instructed by God, Abraham built an altar, bound his son, laid him on the altar, and reached for his knife. Just as Abraham lifted the knife and was about to stab his son, God spoke through an angel, stopping him in the midst of his obedient act: "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Genesis 22:12 NKJV).

Abraham passed his test, revealing that he could be trusted. God then went on to reveal Himself as Jehovah-Jireh, meaning, "The Lord will Provide."

Long before I was launched into full-time ministry, God tested my obedience. On one occasion, I was asked to give up something I thought God had given me. It meant more to me than anything else. It was an opportunity to work for a well-known evangelist, one I dearly loved. I had desired this opportunity for years.

My wife and I had been offered positions on staff as assistants to this man and his wife. Not only did I love this man, but I also saw it as God's opportunity to bring to pass the dream He had implanted deep within me—that I might preach the gospel to the nations of the world.

I fully expected God to say "yes" to this wonderful offer. I had informed family and friends about the great news and had already made plans to accept it—even resigning from my position as executive assistant to my pastor. However, I was filled with unrest. Something wasn't right within, and I lacked peace.

When I really positioned myself to hear from God, He made it clear that I was to turn down the job offer. I wept for days after refusing this offer. Although I knew that I had obeyed God, I did not understand why He had me make such a hard decision. I was bewildered and embarrassed.

I finally asked God, “Why did You make me put this on the altar?” He quickly answered, “To see if you were serving Me or the dream.” Only then did I understand that I had been tested. During this time of testing, I didn’t understand what He was doing. The only thing that kept me obedient was my love and fear of God. I’m thankful I passed that test.

The pressure test. During his wilderness period, Jesus was often pressured to step into ministry prematurely. On one occasion, His brothers confronted Him, “Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! You can’t become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!” (John 7:3–4). Jesus was never in a rush.

Often during the process, you will be tempted to make things happen ahead of God’s timing. It’s common to succumb to social pressure that makes you feel like you need to be further along than you presently are. The more you try to rush the process, the more you will prolong it.

Will you allow God to bring about the promise in His time and in His way?



In the early eighties, I worked for a very large, nationally recognized church in Dallas. My role was personal assistant to the senior pastors. The first year or two felt like a honeymoon. I literally felt like I was in heaven. I would often think, “I’m taking care of the greatest ministers of the gospel on the planet.” Our church would regularly host the most prominent national and international speakers, and I would be the one to chaperone them to and from the airport, hotels, restaurants, and services. I had one of the most coveted positions at the church because of the opportunity to spend hours with some of the most influential ministers of the gospel.

Because of the opportunity to spend quality time with these ministers, many would recognize and speak to the call of God on my life. Many of these ministers would encourage me, urging me to start a church or begin my traveling ministry. They even

helped me strategize ways to get started. The pressure was on—after hearing their words of encouragement, the urge to leave and start my own ministry intensified. The pressure to do something, to start something, hounded me. However, whenever I sought God in prayer, I felt no peace.

On one occasion, I prayed, “God, all these men and women I highly respect are telling me to go start a church or ministry. What should I do? Am I going to miss the call of God on my life because I’m stuck here driving this van?”

I heard the Lord clearly say, “Son, I have a plan. David was a man after My heart. King Saul tried to dress him with his armor; but that armor was for King Saul. It wasn’t for David.” I knew I wasn’t supposed to start my own ministry just yet, although I had a lot of pressure to do so. The pressure test will reveal who you’re really serving—God or the dream?

The stewardship test. Jesus taught, “And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?” (Luke 16:12 NKJV). The wilderness is a time in which you are tested with stewardship. Will you serve another person’s vision as if it were your own?

Once I made the decision to resist the pressure to move ahead of God and start my own ministry, a sense of peace filled my heart. For the first time in months, I was no longer consumed with my own ministry. I had determined that if God wanted me to just chaperone guest speakers until Jesus returned, then I’d do that with all my heart.

I began to appreciate my wife, my son, and the apartment I lived in. My attitude shifted—no longer did I serve to get; I served to give. My present was no longer viewed as a stepping stone to what’s next. This heart posture enabled me to not only steward my present responsibilities well; it also positioned me for promotion.

