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# Women of Witness

TIPS TO BETTER YOURSELF

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## Waiting for a Turning Point

By Tessa Afshar

*“And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden ...” Isaiah 58:11 (ESV)*

In our Instagram culture, the future is often associated with words like *dreams, goals* and *opportunities*. But for those traveling through a dark season, it can feel like the future has nothing to offer but loss. No one is impervious to seasons like this. They slither in through our worst failures; they sneak up on us through unexpected circumstances such as physical or mental illness. They crawl in through grief and trauma. And they make certain claims about our future.

I have learned that beyond the scorched places of life, a well-watered garden awaits. This imagery can be heard from the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming to a Judean people who had lost everything that God intended a reversal for their lives. Their “*scorched places*” would one day become like a “*watered garden*”:

*“And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden ...” (Isaiah 58:11).*

In my early 20s, I went through a divorce I didn’t want, and suddenly my future felt hopeless. All my dreams were in tatters. Because I had been rejected by a man I trusted, I felt like I must, at my core, be rejectable, like I was damaged in some way. I might get into heaven because of God’s grace. But on this earth, I would always be less-than. No one would want me after this.

Lies like these can grow deep roots. They can suck out hope and turn our future into a scorched desert. If we aren’t careful, we might lay our foundations upon them and try to build a permanent home on those shifting sands.

Standing on the other side of this “scorching” experience, I now see with wonder that a glory awaits when we get beyond these grand breakings of the soul. Which is why I have come to have great respect for them. I have learned the most transformative lessons of my life in moments when it felt like my heart had shattered.

First, I have learned a resilience that has nothing to do with the fragile way I am made. By nature, I am emotionally and physically fragile. It doesn’t take much to shake me. But on the other side of these dark seasons, I have found a spiritual resilience — a strength that flows from God and allows me to navigate an increasingly hard world without breaking.

Second, I have entered into my God-given purpose at a depth I never would have known unless I walked through my scorched seasons. If God had not allowed me to navigate those valleys, I might have still walked in my gifting but in a superficial way. My influence for good, my usefulness in God's Kingdom, would have been vastly diminished.

Third, I have learned to enter relationships with a level of health and joy that I lacked before experiencing shattering heartache.

This reminds me of how, years after Isaiah's prophecy was spoken, those same Judeans, now captives in Babylon, could look up and see the wonder of the hanging gardens. Perhaps they remembered the prophet's promise as they looked upon this impossibility: a garden with large trees and flowing streams on top of a roof. In the searing heat of Babylon, what should have been a scorched place — this rooftop, this brick and bitumen canopy — had turned into a verdant garden. What an incredible reminder of Isaiah's promise!

Perhaps you are in a scorched season of your own. Perhaps when you look up, all you see is a rooftop. An impossibility. Perhaps some event is whispering into your heart, *Your future is a ruin*. Or worse, **You are a ruin**.

I want to tell you that beyond your scorched place, a garden awaits you. Hold on, beloved. Your turning point is coming.

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, help me hold tight to You as I walk through this scorched season. Transform this heartache. Make the bones of my spirit strong. Teach me Your resilience. Bring me deeper into my purpose. Help me walk in greater relational health. Turn me into a well-watered garden. In Jesus' name, Amen.

<https://proverbs31.org/read/devotions/full-post/2022/11/21/waiting-for-a-turning-point>