

It is hard to say when my first journey into the wilderness occurred. A curious, rolling vagabond feeling the creek's coolness, laying in a green meadow watching redtail hawks gliding overhead. Countless hours playing alone in the woods, looking for arrowheads and broken pieces of pottery with strange markings. In my early days, the wilderness was a place to explore filled with wonderings stirring my imagination. My next-door neighbor, Mrs. Oman, lived three miles away from our farm. A woman of a dark complexion, a native American, we journey together on Sunday evening looking together for unearthed artifacts plowed up by her husband. She said little, but I learned how to look and observe. Once in a while, she would hint at native secrets, only spiking my interest more. We both knew it was sacred land. The land and all the animals and plants created an unspoken connection that is more felt by the inner knowing than words could not explain. Now I know she was my first spiritual companion. My teacher taught me the wilderness was nothing to fear, rather embrace. She had traveled this wilderness before me and was bringing past lessons forward. It was she who told me the name of the creek I waded in, Buck's Branch. Named for a native American who lived in a cave on the family farm. Collapsed, I thought it was an abandoned fox hole. Stories are long forgotten, yet still living. She was the one who traveled with me opening doors I never thought possible. I was seven when I lost her to declining health. While I traveled alone for many seasons, she was always present, teaching.

Read: John 15:12, Galatians 5:13, 6:2, Romans 15:14, and 1 Thessalonians 4:18 and Hebrews 10:25

As we read these scriptures: I am reminded of bible stories like Adam and Eve, Naomi and Ruth, Jesus sending out his disciples two by two, Paul and Timothy. These are but a few examples that we are to travel together.

People are communal. We need one another. We were created for relationships: with God, each other, and ourselves.

Regardless of where you travel in life, your journey will always involve people. This is especially true when you journey into the wilderness. We need someone else to

journey with us. We call them by different names, but in essence, they are spiritual guides or companions. For the sake of our discussion, I will use the word, spiritual companion. Who has travel with you into the wilderness or who have you been a spiritual companion for someone maybe intentional or unintentionally? What did we learn?

Let begin with Moses. Read Numbers 10: 15-29

God had promised that he would guide Moses and his people through the wilderness. This is Moses' three wilderness journeys. First Moses ran into to wilderness to escape death. God led Moses back to Egypt to confront Pharaoh and deliver God's people from slavery and take them to the promised land. God promises in Numbers 9 to guide them by a cloud by day and fire by night.

Now we see where Moses asked his brother-in-law, a Midianite, to assist in guiding them through the wilderness.

What purpose did Moses have asking Hobab to guide them? Was this a lack of faith by Moses or was there another reason?

We might think that Moses lack faith in trusting God. I don't believe that. This is Moses third wilderness journey. The wilderness was becoming a place that Moses was familiar with, but Moses

asking Hobab for assistance might seem puzzling at first, tells us about Moses.

One of my favorite movie actors is Clint Eastwood. I first saw him in Rawhide. He acted and produced many movies. In his movie Magnum Force, Eastwood playing the role of Harry Callahan says. "A man's got to know his limitations."

Moses as a leader was humble enough, and wish enough to ask for help. He knew his brother-in-law knew the upcoming wilderness better than he did. The best places to camp, the best places to find water. Hobad knew the lay of the land so to speak, and Moses knew that and was willing to ask. How many of us have experienced a time in our life when we needed help, and it seems that God put the right person at the right time for us. That person that walked along beside you doing perhaps one of the most

important ministry there is: being presence and listening. Allowing you to let the thing that is holding you down, keeping you from moving forward, oppressing rather than liberating you. That person is your spiritual companion.

When you find yourself in the wilderness, perhaps the hardest thing to do, is ask for help.

Is it for you to ask for help? What makes asking for help difficult?

What keeps us from asking for help in the wilderness?