Whatever the promotion, it means serving and stewardship. The higher you rise, the greater the responsibility. Several months after making this decision, a very famous pastor whom I had chaperoned often offered me a job as his youth pastor. I knew in my heart that this position was God’s promotion.

Initially, I laughed at this opportunity. I had just turned down working for one of my heroes in the faith where I could’ve been traveling around the world with him, leading multitudes to Christ. And here I was, about to step into youth ministry. In

the late eighties, youth ministry wasn't glamorous like it is today. However, I knew God wanted me to take this position, and I was determined to steward that position faithfully.

Fast forward two years, after faithfully serving as youth pastor, God released me into a full-time traveling ministry. In 1990, my pastor laid hands on me and prayed me out into the nations. After more than thirty years of ministry, I can confidently attest that if you're faithful with your present assignment, God can entrust you with more.

The character test. The Bible informs, "Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised" (Proverbs 27:21). It is interesting what fame, success, and promotion can reveal about a person. Many gifted people have quickly ascended to a position of fame only to descend as quickly as they rose because their character could not sustain their success.

The process includes stages of gradual promotion to test your character. How you handle success at one level of promotion determines whether you're ready for greater promotion. The apostle Paul shared how he was tested to be trusted as a messenger. Because of this testing period, he was free from pretense and false motives: "God tested us thoroughly to make sure we were qualified to be trusted with this Message. Be assured that when we speak to you we're not after crowd approval—only God approval. Since we've been put through that battery of tests, you're guaranteed that both we and the Message are free of error, mixed motives, or hidden agendas" (1 Thessalonians 2:3–5 MSG).

The character test reveals any mixed motives or hidden agendas. This is why God uses the process to test and prepare us—to expose and rid us of these impurities; because the spotlight only magnifies what is in us. Joseph's character was thoroughly tested before each level of promotion: "Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character" (Psalm 105:19).

Each phase of the process Joseph went through positioned him for promotion. We see this in his faithfulness to Potiphar—managing his home and refusing to commit adultery. We see this in his faithfulness to manage the prison and serve those who were detained. We see this in his faithfulness to Pharaoh and forgiveness toward his brothers.

Refuse to be in a hurry for promotion. Allow God to develop and test your character,

so when promotion comes, you'll be able to handle it.



Father, give me a heart that reverentially fears You. I pray that You will always sit enthroned in my heart. Help me to faithfully steward my present assignment. Lord, I pray that I will never act out of fear, frustration, or pressure; but I pray that I will always be led by Your Spirit. I thank You that You direct my steps, because You delight in every detail of my life. I thank You that You are working out Your plans for my life, because Your faithful love endures forever. Amen.

Progress Through the Process

Progress is made through the process. Several times I've repeated: The process prepares you for what is prepared for you. With this end in mind, you can patiently stay the course. The writer of Hebrews instructed:

Be like those who stay the course with committed faith and then get everything promised to them. . . . You need to stick it out, staying with God's plan so you'll be there for the promised completion. (Hebrews 6:12, 10:36 MSG)

Two identical statements are emphasized regarding receiving what God has promised: "Stay the course," and "Staying with God's plan." The key word is *stay*. Many miss what God has for them because they don't stick around to receive it. They become discouraged or impatient, and abort the process. Another word for "stay" is "wait." The word "wait" means, "To stay where one is or delay action until a particular time."

When I accepted the position to be the youth pastor for the internationally known pastor, he shared with me, "John, I don't know what it is, but I only see you here for a few years, because then I see you traveling." I'll never forget my sincere response: "As far as I'm concerned, unless God tells us differently, I will be here for the rest of my life until Jesus comes back." I was willing to stay wherever God had me.

Because of the wilderness I had just gone through, I learned that apart from God's

involvement, I cannot, in my own ability, bring to pass His plan for my life. My character had matured to a place where I was no longer striving to make the promise come to pass. When I looked at my pastor and said those words, I meant it. It wasn't the politically correct thing to say in the moment. The pain I endured through all I had experienced taught me invaluable lessons. I never wanted to make the same mistakes again.

During the next two years while I was youth pastoring, I went through trials like I hadn't experienced before. It was another intense wilderness period in which greater spiritual growth and maturity took place. The lessons I had learned in Dallas prepared me for what I would face in Orlando. Knowing this, I was equipped for the challenges I would soon experience.

