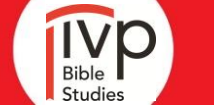


EXCERPT



A Way in the Wilderness *Meeting God in the Desolate Places of Scripture* *A 6-Week Bible Study with Video Access*

May 20, 2025 | \$20, 168 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0928-4

Available in both English and Spanish, *A Way in the Wilderness* offers an invitation to meet God in the wilderness and to allow him to grow and transform you through it. Each week, Kristel Acevedo leads you through reflections on a biblical figure who faced their own wilderness—be it the solitude of John the Baptist or the trials of the Israelites. Through these familiar stories, she draws parallels to our own lives, helping us see that amidst the struggles is often where God meets us most profoundly.

God Meets Us in the Wilderness

I often think about my “wilderness years”—six years when I felt confused, frustrated, and lost. For a while, I remembered those years with disdain. In fact, I didn’t like remembering those years at all. I just wanted to put them out of my mind and forget. If you’ve ever walked through a difficult season, I bet you’ve had similar feelings.

Before we go on, you might ask, what exactly is the wilderness? Throughout Scripture we read about different people in the wilderness. They experienced a physical wilderness, a harsh environment where hardly anything grows, with just enough food or water to survive. Some fled to the wilderness because they had run out of options, as a last resort. Others found safety in the wilderness. Regardless, in each instance, we find that their experience in the wilderness was a time of preparation and growth.

You and I are unlikely to end up in a literal wilderness (unless you’re the outdoorsy type). But most of us end up in a metaphorical wilderness at some point in life. It’s a season when we may feel stuck and without options. We might feel directionless or even lost. It can also be a season of loneliness, isolation, or disconnection from others. And it is a season that feels particularly harsh. With little access to emotional or relational resources, we find ourselves weary and with little opportunity or desire for growth. And even though God is with us in the wilderness, we may feel as if he has abandoned us there.

Mother Teresa once described the wilderness experience as a “dark night of the soul,” which was a phrase she borrowed from a poem by Saint John of the Cross, a sixteenth-century priest. Many others have referred to it as the “winter of the soul.” Maybe you can relate to those descriptions.

My prayer for these next six weeks is that you will come to see how the wilderness, although difficult, is a place in which God meets us. Whether you’ve experienced a wilderness season in your past, are experiencing one now, or know someone else who has had just such an experience, this Bible study is written for you. But also, for me (in fact, you might even say primarily for me). During my wilderness season, I felt alone and discouraged, and I thought God had forgotten me. Even after I came out of that difficult season, I felt only resentment for those years I thought were lost.

I understand the fear, distress, and isolation that comes with wilderness seasons, and I want to accompany you during this season. This Bible study is meant to encourage you with the biblical truth that we are never alone and that with God, even in a wasteland, nothing is wasted.

Throughout the next six weeks we will look closer at Adam and Eve, Elijah, Hagar, John the Baptist, even Jesus himself! That’s right, Jesus also experienced the wilderness. We’ll dig into the Scriptures and discover how the wilderness can shape us and form us. Most of all, we will remember that, regardless, God is always with us

—taken from the introduction



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Q & A



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Kristel Acevedo (MA, Southeastern Seminary) is the discipleship director at Transformation Church, a vibrant multiethnic and multigenerational community near Charlotte, North Carolina. Originally from Miami and the daughter of immigrants, she has a passion for discipleship, biblical literacy, multiethnic ministry, and helping others develop a biblical view on immigration. Kristel is the author of *A Way in the Wilderness* and a coauthor of *3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future*.

Reframing the Wilderness

What motivated you to write this book?

Kristel Acevedo: I experienced several years of the wilderness in my life—a season in which I felt spiritually dry, alone, lost, and forgotten. One day I was reading the Bible, and I came across a verse about John the Baptist which sparked hope in me (Luke 1:80). God took me on a journey of reframing the wilderness. I realized that this season of my life wasn't a waste. Instead, this season was helping me become spiritually strong, conformed into the image of Jesus. I started to mine the Scriptures for other stories of the wilderness so I could understand it better. Once I had this revelation, I knew I had to share it with others because the wilderness is inescapable, it's a necessary part of our spiritual growth. I wrote this study as a beacon of hope for all of us who experience the wilderness.

What is the main message of your book, and what is distinctive about your approach?

Kristel: The wilderness is a season of life in which you feel disconnected, lost, hurt, or confused. It is a season of spiritual dryness that can feel particularly harsh. In the wilderness, however, we can develop spiritual strength. Spiritual strength is not about digging deep or pulling yourself up from your bootstraps. Instead, it is reliance on and alignment with the Holy Spirit—it's a resilience that develops when we trust God to do the work in and through us.

What are five main things you want readers to take away from your book?

Kristel:

- The wilderness is not a waste of time, a detour, or challenging for no reason.
- In the wilderness we can develop spiritual strength.
- Spiritual strength is reliance on and alignment with the Holy Spirit.
- Nothing is wasted in God's economy.
- We can find our way in the wilderness when we follow the path God has for us.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your book?

Kristel: It's a six-week interactive Bible study. There are several spiritual practices which are introduced throughout. There will be video teachings for each week. My dad is providing all of the illustrations in the book. This study will be available in English and Spanish.



