



Desert Instructions

How to Acquire God's Encouragement in Difficult Times



1. Keep _____ (vv.1-6)

2. Trust _____ (vv.7-14)

3. Let _____ (vv.15-18)

4. Celebrate _____ (vv.19-29)

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. It is recommended that you take time this week to write out your response to each of these questions. This will help to drive home the point of today's message and will help you apply the principles to your life situation

1. It is important to distinguish between *discipline* and *deserts*. According to Hebrews 12 painful times of suffering may be God's way of leading us to confession and repentance regarding a specific sin. Take a look at Hebrews 12:5-11 and evaluate your own life as to whether any painful situations you are experiencing are God's way of getting you to agree with him that something in your life needs to be amended. Don't do this quickly or flippantly. Sin is delectful and can easily be rationalized in our own minds. If you have identified an area of suffering in your life that you believe to be God's discipline, write out a prayer of confession and repentance.
2. Describe a *desert experience* (i.e. suffering not related to God's discipline) that you are presently going through. If you cannot identify something current, describe a recent period of suffering.
3. In what ways do you become more "self-centered" during *desert seasons* of your life?

What areas of service, ministry, or generosity can you step up during times when you are suffering?

4. What activities, disciplines, or practices help to keep you from doubting God's goodness and love during difficult times in your life?
5. In what ways do you shut people out of your life when you are hurting?

Describe a time when you "let someone in" and God really worked to encourage you through that person.

6. List as many things as you can in the space below that you know are blessings from God – despite the trails he has also brought. How will you celebrate these?