Dave Ward

Poop! I am in the valley!

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# Never shaken!

Psalms 30:6-7 (ESV) As for me, I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.” By your favor, O LORD, you made my mountain stand strong; you hid your face; I was dismayed.

I don’t know if you ever had that, a feeling of amazement and knowing you got it down. After that you feel yourself so low again! If you say I will never be shaken God says: “valley time!” :p I am talking out of this today, a picture I will try to play out. I want to contrast the mountain top and the valley for you.

# Mountaintop

Mountaintop you're high up, you feel spiritual and good, the sky is blue, see for miles, hear everything and look down on everyone in the valley season. Why don’t they just do what I do? Skiing down the slopes. I love the mountain top!

We all want to live there! An intern asked her; I just want life to be like this all the time. Do you think it is possible to live on the mountain top all the time? I don’t think that is what God wants, it is his design with valleys. I still hope it is true, and my issue being a lack of faith. But I think this is the way it functions.

# The valley

My valley feels like a jungle, from swoop swooping to the middle of the jungle. Then you find yourself in the valley. It’s dark, can’t see in front of you, vines hanging on there. From this beautiful life is easy seeing for miles you find yourself in the dark. Can’t hear sounds so clearly and the first thing I think is what on earth is going on?!

Slowly life is starting to suck, not healing people with my burps all the time. Normally for me I don’t get that sign or warning. I feel like I suck at life. They don’t realize how hurt really feels. You barred yourself and hide from who you are as a human.

I feel like I am failing. Jealous, or bitter more. On the mountaintop Jesus comes out of you all the time. It is easy to be nice! I am such a nice person, being me is so much fun! When I enter the valley it is like the opposite comes out. Do I need deliverance? Comparison issues, I am shocked and disappointed by it. Finding something hard that not long ago was easy.

# Trying to be spiritual

It feels like you have gone backward. If you live with mountain standards in the valley you will die! There is an ease in the mountain top, time with being in Him. Sometimes you think it is all about you, and it is not God. I will hide my Face, not because I am cruel. But you need to be reminded of who you are and in His kindness, He plops you in the valley. This is really hard, up there it was really easy. I was disciplined, right now I really try to live with this standard but it is increasingly hard!

Sometimes when you are in a painful place you can fast and pray and become really proud. When he became really quiet what happened publicly became privately. He was so happy with just a glass of water in his chair. It was so easy, why haven’t I done this for all my life?

Wondering why not everyone did it. No longer any risk in sitting in there. What it cost you at the start is not requiring faith anymore, because it slipped into discipline. He started to notice that 6 hours became really hard work, then 4 then 2 hours. Now he was really freaked out. That was the way I found Him and experienced attention and connection. I must have been doing something wrong! Do I need to suck it up and push through? The worst thing about that he would clear the diary and not really knowing what to do. Monk-like together sitting for 8 hours, what once happened there with God now was without God being there.

It is really painful that there are seasons where I can do extreme spiritual stuff my identity can get inside of that. God wants to see if I remain proud and push through or am I mouldable and listen to Him and where He is? There is a human pride that comes and I am becoming more miserable that is the test. Will you let go of your standards? Of course I am not talking about sin!

On the mountaintop discipline is really easy for me, not drawn to home comforts. Doesn't mean I want to be in that, but when the season starts shifting I go to human comforts more. Because I am very radical it is different, but it is important and good for me to eat more chocolate and have more fun and see how human I am sometimes. I have sat for hours on my own reading the Bible while the Holy Spirit was like just watch something fun, daydreaming, winding down. But really hard to have that as a human.

If you can not be a normal human you will be proud and not connected with Him. Bob Jones and Heidi Baker on a 40 day fast on the 12th day: Eat biscuits!

# How to know you’re in the value

The problem with this world is that it is unseen when you're on a mountaintop literally you can see it! On a tangible literal mountain! But in the Kingdom how do you know when you are in the value, and when you're not? Everything can stay the same, but within your internal world, something is shifting! The sense of now knowing where you are and what is going on.

How to diagnose it can be pain or discomfort, earlier on they were fun and now they’re painful. 2 practical things:

* Go back to basics!

When it is dark and I am head-butting trees how do I get out of here. I had to be lead out of being quiet, I didn't want to be tricked out of it and leave it too soon. Someone would have a dream and they said: "it is a different kind of year Dave Ward is speaking again." Oh, I think it is God so I will talk again all the time! His anxiety went through the roof. Worship and listen to a few songs. Feeling and senses. Letting Him know that I don't know what is going on, but that I am available. He will come and meet you, but it may take time. Bill says that sometimes, once he is not connected he will go to principles and do them. A life of principles is good, even when we don't feel so connected.

* Don’t say you are in a valley just to make yourself feel better!

We love to feel in control by saying spiritual things, not from His mouth. When we put our words to His words and partner with Him that is the ease that comes in that time. All this I never realize it was just Him. So exciting to see it was all Him, you and me? If you have a grace in an area it is Him. It becomes fun and exhilarating is you and Him. A connection point with you and God and that is fun! Be slow to label yourself or season, particularly in a hard time or season. Has He or are you trying to say that because no one is noticing you?

