

LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER

Jeremiah 17: 5-8 This is what the Lord says:

*“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.
He will be like a bush in the wastelands;
he will not see prosperity when it comes.
He will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.*

*“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.
He will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit.”*

Can you keep on trusting when the heat comes? When the drought comes?
Can you hang onto the confidence you have in the Lord?
Can you be like that tree planted by the water? Your roots firmly fixed in a
faith in Jesus Christ?
Can you go through a drought – or through depression – without worry?
Can you bear fruit and be productive even when you’re having trouble
emotionally?

What’s holding you back?
How can we hang onto the confidence in the Lord when we’re going through trials? Can we
continue to trust Him? To rely on Him?
And is faith the same as trust? Is it possible to believe in God but not trust Him?

What happens when we do continue to place our trust in Him during times of trials?
We will be blessed. (vs 7)

Jeff Manion, in his book *The Land Between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions* asks: “Is it possible to possess a vital faith that prompts you to be at your best when things are at their worst? Is it possible for the best version of you to emerge while you are passing through a season of profound disappointment, unnerving chaos, or debilitating pain?

Manion likens the 40 years the Israelites spent in the desert after they were freed from their slavery in Egypt to a time of disappointment and debilitating pain (like depression). He believes a time like this is the time that God does some of His deepest work in our lives. The time in the desert was required for God to do His transformational work in the Israelites, to prepare them for what lay ahead.

He writes, “Many seasoned spiritual advisers propose that this is the only space in which radical, transformational growth occurs. God intends for us to emerge from this land radically reshaped. But the process of transformational growth will not occur automatically. Our response to God while in the Land Between is what will determine whether our journey through this desert will result in deep, positive growth or spiritual decline.”

“While offering us a greenhouse for growth, the Land Between can also be a desert where our faith goes to die – if we let it. The habits of the heart that we foster in this space – our responses and reactions – will determine whether the Land Between results in spiritual life or spiritual death.”

“We choose.”

- Have you ever felt yourself transformed or changed after a depressive episode?
- If so, do you remember how you responded to God during that depressed period?
- What does the Bible say about what our heart’s attitude should be during times of depression?

Psalm 40:1 Wait *patiently* for the Lord. (He will hear your cry and lift you out of the mud and mire.)

Psalm 37:3 “*Trust* in the Lord and *do good*.”

Psalm 13 Cry out to God, but then turn around and say “*But I trust in your unfailing love*.”

Psalm 28:6-7 “Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; *my heart trusts in him and I am helped*.”