

- 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).
- 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.

III. Listen to the songs from this week's playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBL8waErHIN51-TPzZVOZyZCEUfe-uC4i>

Enjoy this year's songs on Spotify or on our DDD You Tube channel (see handout):

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBL8waErHIN6ncxj-5uV0AXyVObmZeAlI>

IV. PRINCIPLES

These principles will help you to find life in all your Wilderness areas:

A. LETTING GO IN THE WILDERNESS

- The process of “Letting Go” begins with recognizing our Wilderness areas. God appointed many varieties of Wilderness experiences in the Bible for our instruction.
- By observing our emotions, actions, and words (grumbling), we can better identify the unbelieving mindsets (insecurity, compromise, etc.) keeping us in the desert.
- Bringing toxic thought patterns into the light weakens them! Acknowledging our sin and brokenness allows us to connect with God’s truth free of guilt and shame.
- Surrender can happen in a moment, but maintaining a surrendered heart is a full time job! It requires us to consistently renew our hearts and minds over time.
- Though experts vary on how long it takes to make a lifestyle change (21, 60, 90 days), follow through is required for true transformation to become a reality.
- As we persevere in our journey from The Wilderness to the Promised Land, let us continue to wrestle with God so that we may receive His blessing!

Insights:

B. DECEPTION vs. DEPENDENCE

- Jacob has a well-earned reputation as one who schemes, deceives, and manipulates in order to achieve his desires and goals:

SINFUL

DESIRE → EXPECTATION → RIGHTS → **UNBELIEF → DISCONTENT → RESPONSE**
(Deceit & Self-reliance)

- Jacob’s name means “overreaching, tricky, treacherous, deceitful, or one who supplants.” He was born grabbing the heel of his twin brother Esau. (Gen 25:26)
- A relational and spiritual Wilderness was birthed when these twins arrived.
- God had decreed before his birth that Jacob would receive the greater blessing and the inheritance that went with it: Gen 25:23 NLT--The Lord told her, “The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son.”
- Instead of depending on God to fulfill His promise, Jacob cunningly convinced Esau to sell him the blessing at a very cheap price! (Gen 25:27-34)
- Jacob and his mom used deception to seal the deal. They tricked 137-year-old Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing of the firstborn using lies and a disguise. (Gen 27:1-41)
- Humans have the tendency to deceive themselves. It is certainly possible that both Jacob and Rebekah justified their lies and schemes on the basis of “helping God.”
- Jacob and all who knew him missed out on seeing how God wanted to accomplish His magnificent plan, at least in the near term. Thankfully, He can’t be thwarted!

LISTENING EXERCISE: *Dear Heavenly Father, please show me anywhere I may be deceiving myself, where I'm depending on lies or unbelief instead of Your Word:*
Insights:

C. FEELINGS vs. FAITH

- Jacob's unbelief had far reaching consequences. This family, destined by God to bless every nation, suffered much unnecessary heartache and brokenness.
- Everyone was left with negative feelings! When Jacob used trickery to gain his desire, Esau was overcome with anger: Gen 27:41 NLT-- From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: "I will soon be mourning my father's death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob."
- Jacob and his parents were now vulnerable to so much fear that they sent him away.
- He literally fled to The Wilderness east of the Jordan River. God appeared to him on his way out of town: Gen 28:12-16 NLT-- As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway. At the top of the stairway stood the Lord, and he said, "I am the Lord, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!"
- The Lord had promised Rebekah that Jacob was the one He would bless and use to carry out His covenant with Abraham. Here Jacob receives the promise firsthand.
- Strong-willed Jacob changes after this personal encounter with God. He got a measure of faith by hearing from God: Gen 28:20-22 NLT-- Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing, and if I return safely to my father's home, then the Lord will certainly be my God. And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me."
- Though his faith wasn't strong yet, Jacob endured this Wilderness season without a trace of deception. Even when he himself was deceived, he stayed the course.
- God used this time in Jacob's life to mold and prosper Jacob. He stayed in The Wilderness for 20 years but came away a wealthy man with a large family.
- At the end of this God-appointed Wilderness, Jacob gets marching orders to go back to Canaan: Gen 31:2 NLT-- The Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father and grandfather and to your relatives there, and I will be with you."

Insights:

D. WORKS vs. WORSHIP

- God had greatly blessed Jacob in The Wilderness. He knew God was with him but still had traces of self-reliance: Gen 31:40-42 NLT-- “I worked for you through the scorching heat of the day and through cold and sleepless nights. Yes, for twenty years I slaved in your house! I worked for fourteen years earning your two daughters, and then six more years for your flock. And you changed my wages ten times! In fact, if the God of my father had not been on my side—the God of Abraham and the fearsome God of Isaac—you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen your abuse and my hard work. That is why he appeared to you last night and rebuked you!”
- Jacob was not fully depending on God and God alone for his future. He appears to place part of his faith in his works: Phil 3:3 NLT—Put no confidence in human effort.
- As he nears the Promised Land, fear rises up and Jacob’s self-reliance kicks in.
- He leans on his own resources to ease the way with his estranged brother Esau. He sends his servants ahead of him with an over-the-top gift: Gen 32:13-15, 17-18 NLT-- Then he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys... “When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, ‘Whose servants are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?’ You must reply, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.’”
- It’s worth noting that Jacob exercised faith first. He prayed, appropriating God’s promise and protection, right before he implemented his plan. (Gen 31:9-12)
- Yet it seems there’s still a gap within Jacob. He hasn’t learned that his plans and efforts can’t accomplish God’s will: Jn 15:5 NLT—Apart from Me, you can do nothing.
- When George Mueller was asked about the most important part of prayer, he answered: “The 15 minutes after I have said, ‘Amen.’”
- God was committed to keeping His promise to Jacob, but He needed to bring Jacob to the end of himself first: Gen 32:24-29 NLT-- A man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. ²⁵When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob’s hip and wrenched it out of its socket. Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” “What is your name?” the man asked. He replied, “Jacob.” “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.” “Please tell me your name,” Jacob said. “Why do you want to know my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.
- Jacob wasn’t ready to receive his inheritance until coming to a place of brokenness.
- Brokenness is “the condition of being completely subdued and humbled before the Lord, and as a result, completely yielded to and dependent upon Him.” (David Berg)

