

Surviving the Desert

Most of us don't enjoy being stuck anywhere. Think about being stuck at the office, the airport, or on the side of the road. But of all the places we tend to get stuck, thankfully, the desert isn't one of them! By nature, deserts are harsh: the sun is relentless, the land is barren, and water is scarce. Being stuck in a desert is a frightening experience—it's true for literal deserts, and it's true for metaphorical ones, too. And when we're in a desert, we learn two things: we're not in control, and we don't have what it takes to get ourselves out...and we are desperate to get out!

The great news is that God is with us in our deserts, as he is anywhere else, and faithful to provide for every step of the way. The challenge is to consistently place our trust and faith in God when we're naturally inclined to take matters into our own hands. So, how can we depend on God? Here are some things you can try, choose what connects best with you.

1 Prayer

Prayer is simply talking with God. We don't use fancy words or act super formal; we speak plainly because we trust him and believe he loves and cares about us. If you're not sure what to say, try this:

God, I'm depending on you to give me the strength to do each "next thing" today.

There's so much I'm uncertain about and can't fix. I'm counting on you to take care of it all. Thank you for being dependable and faithful.

If that's too much, try this:

God, I'm counting on you to get me through today. Thank you that you will.

What do you need to tell God today?

2 Journaling

Before your day gets going, take 5–10 minutes to list everything (big and small) you're feeling or depending on God for. At the end of the day, review your list and note the ways God was faithful. Thank him for these things and for the grace he gives in the areas where you're still struggling.

What are you thankful for today?

3 Nature

Spend time outdoors and observe the ways God attends to creation. As you do, let it encourage your heart to know that in the same way he cares for his creation, he will also care for you. If you can't get outside, read chapters 38 and 39 in the book of Job and enjoy the beautiful imagery. Observe the detail God put into every facet of this world, and remember he thinks far more about you (see Matthew 6:25–34.) A final suggestion is to collect something from nature (e.g., a rock or flower) and put it where you can easily see it as a reminder to trust God to attend to all your needs.

Where can you appreciate God's artistry today?

4 Scripture

Fear and uncertainty cause our minds to be consumed with worry. Worry distracts us from focusing on God. Memorizing Scripture gives our minds something more productive to think about by turning our thoughts toward God's faithfulness. Here are a couple of suggestions to start with:

Lamentations 3:22–23 – Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Psalms 56:3 – When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

What Bible passage provides comfort for you today?

5 Relationships

Deserts can make us feel alone and isolated. We might assume no one would understand—or worse, that no one cares. But part of depending on God is leaning into others for support, encouragement, prayer, wisdom, and joy. We can depend on God to provide people who will enter into the desert with us, but our part is to invite them in.

Who are you doing life with today?

6 Music

Worship directs our minds and hearts toward God. Many of us enjoy worshipping God through music, as songs remind us of God's character and faithfulness in our lives. Create a playlist of your favorite worship songs, letting the lyrics become prayers of dependence and trust in him.

What lyrics resonate with you today?

7 Creativity

You may enjoy creating something that visually reminds you of God's faithfulness and your dependence on him. Maybe it's writing a verse about his faithfulness in beautiful script, building something, or designing a piece of pottery or jewelry. God has gifted you with an amazing talent—use it to lean into him during desert seasons.

What creative exercises are life-giving to you?

8 Service

Serving others is an effective way to remember our dependence on God. Jesus regularly served others because he fully trusted God's provision for him. Before your day gets going, take a few minutes and ask God to reveal ways you can serve those around you. Let each act of service be a means of declaring your dependence on him for your needs.

How are you reflecting kindness and love to others today?

Remember, God is in the desert with you. He's not uncertain or afraid, and he doesn't want you to live that way. He wants you to live fully dependent on him. Try a few of these suggestions to help you experience God's faithful provision in this season. You may find that you thrive, not just survive, in this desert season.