I am most likely to reach out for something good rather than God when I am looking for meaning. What is the Lord doing, what is He saying? Be slow to just grab anything that fits or sounds spiritual. Doing all kinds of things, I don’t know what He is doing or why?! Just admit you don’t know! One of the wisest answers is I don’t know. I have no idea what the answer is. So many times admitting that means that knowing come. Hang out there, don’t fake knowing if you don’t know!

# Why valleys?

Why did God make valleys, what a swine?!

To be alive is to grow, move. Your body is designed to do it all the time, you go with it. You will get things in the valley you can’t get anywhere else! He gives you a house, but I think of it like going back to other houses. They became homes how I felt the first few weeks I was in there.

When he moved to an apartment in London it all felt like home, but thinking back this whole park and area was intimidating when I got here. That is kind of how seasons are with God. What took discomfort and risk was big, but is normal now. I don’t really want comfort, but I want Him!

When God is showing me a part of Himself I will go through the thing you are striving. Dave is becoming an expert, then God has to mix something up! A bit like the never be shaken, God is like move on! If you're trying to judge everything through the lense God is revealing to you that is very revealing you're about to become a Pharisee. God loves them so much! But that doesn't mean He wants us to be like them! God wants childlikeness and throws you into the valley for a bit.

The first thought is I want back to the mountaintop, but God loves the valley as much as the mountaintop! I want to be able to see the sun again, after a while you realize the trees are really beautiful. Not only spiders but butterflies as well. Not just trying to get out, but appreciating where you're at right now!

Move from trying to get out to moving and finding Him in there.

# Growing up

You’re not screwing up, you're growing up!

Winning or learning, a beautiful picture of this. If I go from mountain top to valley I am quick to feel small and failing. When you realize you’re not screwing up, but growing up it feels you permission to be great and strong. In the mountain you don't have to do that, but in the valley, it is supposed to be a growing time. That is the essence of being alive, to learn!

# Live by principles

Not high, low, but near!

Principles are fixed, trying to apply them to themselves always is hard. Perhaps you're trying to apply wisdom and teaching to a time you're not in. Sometimes that is really hard, your need for Him to be real and you not being able to make Him do it.

There comes a point where you have to give up on the principles if they're not giving you life. I need to hear You right now, even if I feel like the deafest Christian on earth who can't hear You.

No interest in the valley or mountain if He is not.

The whole point of life is to know Him! You can not have life and add Him into it. This is the point, you will only find true fulfillment in Him!

# Embracing ourselves fully

He hides His face so we embrace ourselves fully and seeing wholeness. It is beautiful and rich, but there is something about becoming whole when you feel His warmth in the middle of your ugliness, process and not being there yet. There is something there in Him that you can’t find up there! Easy to feel fathered on the mountain top, but my longing is that I will in my weakness become a Father that when my son is being ugly his first thought is man I need to see dad. It might feel hard to tell him, but I will feel safe when I am with dad.

Teach me how to be so secure as a father that when my son comes he can feel safe in my company. You only get that in the valley.

Giving words to the process for us makes it okay to be human. Oh, you're so normal Dave, I wanted to be radical! Everyone is better at something, but not finding my acceptance in something different is very good!

# Connection vs formula

For a lot of people leaving it is easy to assume that you're going into a valley. It is super important to not look at it that way! It makes sense, but if that is not what He is saying I can end up in a valley time very easily. Be slow to assume that changing circumstances automatically means valley. You can't speed it up, but you can slow it down! God's purpose for time, as you find how much He likes you the need to speed slows down in you because you start to appreciate the now way more. He is not waiting for a better day than the day when you are very profound.

I’ve lost the need to speed up, I see success less and less as impact and more as connection. Thankfulness is key, different answers to different people. Leaders are different around here. Thankfulness is good in desperate times, but it confirmed the message of not being able to be in pain for Dave. God was saying your praise, worship is telling me how you feel. Give me your ugliest, that is the most beautiful thing you can give to me. But then there were days where God says just give me praise and thankfulness!

So many times when you're trying to do the thing that repeats it next time. How do we contain this awesome time the exact same thing? That doesn't work! You can’t recreate a moment, move through it with Him!

What are you talking about when you're talking about the valley. Is it difficulty. Assumption is one of the biggest enemies of childlikeness. Be slow to make a conclusion. Where does the journey up the mountain jump into this?

I wasn't being specific or literal as the question you're asking. More illustrating it because of that picture. But I can say something profound about leaving the valley and climbing the mountain. I don’t think those are the only 2, but I was trying to make the contrast today. There is a breakthrough in both. Every time you would say it is this way He is going to mix it up. He doesn't like to be boxed!

# Process

Everything is process, the more we give into the process the more we find Him. He is the Creator of process!

Give people permission where they are at and okay with what they are. We can reign in any season and be victorious always. Don’t go that is wrong, but I am here you like me just as much as I am there. Teach me, mature me and grow me into this.

A lot of those verses are destination and positionally you can be there, but I am nervous about using Scripture to rob us of process because that is not how God intended them to be!

What do you do when you're in a place where you feel hopeless and despairing? Something about finding Him everywhere and anywhere.