

Published based on [With God in the Valley](#)

With God in the Valley



Recently I've been pondering how God leads me, at times, into the valley of the shadow of death, where life is uncertain, the terrain is difficult, and it's just downright scary at times.

Well, you might say, "God doesn't do that." Uh, I beg to differ. The Psalmist David, the one God Himself said was a "man after my own heart", invited us to explore the reality of walking in that valley. Job, who was called "a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil", certainly walked through the valley. Jesus Himself was "driven into the wilderness" to be tempted, and on the cross he faced the greatest darkness, as he took my sin and your sin and the sin of all humanity on himself and cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The mysteries of human suffering are beyond our grasp, and yet God invites us into them. While I do not believe that God causes evil and I understand that all evil and pain in the world are a result of the work of the enemy, I do believe that God uses human suffering to change us.

In the valley, we struggle and grasp for answers. We wish we could explain the workings of God and the workings of evil in neat theological boxes and all the while God is whispering to us that it's not so much understanding that we need but a releasing of our need to understand.

Yes, God wants us to learn through our struggles and our suffering. Yes, God wants to give us insight, but beyond that God desires to lead us to the point where we can trust Him in the midst of our suffering.

Frankly, I've flunked that test more times than I've passed. Oh, I passed lots of easy tests. The true/false ones. The fill-in-the-blank ones. But the essays! How I've hated those! The ones where I have to process through and come to a conclusion.

Yet learning to trust God is a lot like those essay tests; a long and purposeful journey. Trusting God is a lifelong process. While I may be quite comfortable trusting God in one area of my life, I may find that I am completely unable and often unwilling to trust Him in another.

And He knew that before He invited me to come into relationship with Him. He didn't require my perfection. He knew my story before it began to be written. Through my story, He pursues my heart, wooing me to Himself. He challenges me to open new areas of my heart to Him. He asks me to live in the mystery.

The work of God in me is "inside out". I may be able to fake most of you off. You might spend an hour with me and think I've got it all together. You might even attend my church and think I'm a super Christian (you know what I mean, the ones with the S on their cape). But nothing in me is hidden from God. My times in the valley expose the depths of who I am and what I really believe about God, life, and myself. God is able to handle the truth about who I am and where I need to grow. He is committed to lead me into that truth, enabling me to face my own personal truths with His Spirit, and giving me extravagant grace to change.

Sometimes the changes are easy, but often they come like winning a war, one battle at a time. The battles leave

me wounded at times. Scarred. Limping like Jacob, but if I find what God is offering me, I leave the battle with deeply understood truth about who I am and who He is. Such truth leads me into new levels of trust. Surely such a God who would walk with me through the valley, correcting me at times, comforting me often, is worthy of my trust!

My journey is much like peeling an onion, layer after layer of my resistance, my need to control, compare, and compete, get peeled away and I become more able to face the naked truth about myself and my life. I can live in the paradoxes. I can live in the mysteries, and I can say with the Psalmist David, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...I know you are with me."

You can also find this article published on [With God in the Valley](#), and on the tag pages [darkness](#), [David](#), [Jesus](#), [Job](#), [mystery](#), [valley of the shadow of death](#).