

# Small Group Study Guide

Near to God when Alone on Purpose | Mark 1:9-13  
From Sunday April 26, 2020

## Appetizer:

**Question:** When have you had a time when you specific planned to go off into the wilderness by yourself? Have different people share

### A couple questions from the passage:

Have someone in the group read Mark 1:9-13 out loud. **What stands out to you in the passage?** What do you notice about the pace of the passage? Why does this language work so well in bringing Jesus' baptism and his wilderness experience together? And what does this tell us about the result of baptism?

## Main Course:

Leadership is lonely at the top. We may have all heard this quote before. It basically reveals that leadership often takes us into places and experiences that are hard, require a certain set of skills and a certain calling.

**Question:** Jeff described a wilderness or a desert as something that is "abandoned and uncultivated." What do people in the group feel called to? How are the things that they are called to like a desert?

**Question:** Some of us might be feeling like we're in a desert that is not very positive: a time of fear or doubt or concern or disillusionment. Is there a way to see these deserts less as something of suffering and dryness and more as something that we are "driven into" by God for his purposes?

When we are called to be "alone on purpose" there are things that we can expect when we enter the wilderness. This includes:

### 1. A Time Commitment

**Question:** What is the significance of Jesus being in the wilderness for 40 days?

How can the length of a commitment affect our passion to what God is calling us into?

## 2. Temptation

It was mentioned in the sermon that "We are at our best when we are put to the test."

**Question:** Do you agree with this? How are tests and temptations a GOOD thing?

**Question:** What are some temptations that arise when you are in a desert place, even though you are there for a reason?

## 3. Restoration

It is such goodness that we do not go into the wilderness alone: the Holy Spirit is with us, and often is the driving force behind getting us INTO the wilderness we find ourselves in. And yet, there is something true about finding strength in knowing that you are operating in your giftings and that you are where God wants you to be. There can be "ministering angels" around you giving you strength in the midst of the journey.

**Question:** Share with one another times in which you found strength in the midst of a difficult calling or a difficult place you found yourself in.

## Dessert:

The wilderness is a great place to learn about ourselves and about the character of God.

**Question:** What are you learning about yourself and about God in the desert you are in?

**Reflection:** We have an opportunity to take advantage of being called into the wilderness. In times of crisis or difficulty, creativity can flourish, change can be more readily accepted, and skills can be sharpened. Author Annie Dillard encourages all of us to "jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down."

Before going into a time of prayer, ask each person in the group what "wings" can we pray for that they feel they need to handle the situations they are currently in.

**Pray with the group in closing.**