

# Lifelines

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Topic: *Breaking out of your rut*

## **God Makes Streams in the Desert**

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Currently we live on Gwynn's Island, a small island surrounded by water. It is said that every road in Mathews County, VA ends at the waters' edge. Quite a contrast to when I spent the first twenty-five years of my life, living in the desert-like areas of Nevada, with only an average annual rainfall of seven inches.

Deserts are known for their harsh environment, dry air, and higher elevations which put you closer to the heat of the sun. So, what does any of this have to do with people who live surrounded by water and humidity? Actually the desert image played a key role throughout the Bible.

Adam and Eve were created and placed in a beautiful garden, full of lush vegetation, fruit trees, and abundant water. God designed humans to be the caretakers of God's creation. But humans ate from the one tree that God prohibited them from eating, and the consequences of that sin severed their relationship with God. They were filled with guilt at their wrong-doing and when they heard the voice of God walking in the garden, they went and hid themselves for they were "naked." This nakedness was not merely physical. Their lives were now filled with guilt, and it changed their confidence, self-image, and made them hide from God.

Sin has consequences. Adam and Eve had to leave their cushy garden life, had to stay alive by working hard, and surviving by the sweat of their brow. As they left the Garden of Eden, they encountered the heat and harshness of the desert. The rest of the Bible tells us about God's continuous effort to bring mankind back into a state of openness and joy in the presence of God. Further generations of people living in, or traveling through, deserts fill the timeline and stories of the Bible.

This metaphor of parched deserts and the relief brought by water in the midst of the dryness occurs frequently in the Bible. When God was leading Israel out of Egypt and into the "Promised Land" God continually provided water for them in the desert.

In Psalm 78:15-16 (NASB95) we read: "He (God) split the rocks in the wilderness and gave *them* abundant drink like the ocean depths. He brought forth streams also from the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers." Our wonderful God, out of His great love for us, provides refreshing waters to us, even in the midst of the most difficult events in our lives.

As humans, we experience difficulties in our lives, be they physical ailments, frustrating co-workers, family stresses, children who break our hearts, and the guilt we have from turning our backs on God, or showing disdain towards Him. When we have relational problems, we feel like we are in a desert, fatigued and disheartened. Like when you just lost your job. Or found out you have cancer. Or lose your home like those in the Southern California fire, with all your memories going up in smoke. We are depressed, and discouraged, and need a nice shady area with flowing cool water to put on our forehead, and to drink in order to replenish and refresh us.

Sometimes we feel like we are on a salt flat and can see no signs of the desert ending. Yet, if we turn towards God, and open our lives up to Him, He fills us with rivers of living water, bubbling up within us, and flowing out to give others in the barren deserts of life, the life-giving water of God.

Jesus met the Samaritan woman at a well. She was ostracized from the community because of lifestyle. Jesus said to her in John 4:13-14 (NASB95): “Everyone who drinks of this well water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

Jesus can turn our dry, dehydrated lives into artesian wells continually flowing life-giving water into our own lives, and out to the thirsty world around us. Are you living in a desert-parched situation? Just as God gave water to His people on the journey to the Promised Land, He will give us artesian wells of water to keep us spiritually healthy and alive, with enough water to share with others. Ask Jesus to come into your life, and cause His “rivers of living water” to flow into you, permeate you, and flow out to others.

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