Carl Jung talks about shadows. Those Hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the [ego](#) has either repressed or never recognized. Those things we are not consciously aware about ourselves, but unknowingly control our behavior either in a positive or negative way. It in the wilderness we begin to become of these shadows. These shadows can prevent us from asking for help in the wilderness. I because aware of a few.

Read 1 King 19:10, Psalms 10:1-11, Colossians 2:18-23, Proverbs 7:13-14

Reading these scriptures, we

We need to be aware of prevents from asking for help?

Self-pity, pride, false humility, false spirituality

Listening to Elijah, I heard self-pity. We know about pity parties. Wow is me. We fall into depression. We allow it to take control. We become self-absorbed. It is destructive to dwell on the negative, it harbors bitterness and resentment. We focus on the hurt rather than taking control of our lives.

On the other end of the spectrum is pride. We know the say: pride goes before destruction. Being prideful and having a healthy ego has its advantages, but excessive pride put you above God and others. It disrespects others by devaluing others. Pride is driven by poor self-worth and insecurity. You put others down in order to feel superior. Excessive pride prevents you from asking for help, but asking for help exposes your weakness. Prevents from one having a teachable spirit.

False humility is pride in disguise. It is still about the self. It is used as a smoke screen to hide sin. When we intentionally devalue ourselves or appear to be humble is false humility. Actions are not consistent with what they say. It's my way or the highway. Or it can be overly dependent on what others think. It self devastated in order to appear humble. People pleasers does whatever others want regardless what is wise or the right thing to do. It may appear they submit to authority, but it's an extreme form of pride that manifests in false humility.

False spirituality. False spiritual is the misconception that as long as you have God, you don't need anyone else. Yet, Jesus needed other people to walk with him. I think of the time when Jesus goes to the garden of gethsemane knowing he needed companionship and support to face the wilderness journey of the cross before him.

What do these teach us about asking for help? Read Genesis 2;18, Matthew 7:7, James 1:5, James 5:14

Rob Renfroe, said "One of the great gifts God gives us in the wilderness is other people of faith who will love and encourage us and be our eyes, showing us a way through.

Whatever the wilderness we face, it is important not let pity, pride, false humility or spirituality from asking for help from others. God places people in our life to help. In truth, people want to help. People who have been in the wilderness and have come out of it have a heart for those who are in the same kind of wilderness. They understand. They don't judge. They listen. They gently guide you to find the truth the reason you are in the wilderness. Then they encourage you to take the next step. They walk with you being your ears, eyes, and a voice in the wilderness, helping you find your way. That is a spiritual companion.

Who has been someone you have turned to that guided you through your wilderness?  
Read 2 Timothy 3:1-17

A spiritual companion is someone who walks with someone going through the deserts or facing the unknown. After reading Paul's words to Timothy, how did Paul prepare Timothy for the wilderness journey? How was Paul a spiritual companion for Timothy?

As I read Paul's words to Timothy, I see that Paul saw Timothy's potential as a leader and companion. Even in prison and facing death, Paul's willingness affirms Timothy's calling, share that there will be wilderness moments facing trails and suffering.

Encouraging Timothy to reflect upon the need for integrity building character. Advice for navigating the uncertain tasks and relationship of ministry. Paul was listening, believing, and guiding the next generation.

It is important to understand that our spiritual awareness is the result of Christ's redeeming love. In Christ, who have a whole new perspective. Since you have been raised with Christ, we are to set our minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3: 1-3). Awareness is the gift of the wilderness. Carl Jung said that "the privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are."

David Whyte's poem "Sweet Darkness" observes there is a "time to go into the dark where the night has eyes to recognize its own ... The night will give you a horizon further than you can see." Flee not the wilderness!

No one ever said you had to go it alone. You need to know your limitations, be humble and ask for help from someone you have journeyed before you. We were created to journey together learning from one another. When pushed into the wilderness, forced into solitude and silence, understand someone is waiting to listen and guide you. It is in the reflection, the renewal, refocusing for the next step.