The process takes time. Progressing through the process will require patience—or the ability to wait well. Paul encouraged, “That is why waiting does not diminish us any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy” (Romans 8:22–25 MSG).

Paul uses the analogy of a pregnant woman. When a woman becomes pregnant, there is a period of waiting. From the moment of conception to the moment of delivery, she is known to be “expecting.” As the baby forms and develops within her, she knows a date is set to give birth to the baby she is carrying.

You cannot rush the development of the child in the womb, so we cannot rush God's work in our lives. God determines the schedule. Rushing the process is like delivering a baby prematurely—they are weak, and in some cases cannot survive the conditions outside the womb. In like manner, when you are pregnant with a promise from God, you are expecting one day to receive that promise.

As you wait on the promise to be fulfilled, you are growing and developing in preparation for it. Just as a pregnant woman educates herself on what to expect while she is expecting, likewise it is wise to be aware of what to expect while you are expecting the fulfillment of God's promise.

Expect to encounter discouragement. As you stay the course, you will encounter discouragement. This often occurs when what you're expecting doesn't happen how or when you expect it to. Solomon related to this, expressing, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12 NKJV).

Delay can be depressing, and it can feel like denial. However, let go of preconceived expectations and let God bring His promise to pass in His timing. When He does, the sweetness will satisfy your soul.

Expect to contend for the promise. To combat discouragement, you must keep yourself encouraged. This will require you to be intentional about keeping the promise before you. When you do this, it provides a sense of purpose to the present process.

Regarding encouragement, the Bible gives us helpful tools to apply. One is to write the vision and review it often: “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Habakkuk 2:2–3 NKJV).

Another tool is to pray the promise. Paul urged Timothy, “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18 NKJV). Both reviewing and praying the promise will help you stay the course to completion. The promise is in the process of fulfillment.

Expect God to surprise you. Through the process, God can seem distant. You may be tempted to entertain thoughts and feelings of abandonment. In frustration, you cry, “God, where are You?!” Just because you cannot see God working on your behalf doesn’t mean He’s not. In fact, this is a time when God is most active. The words of Psalmist indicate this truth: “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4 NKJV). The word “delight” in Hebrew means, “To be soft, moldable, and pliable.” When we allow God to shape us, He prepares us for the desires of our heart. God takes the time to do everything right. *Everything!* Time is on your side because God is on your side.

Waiting on God through the process enables us to develop and maintain dependency on Him. Success has a way of causing us to lose sight of our need for God. It has a way of weaning us off our dependency on Him. Unintentionally, we can shift from a God-orientation to a self-orientation—in which we take responsibility for maintaining success, rather than depending on God.

Therefore, God works to ground, strengthen, stretch, and mature our faith and trust in Him. When we enter times of promotion, we’ll know that it was God who brought

us there. Our hearts will be anchored in Him. Expect God to surprise you! “God has made everything beautiful for its own time . . . but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Expect your capacity to be enlarged. Along the process, our capacity is incrementally enlarged. When I first started bench-pressing at the gym, I couldn’t handle heavy loads. My strength was not developed. Over time, as I was consistent with my workout regimen, my strength progressively developed. I was able to handle heavier loads of weight.

In like manner, God develops our capacity to handle greater challenges. Therefore, staying the course is crucial to our development. Paul affirmed, “Let us exalt in our sufferings and rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance; and endurance, proven character (spiritual maturity)” (Romans 5:3–4 AMP). There is purpose in the process.



Father, I thank You that You take the time to do everything right. I choose to depend on You. My trust is in You. I thank You that You make everything beautiful in its time. Amen.

Purpose Beyond the Pain

There's no question that the process is painful. Pain is experienced physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Without a proper understanding of pain's purpose, you will always defer to the path of least resistance. The expression "No pain, no gain!" holds true in our development. I'm certainly not suggesting that you seek out pain, but rather, I'm encouraging you to have a fresh perspective on it. Our response to pain will determine whether we become bitter or better.

When contrasting pain and pleasure, Solomon wrote, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness (pain) has a refining influence on us" (Ecclesiastes 7:3). Here Solomon is contemplating the fact that there is more to pain than we realize. He is pointing out that there is much to be gained through pain that cannot be achieved any other way. There is purpose in your pain.