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DETAILS



IVP Bible Study Experience Bringing Scripture to Life

"This unique Bible study invites readers to not only meditate on biblical passages but also apply them to their lives in contemplative, creative ways both individually and in community. It goes beyond a traditional question-and-answer model and engages almost all your senses."

—Mabel Ninan, author of *Far from Home*

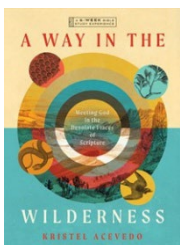
IVP Bible Study Experience

IVP Bible Study Experience volumes will help you and your small group uncover the depths of God's Word in a whole new light. Using inductive study methods through both written and video teaching, readers are given the opportunity to learn from trusted Bible teachers and engage with prayer practices, spiritual disciplines, and other tools for engaging with Scripture.

These accessible studies are designed with busy readers in mind, allowing for open-ended reflection and inviting us to discern how to apply the content to our daily lives. Formatted as beautiful workbooks, these studies include plenty of white space for individual reflection as well as inspiring full-color images and graphic elements. With free access to video curriculum included with every purchase, these refreshing and insightful studies will enrich your understanding and connection with Scripture!

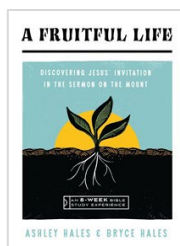
Here's what you'll get from IVP Bible Study Experience volumes:

- Welcoming and accessible Scripture study for groups of any size
- Each study includes 6-8 weekly group sessions with 5 manageable days of individual reflection each week
- Free access to weekly video curriculum and a leader's guide included with every purchase



A Way in the Wilderness: Meeting God in the Desolate Places of Scripture ***A 6-Week Bible Study*** By Kristel Acevedo

Each week, Kristel Acevedo leads readers through reflections on a biblical figure who faced their own wilderness—from the solitude of John the Baptist to the trials of the Israelites. Through these familiar stories, she draws parallels to life now, helping you see that amidst the struggles is often where God meets you most profoundly. **Also available in Spanish.**



A Fruitful Life: Discovering Jesus' Invitation in the Sermon on the Mount ***An 8-Week Bible Study*** By Ashley Hales and Bryce Hales

In their new eight-week Bible study *A Fruitful Life*, Ashley and Bryce Hales explore how readers can dive deep into the Sermon on the Mount to understand how a life emulating Jesus—living and loving as he did—is a truly fruitful life.



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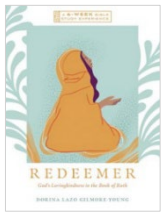
DETAILS



IVP Bible Study Experience Bringing Scripture to Life

"The invitations to reflect on Scripture and personal experience, to engage in breath prayers, to check in with the Holy Spirit, and to practice family sabbath provide helpful ways to integrate this resource into a personal journey taken alongside others."

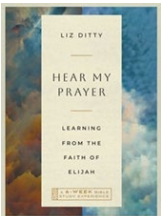
—Maria Liu Wong, provost of the City Seminary of New York



Redeemer: God's Lovingkindness in the Book of Ruth **A 6-Week Bible Study**

By Dorina Lazo Gilmore-Young

In this six-week Bible study, Dorina Lazo Gilmore-Young invites us to view the book of Ruth as more than a Hallmark-tinted story, one that proclaims God's heart for the vulnerable and invites us to become captivated by God's love!



Hear My Prayer: Learning from the Faith of Elijah **A 6-Week Bible Study**

By Liz Ditty

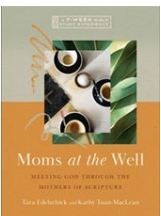
Whether you consider yourself a prayer warrior, a prayer newbie, or even a prayer skeptic, Liz Ditty, an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader, invites you to engage with the story of Elijah and his encounters with God as she guides us toward a less awkward, more authentic prayer in this six-week Bible study experience.



Live In the Light: Radiating the Hope of the Letters of John **A 6-Week Bible Study**

By Tara Beth Leach

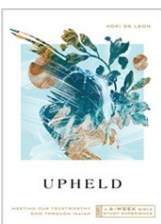
We are in a season of church meltdown. John, writing to churches caught in leadership failures, church splits, and a powerful leader stirring up dissent, has a message for us today. This six-week Bible study experience invites us to become a community that brings love, hope, and healing to every darkened space.



Moms at the Well: Meeting God Through the Mothers of Scripture **A 7-Week Bible Study**

By Tara Edelschick and Kathy Tuan-MacLean

Motherhood is hard. Really hard. That's why we need a well. For centuries, neighborhood wells served as gathering spaces that provided community and relationships for women. This seven-week Bible study offers a modern-day "well" where mothers can gather and experience the God who invites us into a process of spiritual transformation.



Upheld: Meeting Our Trustworthy God Through Isaiah **A 6-Week Bible Study**

By Kori de Leon

I am with you, I will strengthen and help you, I will uphold you. God's promises spoken through Isaiah offered reassurance and comfort during difficult days, and they're still true for us today! Join Bible teacher Kori de Leon in this six-week Bible study experience on Isaiah 40–48, pointing us to God's faithfulness and mercy.



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