

Continuing the Story of David...



Turning Your Desolation Into Your Destiny

A recent poll discovered that 25 percent of Millennials and Gen Zs have contemplated suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic. We live in desolate times. So did David. Yet, his wilderness season prepared him for a throne. From his story, we learn how to turn our desolations into a destiny.

Principles that See Us Through Seasons of Desolation on the Way to Our Throne:

1. Life has its unavoidable seasons. They come and go. Some are pleasant, others difficult. Yet, they all pass. The issue isn't how long they last, but whether we will pass through better for them. **Our response:** Hold on loosely to each season. Don't get too comfortable in the good times or too discouraged in the bad. None will last. [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 by David's Son, Solomon]

2. The seasons of our lives are in the hands of a Sovereign God for a good purpose. **Our response:** Find the beauty in each season. See each in the light of eternity. Don't weary yourself trying to figure out God's purposes. [Ecclesiastes 3:11]

3. Rather than looking for a way out, or trying to gut it out or attempting to figure it out, put your effort in pursuing the heart of God. **Our response:** In the words of a Nike commercial, "Just do it!" [1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22 & Matthew 6:31-34]

4. When times aren't right, always do right. Doing right is its own reward. **Our response:** No matter how desperate our situation or critical our need, we can never justify disobeying God. "I didn't have a choice!" will never fly in the courts of heaven. We all have a choice: Do right, even if it breaks your heart—or someone else's. [1 Samuel 25:1-11]

5. Beware of the accumulative power of resentment, rage and revenge. Wilderness times can make us better or bitter. The choice is always ours. **Our response:** Let God deal with those who seek to injure us (unless, of course, we are in his anointed position to lawfully discipline or administer justice). [1 Samuel 25:12-39]

6. Remember Abigail's story. Pray that God will protect you by bringing people like her into your life when you are ready to melt down. **Our response:** We can never forget that we are all depraved enough to do evil beyond our wildest imagination. A sober evaluation of ourselves will keep us on our knees praying, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Also, we will listen to those God sends to us as an answer to our prayer. [1 Samuel 25:28-44]

7. Beware of running ahead of God's timing, or taking his role in solving your problems—especially if it causes you to violate his biblical precepts to do so. **Our response:** There are plenty of folks who will tell you what's right or wrong, but don't listen to anyone whose advice doesn't line up with God's Word. [1 Samuel 26]

8. Sometimes you have to get away from the pressure for a season—even if you end up in the land of the Philistines. There are times when you will find better help from nonbelievers than professing Christians. **Our response:** When it comes to the ones you look to for support, look to character and not religious profession. The best support are Christians with godly character. The second best are nonbelievers with good character. The third choice are flawed believers without reliability. Ultimately, the best advice is stamped on U.S. money: "In God we trust." [1 Samuel 27:1-7]

9. There are times when transparency and vulnerability are good and necessary. Then, there are moments when they are dangerously stupid. Be very careful who you trust with your darkest secrets, fears, anxieties, or confessions of sin. Not everyone is godly or mature enough to handle them in a responsible or loving manner. **Our response:** Pray that God will give you the grace to bear up under the load or the wisdom to know who is worthy of sharing your burden. [1 Samuel 27:8-12; Matthew 7:7-11]

10. Don't look to the creation to give you peace of mind in the face of an uncertain future or the strategies with which to deal with it. If the Creator chooses to keep secrets from you, rest in his goodness and power to see you through to a right end. [Deuteronomy 29:29] **Our response:** Seek the *logos* Word of God first, and hope for a *rhema* Word from his Spirit. Avoid, at all costs, witchcraft, the occult, horoscopes, new age gurus, eastern religions, and false "Christian" teachers and cultists. Beware of media narratives, political promises, the so-called "science" of secular humanists, and any other voices that proclaim that the answers are found anywhere but in God. [1 Samuel 28;]

11. Ultimately, in desolate times where we are in a survival mode, there will come a singular moment when our faith will divide us from others—even those who have been of great help and comfort to us in the past. **Our response:** Like the seasons of life, we must hold on loosely to the relationships that pass through our lives. Instead of regret, bitterness or lasting sorrow for those who take another path at critical forks in the road, we should thank God for what they contributed to our lives—and then move on. We must never forget that our best days are always ahead of us. [1 Samuel 29]

12. When things go wrong, it is sinful human nature for folks to take out their anger and grief on those closest to them. Their loved ones invariably become the “can” that they kick. **Our response:** Don’t be one of those who takes out your anger on your spouse, children, friends, or the one conveniently nearest to you at the moment. Remember, things said or done in anger can never be unsaid or undone. If you are the target, keep your eyes on Jesus and do the right thing. Trust him to vindicate you. [1 Samuel 30]

13. The Lord may not be on time [as we count time], but he is never late. Faith believes his Word, and obeys it, even when there is no evidence of its reality on near horizons. [Hebrews 11:1&2] **Our response:** Live by faith, not sight. Live by God’s timetable, not yours. It’s in the waiting and persevering that God prepares us to be big enough to handle the bigger things. Pampered princes and princesses are developed in palaces, but godly kings and queens are crafted in desert wilderness. [1 Samuel 31; James 1:2-4]

14. Never rejoice in the evil that befalls your enemies. Instead, speak well of their good qualities. Remember, like the good and bad seasons of life, the “good” and “bad” people are all put in your life by a Sovereign God for your growth and his glory. **Our response:** When regret and resentment for past disappointments, or hurtful people [or even present trials and tribulations] paralyze us, we have to understand that this is the devil’s scheme to dismantle and disarm us. We have to remember that we have been made for better things: to be mighty warriors who rise up to take possession of the wondrous future He has ordained for us. So shake off the sadness and regret, and thank God for those painful and precious wounds. Turn your scars into stars, and your desolation into your destiny. [2 Samuel 1&2]

15. Remember the nameless Amalekite. Certainly, our actions will determine our immediate destiny. The law of consequences is inexorable and inviolate. But, if we will let go, and allow God to manage our future, he will always do an infinitely better job than we ever could. **Our response:** Seek first his Kingdom, and all other things that we need during our seasons of desolation, will be supplied to us. [2 Samuel 1:8-13]