A few verses later, he wrote, "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider that God has made one as well as the other" (Ecclesiastes 7:14 NKJV). In the day of adversity, Solomon tells us to consider God's purpose. Pain has a refining influence on us. Not only should we ask, "Why am I going through this?" We need to ask, "What am I learning from this?"

Let's attend to pain's lessons and explore the purpose of pain.

Pain produces perception. Perception is defined as, "The ability to see, hear, or

become aware of something through the senses.” C.S. Lewis said, “Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures . . . but shouts in our pains. It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Pain is God’s megaphone; it gets our attention like nothing else. Painful situations put us in a position to consider who we are and where we are. Pain always points to a problem. The problem is not the pain—the problem is what’s causing the pain! What is God trying to tell us through pain? Are there attitudes or practices that need to change? Are there mindsets that need to be renewed? Is there a part of your character that cannot be developed any other way?

Another benefit of pain is that it develops empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Regarding this, Paul wrote, “He (God) comforts us in all our troubles so we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us” (2 Corinthians 1:4).

There is an intimacy with God that is known through pain. This is due to our heart being tenderized and open to His presence. When we have experienced a level of pain, we can better relate to those who are suffering. We become more sensitive to those around us and can minister to them more effectively. God allows painful experiences so that we can perceive our true condition and our need for Him. In turn, we can become greater vessels of His love to a hurting world.

Pain produces protection. Pain cannot be ignored. It is a gift that acts as a coach and counselor. Without pain, we would injure ourselves repeatedly. Just like a child learns not to touch a hot stove through the pain inflicted, we too learn what not to do from painful experiences. David shared, “Before I suffered, I did wrong, but now I obey Your word” (Psalm 119:67 NCV).

Pain produces pruning. Pain purifies our hearts and refocuses priorities. Having experienced his share of pain, A.W. Tozer wrote, “It is astonishing, how many difficulties clear up without any effort when the inner life gets straightened out. If half the time we spend trying to fix up outward things were spent in getting our hearts right, we would be delighted with the results. Strange as it may seem, harmony within our hearts depends mostly upon our getting into harmony with God.”

Refuse to be in such a rush to get out of painful circumstances that you don’t get anything out of them. Again, there is purpose in your pain. The writer of Hebrews

informed, “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).

During unpleasant circumstances, we may feel as if God has abandoned us or is even punishing us. In these moments, rather than turn away from God; we must turn to Him. It is in God’s presence that we will be infused with the necessary strength to walk through the pain and see beyond it.

In his suffering, Job was determined to cling to God. He declared, “At least I can take comfort in this: despite the pain, I have not denied the words of the Holy One” (Job 6:10). The Psalmist journaled, “What joy for those whose strength comes from the Lord . . . When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs” (Psalm 84:5–6).

There is both purpose in your pain and purpose beyond your pain. For a follower of Christ, there is always light at the end of the tunnel.



Father, I thank You that all things are working together for good. Despite my pain, I choose to cling to You. I choose to dig deep and find my strength in You. I thank You that there is purpose in my pain and purpose beyond my pain. Amen.

Final Thoughts

Throughout this mini-book, we specifically dealt with the purpose of the process. This included the importance of trusting the process, how we are tested in order to be trusted, progressing through the process, and the purpose of your pain.

If you're struggling to find purpose in your present season and feel like you're lost in the middle of an endless maze, you could be in a spiritual wilderness. If this describes you, I strongly encourage you to go through *The Wilderness* course. In this course, I carefully guide you through navigating this crucial season. I unpack how God gives you a promise to awaken a sense of destiny within you. And I show how this promise will create a process that prepares you for its fulfillment.

The wilderness is a time in which God can feel miles away and His promises even further. If you're in a wilderness now, know that you're not alone! Many have been where you are and have made it through victoriously. You can too! I hope this mini-book has offered fresh perspective and hope. Remember, where you are is vital to where you are going. God is preparing you for what He has prepared for you.

Stuck in the Middle: mini-book

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Written by John Bevere

Developed by Chris Pace

Edited by Laura Willbur and Cory Emberson

Cover by Austin Bevere

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