LISTENING EXERCISE: *Dear Father, is this pain I’m experiencing in my life due to my unwillingness to be broken and submitted to Your Lordship?*

- During this all-night wrestling match, God could have defeated Jacob in an instant. Instead, He wanted to exhaust Jacob's fleshly efforts.
- Jacob was a tough nut to crack! The Lord had to put his hip out of joint in order to make him realize that it was God he was fighting.
- "When God is ready to change you, it's gonna hurt for a minute!" (Tony Evans)
- God was willing to use physical and emotional pain to facilitate surrender in Jacob.
- In stating his name to the Man, Jacob was admitting his deceit and self-reliance.
- God loves us enough to use whatever means are necessary to bring us to a place of brokenness and proper worship: Ps 51:17 NLT--The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.
- The Lord said that Jacob had fought with God and prevailed. He prevailed by NOT letting go before getting everything God had for him. That's an example for us!
- "As a sign of Jacob's forgiveness and transformation, the patriarch was given the new name Israel, the name by which all future generations of God's people would be known. And true Israelites by faith would wrestle like Jacob did — holding on to the Lord with all their might that they might find blessing." (Ligonier.org)
- Jacob came away from this encounter with God a transformed man. He had a new name and a broken spirit. From then on he'd walk, leaning on his staff (his faith!).
- "Jacob's staff was more than a stick to him. It represented the presence of God in his life. It represented the power of God to change his heart. It represented the faithfulness of God. It represented to Jacob the coming Messiah of Israel and the Savior of his people. Jacob depended completely upon that staff and, so, at the end of his life, it is no surprise that he should make his final arrangements with his family, then lean on the top of his staff and then worship God." (James May)
- Though Jacob spent many years striving in his flesh, at the end of his life, he had a testimony and a legacy of faith:
 - Heb 11:21--By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.
 - Heb 11:21 MSG-- By an act of faith, Jacob on his deathbed blessed each of Joseph's sons in turn, blessing them with God's blessing, not his own—as he bowed worshipfully upon his staff.

Insights:

II. CONTINUE TO PRACTICE

- Maintaining a surrendered heart before the Lord is a constant in the life of every disciple. Use the handout “The Surrender Process” to help in yielding your difficult issues to the Lord.
- Use your “Tools & Techniques” pages (blue) to supplement the teaching in areas where you need strengthening:
 - Listening to God – examines the Scriptures about our communion with the Lord
 - Elevation and Articulation (I Feel But God Says) -- helps you hold the truth of what God has said higher than your thoughts and emotions
 - Liberation – gives you ammunition to overcome a works mindset
 - Who I Am – assists you in anchoring your identity in the truth of who God is for you
 - Call Upon the Name of the Lord – uses the names of God to help you know Him better
- Think about the Wilderness Mindsets we have covered so far -- Identity/Insecurity, Self-Focus, Works, Fear of Man, Questioning God, Compromise, Comfort, Concession, Unbelief, Rebellion, and Grumbling: 1) Which is your biggest battleground? 2) Ask the Lord which “weapons of warfare” He would have you pick up and use in this battle. 3) Enlist the help of your group or a prayer partner!
- Set aside some time for listening to God. He will feed and fuel you with His Word. Use these suggested steps to help you get started:
 1. Pray for God to open the eyes of your heart to see and know Him.
 2. Pour out your heart to Him verbally or in your journal.
 3. Go to Scriptures that are relevant to your issue (use a concordance or Bible website).
 4. Write down the verses that speak to you most. Pray them back to God.
 5. Listen for His response, as you are silent before Him.
 6. Keep a written record of your dialogue and be sure to review it often.
 7. Use the handout “Tools & Techniques: Listening to God” for practical help and Scriptural support. Contact your leader if you have questions.
- Listening Prayer helps us find out where our Wilderness Mindsets got started:
 - Get in touch with your predominant emotions. Write them down and feel the feelings.
 - Ask the Lord to show you an event or environment where these feelings got started. It could be something in your recent or distant past. Write it down.
 - What is the message you came to believe? Usually the first thing that springs to mind is your “truth” even though you may know better. Record that thought.
 - Ask the Lord: What’s the truth about this? Write down the thoughts that come to mind.
 - Be sure to check that this truth is consistent with the character of God and His Word. If you need help with this, reach out to your leader or other trusted spiritual advisor.
- Learn to recognize your Wilderness and its beneficial purposes. Be on the alert for any seeds of pride that begin to spring up:
 - Testing
 - Time Out
 - Therapeutic
 - Transformation
 - Preparation
 - Power
 - Worship
 - Hunger and Thirst for God and His Word
 - Humility
 - Shaping Character
 - Waiting/Perseverance
 - Purification
- Practice Wilderness Worship to grow in intimacy with God during this season using Supplication, Silence, Song, and Surrender.
- Our challenge on this journey through The Wilderness is keep our eyes off of our circumstances and to stay focused on our Rock, Jesus.
- As we put aside leaning on our own understanding, we will be transformed by God: Song 8:5-- Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved