

- 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=PLBL8waErHIN6WJ23q5TY_hZO_iheEUYRt

Enjoy this year's songs on Spotify or on our DDD You Tube channel (see handout):
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBL8waErHIN6ncxj-5uV0AXyVObmZeALl>

IV. PRINCIPLES

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

A. PROCESSING

- Wilderness conditions eventually expose our erroneous mindsets. This allows us to recognize the messages that have been driving us and then to renew our minds.
- Neuroscience has shown that our brains are constantly evaluating incoming signals.
- Our response to the input is based on what has already been stored in our brains. This happens approximately every 10 seconds. (drleaf.com)
- When an incoming signal elicits a negative emotion, we must learn not to judge ourselves. Instead, we can use this as a chance to evaluate it with the Lord.
- Let's observe our thought process with curiosity and compassion. Bring it to God and be honest with Him. Let Him bring His mercy and love to you there.
- Christians can be too quick to replace their thought with a Bible verse. This can bypass inviting God in, receiving His comfort, and exposing root causes.
- With the Spirit's help, wounds from the past can be embraced, processed, and accepted as part of our story instead of trying to fix it or wall it off. He is a Wonderful Counselor: Is 11:2 AMP-- The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and of the [reverential and obedient] fear of the Lord—and He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make decisions by what His ears hear
- Every 10 seconds we have an opportunity to connect with the Holy Spirit! He can improve the quality of our thought life which leads to structural changes in the brain: Jn 16:13 NLT-- When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth

Insights:

B. PURSUIT

- Renewal of our minds takes time. The Wilderness provides us with much needed time, space and motivation for seeking the Lord: Is 51:1-6 AMP-- Hearken to Me, you who follow after rightness *and* justice, you who seek *and* inquire of [and require] the Lord [claiming Him by necessity and by right]: look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the hole in the quarry from which you were dug; ² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him when he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.³ For the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song *or* instrument of praise.⁴ Listen to Me [the Lord], O My people, and give ear to Me, O My nation; for a [divine] law will go forth from Me, and I will establish My justice for a light to the peoples.⁵ My rightness *and* justice are near, My salvation is going forth, and My arms shall rule the peoples; the islands shall wait for *and* expect Me, and on My arm shall they trust *and* wait with hope.⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall be

dissolved *and* vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner [like gnats]. But My salvation shall be forever, and My rightness *and* justice [and faithfully fulfilled promise] shall not be abolished.

- Our God-appointed Wilderness is intended to benefit us. We must be intentional in order to receive all that God has for us! We must “seek and inquire of” the Lord. (v.1)
- We cannot hope to have renewed minds without carving out time to pour out our hearts to Him and then letting Him communicate back to us.
- Jesus withdrew to process with the God the Father. (Lk 5:16) By listening to Him, He received that progressive illumination that led Him on life’s path. (Jn 5:30, Pr 4:18)
- Jesus points out the mistake of being satisfied with information or theology. It means missing out on relational knowledge of God: Jn 5:39 NLT-- You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!
- The Bible portrays many different kinds of encounters between God and His seekers including meditation, song, prayer, journaling, nature, and time in God’s word: Ps 96:6-- Breathtaking brilliance and awe-inspiring majesty radiate from his shining presence. His stunning beauty overwhelms all who come before him.
- Pursue the Lord! Try some different ways of connecting that may be new to you.
- Paying attention to God will impact the way you interpret the thoughts and circumstances that come your way. Attention and attitude are directly related!
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Lord, I desire deeper intimacy with You. Please show me some specific ways You would like to connect with me in the days to come.

Insights:

C. PATRIARCHS

- The Scriptures were written to help us understand the nature of our mighty God. We can observe and imitate the relationships He had with the patriarchs.
- Isaiah 51:2 tells us to think about how the Lord dealt with Abraham and Sarah who are in our spiritual family tree. He used promises to connect them to their destiny.
- Sarah couldn’t comprehend how God could possibly transform her Wilderness from barren to fruitful: Gen 18:13-14 NLT-- Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah

laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ Is anything too hard (*pala*) for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.

- God wanted Sarah to be expectant in every sense of the word! Pala (H6381) -- marvelous, miraculous, wonderful, surpassing, extraordinary, difficult to understand
- We have the benefit of seeing how God was true to His word in the lives of Abraham and Sarah. He will keep His word in our lives as well!
- God had a plan for Mary that was humanly impossible: Luke 1:30-38-- Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.* ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.”³⁸ Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- God’s favor in Mary’s life created a Wilderness of sorts. She would thrive in that Wilderness by opening her heart and mind to God’s seemingly impossible promise.
- The original language is helpful in applying this truth to our own lives:

<u>Nothing</u> = Ou (G3756)	+ Pas (G3956)	+ Rhema (G4487)
No or not	all things, anything, whosoever, whatsoever, everything, always	that which has been uttered by the living voice, a spoken word, a word of faith or promise (Thayer’s)

- In other words, whenever God speaks a personal word of faith or promise to one of His own, anything and everything is possible!
- Knowing this empowers us to see beyond our Wilderness circumstances. We can “wait for *and* expect (God), and on (His) arm shall (we) trust *and* wait with hope.”(v. 5)
- God desires us to know our spiritual inheritance and to experience it. First we listen to Him, and then we take possession in His timing as we walk with Him in faith.
- As we journey through The Wilderness, we need to come back again and again to the feet of Jesus to receive His comfort and to discover His next steps for us.
- Throughout the Bible, God expresses His desire to do pala-wonders in the lives of His people. Why? He wants His people and the people around them to know Him:
 - Ex 6:7 NLT-- I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.
 - Ex 7:5NLT--When I raise my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.”
- Let’s cultivate the attitude of Mary -- “Let it be done to me according to your word” – instead of being stuck in Wilderness Mindsets like the children of Israel in the desert.
- Listening, then responding in faith with a surrendered heart, invites God to make “make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord.” (v.3)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:

Lord, please give me a vision of my Wilderness becoming like Your garden. Is there something You want to change in me or in my circumstances?

Insights:

D. PROMISES

- “There are 7487 promises in the Bible. 7487 specific things God assures His people He will perform in their lives.” (Bible.com)
- God is big on promises! He uses them to help us disconnect from our limited viewpoint and to connect with His glorious purposes: 2 Cor 1:20-22 MSG-- Whatever God has promised gets stamped with the Yes of Jesus. In him, this is what we preach and pray, the great Amen, God’s Yes and our Yes together, gloriously evident. God affirms us, making us a sure thing in Christ, putting his Yes within us. By his Spirit he has stamped us with his eternal pledge—a sure beginning of what he is destined to complete.
- The Lord has already said, “yes” to His promise! He asks us to join Him in its fulfillment as we hear it, believe it, and offer up our “amen” with heart and voice.
- Amen—“so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled. It was a custom, which passed over from the synagogues to the Christian assemblies, that when he who had read or discoursed, had offered up solemn prayer to God, the others responded Amen, and thus made the substance of what was uttered their own.” (BLB.org)
- As we join God in His promise, we are renewed, revived, comforted, and strengthened for waiting in The Wilderness.
- Saying “yes” to the promise of God helps us to let go of striving and lean on His powerful arm instead.
- We must continue to declare these promises lest we forget and lean on our own understanding. Ex: Moses slay 1 Egyptian in the flesh but an entire nation with God.
- In our Wilderness places, may we regularly listen to God and be revived by His promise so that our world may see His glory: Ps 85:6ff NLT-- Won’t you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways. Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, so our land will be filled with his glory.

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