

Just Us Girls

Adapting to the Dark WOVEN - Shannon Hodge

Have you ever found yourself in a prolonged season of loneliness, weakness, and/or confusion. A season where you feel very unlike yourself and out of sorts; as if you have no prominent place. It's as if you're hidden away and God does not see you. You may be in what is referred to spiritually as a season of darkness. It is not uncommon during this season to begin to question God and ask Him why He isn't moving in your life and simply allowing things to happen without any intervention. During my darkest season, when I found myself questioning Him, I was reminded of something that was said in a message that truly resonated with me; it was when the minister said that "God deals with his children in obscurity". Obscurity is defined as the state of being unknown or unimportant. It is also defined as the quality of being difficult to understand or something that is unclear. Obscurity comes from the Latin word *obscurus*, which means dark. So in other words, God deals with us in the dark.

I'm not sure if anyone else shares this stance, but I've always had a somewhat negative perception of darkness. I feel that it's a limiting, it's restrictive; that bad things expressly happen in the dark. After reading that definition, I thought to myself, why would God deal with his children in the dark? No sooner had I asked the question that it dawned on me that darkness is not the issue, it was my perception

was out of order. In taking a step back and tweaking my mindset, I immediately realized that in the darkness, your senses become heightened as you are now hyper-aware. I believe that is because we are forced to develop an advanced level of discernment and pull on abilities that would otherwise lie dormant or in some cases not even be used at all because we are so accustomed to relying on the light. And for a good reason, if nothing else, the light is going to do what it is supposed to do and that is expose, illuminate, highlight, and emphasize things with little to no effort on our part. But in that season of obscurity, you're going to have to pivot and adapt to the dark.

In adjusting my mindset, I looked at a few studies on blindness, there was one that genuinely stood out to me. It was where detailed brain scans of blind and sighted individuals were compared. The scans revealed that those who were blind had a heightened sense of hearing, touch and smell. They also experience enhancements in other areas such as their memory and language abilities. The scans showed that the differences were found in the white matter and functional connections of the brain. The white matter connections can be thought of as "physical highways" through which information flows and functional connections are basically how the different brain regions communicate with one another. Well according to the scans, there were fewer of those connections going to the visual parts of the brain for the individuals that were blind—why? because they were not needed there. As such, they were free to pivot and be developed in other areas where they would be needed most. In essence, their brains rewired itself or pivoted if you will, in the absence of visual information. Think of it this way, in the absence of sight and light, their brains adapted in order to boost their other senses so that they could interact with their environment in a more effective manner for them.

This study was completed on adults who were either born blind or fully blind by the age of three. This spoke to me spiritually because it was apparent that although they were either born into darkness or entered into darkness at early age—God still made provisions. He made provisions for their brains, the most complex part of the human body to pivot, to adapt, to rewire itself in the absence of light. When you find yourself hyper-focused and consumed on a season in time, just know that you are forgetting one of the most important things and that is God is just as interested in doing something IN you, as he is in doing something THROUGH you. You must remember that in that season of darkness God has made provisions for your adaptability. As such, thinking how unlike yourself and confused you feel, is a moot point. Your only job, your only focus during this time is to allow God to develop you. Because it is in that dark season that God is the developing your discernment, he is developing your character—he's developing your call. He just needs the time and space to do so. The fact is, nine times out of ten a moving target is going to be hard to hit; but in that season of darkness, especially in the beginning, you're going to have to be still. This is crucial because it is in the stillness, that you are getting the necessary direction, guidance, and instruction required for you to progress forward with confidence and precision.

In life it's so easy to get caught up in the pity party of why me and begin to question God asking, 'why am I in this period of obscurity and will this season of darkness ever end'. I just want to assure you that yes! Yes, it does end and it will be evident when three things are true.

You have the depth necessary for the next step.

In a drought there are certain plants that will adapt and survive in the absence of rain. These are the plants that pivot and send their roots down deeper in search of the water, nutrients, and resources needed in order to continue to do what they were created to do—which is provide oxygen and take in carbon dioxide. Can you imagine if the plants were consumed with how dark it was or hyper-focused on how deep they would have to go? We would all be in a world of trouble.

You have the wisdom for the next decision.

You gain that wisdom by staying in God's word daily. By consistently studying, meditating, and reading scripture. By improving and perfecting your prayer life. And then taking all that you have learned, all of that knowledge and applying it accordingly.

You have the experience for the next phase.

You'll know that you have that experience because your senses are going to become heightened. You will begin to see things differently, you will hear God clearer, and you will no longer have a taste for what you were doing prior to entering that season of darkness.

And those are the three ways that you will know that your season of darkness is coming to an end or has already ended.

I hope that what I've shared, ignites something within you to encourage you to shift your focus by pivoting and adapting to that dark season you may find yourself in. Although difficult to ascertain in the moment, this season serves as the perfect catalyst for God to develop you for your next level of elevation. Remember, you do not need the light to see yourself as God already sees you.