

TALKING POINTS

STARTING OVER - PART ONE

LEARNING IN

What do we do when we wake up one day and everything is barren in our lives? We often believe God has abandoned us! That is just not true. Even Jesus himself was led by the Spirit of God *into the wilderness* for a very clear purpose.

First, it's critical to know God does not want us to *stay* in a barren place, even if we are in one now. He has made a way for us to not become barren spiritually even when our circumstances are difficult.

God has a plan to strengthen us in our inner being no matter what the external realities are. In this regard, we are much like raising a crop in a barren land - there are things which *must* occur in our lives for us to grow spiritually.

Read Romans 12:1

What kind of effects have you felt spiritually during these complicated times?

LIVING IT OUT

Since we know God does not want us to be a spiritually barren place no matter what the world around us does, it's really helpful to know what steps we can take to grow spiritually during a "barren" time. Here are five points of focus for us to *start over* growing spiritually in the same way a crop flourishes in the right conditions:

New Topsoil - soil rich in nutrients produces a great yield. Spiritual nutrition does the same for us. We can't neglect it.

Read Acts 2:42, Matthew 4:4

Why can we be all about physical nutrition and yet neglect spiritual nutrition?

Water - nothing can live without water for long. "Rivers of living water" represent the Holy Spirit's presence and power poured out on Jesus' followers *if* we allow Him to pour into us.

Read John 7:38

What things in your life connect you with the "rivers of living water" Jesus promised?

The Right Seed - all good crops come from good seed. The good seed we are called to plant is the Kingdom of God itself, right here and now.

Read Mark 4:30-32

How can we show the "right seed" of the Kingdom of God in this divisive time?

Pull Out The Weeds - weeds can choke out the best crops. We need to pull out the weeds of unbelief and anything else that distracts us from God.

Read Romans 10:17, Hebrews 4:11, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

What are the "weeds" in your life?

Wait For The Harvest - all things happen in God's time, not ours. We have to trust and have patience knowing God will reap the harvest in us when His time is right.

Read 2 Peter 3:9, Galatians 6:9

How can we encourage each other while we wait for God's time of reaping a harvest?