

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

- A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.

- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. Find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. ([www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com](http://www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com)).
- Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

- B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

- C. Sing about what you're learning. It's helpful in connecting emotionally to the truth.

- Listen to the songs from this week's playlist:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBL8waErHIN7SJKN-hDJXyPhumGrQ-V0>
- Enjoy this year's songs on Spotify or on our DDD You Tube channel (see handout):  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBL8waErHIN6ncxj-5uV0AXyVObmZeAL>

### III. PRINCIPLES

These principles will help you understand God's purposes for your Wilderness areas:

#### A. TERRAIN

- The Wilderness might look like:
  - A wild, uncultivated or barren region
  - A confused mass or collection
  - A place where we lack community and influence
  - An area where our pleas and prayers are seemingly ignored
- Our particular Wilderness journey may last for a day or a season. Or it may be a persistent area of our lives that is barren and unproductive.
- Emotions in The Wilderness include feeling dry, isolated, fruitless, and stuck.
- One consistent theme of these desert places is that we want out!
- Navigating this terrain includes recognizing God's purposes and understanding that we can do more than just survive The Wilderness.
- Throughout Scripture we see examples of God calling His chosen ones there. In some of the accounts amazing fruit was produced; others didn't fare as well.
- We can even thrive if we will partner with the Lord and the work He is doing there: Deut 8:2 NLT-- Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Insights:

#### B. TESTING

- God says in Deuteronomy 8:2 that The Wilderness is a place for testing.
- Test-- the means by which the presence, quality, or genuineness of anything is determined; a means of trial (Dictionary.com)
- "God is said to try or prove men with adversity in order to prove their faith." (BLB.org)
- The Lord knows what is in our hearts, but we don't! We often have a skewed view of ourselves (both under- and overestimating).
- God never condemns us, but the Spirit will convict us when we fail: Jn 16:8-- He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment]
- Convict—to expose, to bring to the light one's error, fault or sin (Strong's G1561)

- Tests show us when God’s truth resides only in our heads and not our hearts: Ps 51:6-- Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
- As we meditate on God’s Word and the Spirit drives truth deeply into the heart, we are sanctified: Eph 5:26 MSG--Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness.
- Wilderness tests also reveal places where the fruit of God’s Spirit is lacking. We will grow as we walk this desert road in tandem with the Spirit: Gal 5:25 NLT-- Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.
- Tests help us see our need and take hold of God promises of supernatural help and provision: Is 27:6 NLT--The time is coming when Jacob’s descendants will take root. Israel will bud and blossom and fill the whole earth with fruit!
- Let’s be thankful for testing times knowing that God is committed to reproducing His character in us and has promised to finish what He’s started. (Phil 1:6)

Insights:

### C. TIME OUT

- We know from our own experience and from Scripture’s record of God’s people over the ages that we humans have the annoying trait of being forgetful!
- “We forget to remember. We forget who we really are, and who God has been for us.” (Timothy Mackie)
- So, like a loving parent, God disciplines us: Heb 12:10-11 NLT--God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.
- He puts us in “time out” to get us away from the distractions of our busyness and striving so that we might better listen and remember.
- We see God providing a break for the people when they were frustrated in The Wilderness. They forgot His faithfulness: Ex 15:24-27 NLT-- Then the people complained and turned against Moses. “What are we going to drink?” they demanded. <sup>25</sup> So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah that the Lord set before them the following decree as a standard to test their

faithfulness to him. <sup>26</sup> He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.”<sup>27</sup> After leaving Marah, the Israelites traveled on to the oasis of Elim, where they found twelve springs and seventy palm trees. They camped there beside the water.

- God made the bitter water sweet and then led the COI to an oasis in the desert!

Insights:

#### D. THERAPEUTIC

- It can be tempting to see The Wilderness as a negative thing or as punishment, but that is not God’s intention.
- It is true that disobedience and rebellion can land us in a Wilderness. (That is not the focus of this series.) Num 14:20-23 MSG--God said, “I forgive them, honoring your words. But as I live and as the Glory of God fills the whole Earth—not a single person of those who saw my Glory, saw the miracle signs I did in Egypt and the wilderness, and who have tested me over and over and over again, turning a deaf ear to me—not one of them will set eyes on the land I so solemnly promised to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with such repeated contempt will see it.
- Our main focus will be the positive aspects of The Wilderness, a place appointed by God for a season to do special work that is best done in that environment.
- We are wise if we learn to recognize and capitalize on these seasons. Let’s pay attention to the areas that the Lord is highlighting for His therapeutic work!
- Jesus is there with us to pour out Living Water on the places He’s working to heal or strengthen: 1 Cor 10:4 AMP—(The COI) all drank the same spiritual (supernaturally given) drink. For they drank from a spiritual Rock which followed them [produced by the sole power of God Himself without natural instrumentality], and the Rock was Christ
- Whenever we find ourselves in a dry and weary land, we’re invited to come and drink: Jn 7:37-39 NIV-- “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.
- Ask the Spirit help you recognize your thirst and enable you to drink deeply of Him.

Insights:

#### E. TEMPORARY

- Scholars estimate that the children of Israel (COI) were only meant to spend about 3 years in The Wilderness (length of time between the exodus and spy mission).
- God was giving the people time and space to grow out of a slave mentality into a mindset of beloved children and warriors: Ex 3:17-18-- Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by* way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." So God led the people around *by* way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.
- The COI needed preparation spiritually and physically in order to be ready to enter Canaan and possess their inheritance.
- God had important work for them to do during this interim period. He ordered a census, organized the camp, issued guidelines for purity, installed the priests, and initiated a scouting expedition of the Promised Land. (Num 1-13)
- Let's put aside our impatience to seek out all the good things the Lord has in store for us in this temporary season: Lam 3:25-26-- The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Insights:

#### F. TRANSFORMATION

- We could make our minds up to just endure or outlast a stay in The Wilderness. However, a better option would be to choose to cooperate with God's purposes.
- The best route through a dry and barren land is to abandon our own ways and to surrender to God's way instead: Pr 3:5-6 AMP-- Lean on, trust in, *and* be confident in the Lord with all your heart *and* mind and do not rely on your own insight *or* understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, *and* acknowledge Him, and He will direct *and* make straight *and* plain your paths.
- Moses did not lean on his own understanding, but consulted God time and time again on his sojourn through The Wilderness: Ex 33:12-14 NIV-- Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
- Moses got it! He sought God's ways above his own. He wanted to know God by experience. Time in The Wilderness meant more time in the Presence of the Lord!

- The same can be said of us for we have God's promise: Josh 1:5—As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.
- Let us take advantage of this time and space set aside for us in The Wilderness. Let's choose to draw near, spending time in the Presence of the Lord, and be transformed: 2 Cor 3:18 NLT-- So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.
- Our challenge on this journey through The Wilderness is to:
  - o Stay focused on our Rock, Jesus and not on our circumstances
  - o Remember His past faithfulness, knowing He'll show the next step
  - o Rehearse His promises (Promised Land is ahead, He'll pour out rivers, etc.)
  - o Practice His Presence to receive His rest.
- May we be so changed in God's presence in this season that this will be the testimony spoken about us: Song 8:5-- Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness, Leaning upon her beloved?

Insights: