

Learning Gratitude in the Wilderness

Lessons From the Feast of Tabernacles

Core Message: God can use wilderness seasons, trials, and difficulties for a purposeful work in our lives. Rather than allowing hardship to produce complaining, bitterness, or frustration, believers are called to trust God and cultivate gratitude in every circumstance. Trials can humble us, deepen our dependence on the Lord, refine our faith, and prepare us for what He has ahead. When we remember that God is faithful and that eternal glory lies beyond our present difficulties, we can face hardship with a heavenly perspective. True peace is found not in perfect circumstances, but in clinging to God and trusting His goodness.

Main Bible Verses (NASB):

- **Core Memory Verse: (1 Thessalonians 5:18)** “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”
 - **(Deuteronomy 8:3)** “And He humbled you and let you go hungry and fed you with the manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, in order to make you understand that man shall not live on bread alone, but man shall live on everything that comes out of the mouth of the Lord.”
 - **(Deuteronomy 8:16)** “In the wilderness it was He who fed you manna which your fathers did not know, in order to humble you and in order to put you to the test, to do good for you in the end.”
 - **(James 1:2–4)** “Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - **(Hebrews 12:2)** “looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
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Key Points (Fill-in-the-Blank):

- “How do you give thanks in all things? By _____ that in everything that’s happening in our life there’s a _____.”
- “Trials, difficult times, the _____ that we face, this is reality. This is part of living in this world.”
- “These are _____ to overcome those impulses and to _____ God.”
- “We can’t be happy unless we’re _____, unless we’re thankful, and unless we have _____.”
- “God will be _____ to you and do _____ for you in the end.”
- “If we’ll respond by the grace of God to become _____ on Him through the trial, it’s going to bring us _____ to Him.”

Notes:

(Use lines below for personal notes)

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Reflection Questions:

1. What difficult or “wilderness” situation are you facing right now, and how might God be using it to deepen your dependence on Him?

2. When circumstances do not go the way you expect, are you more likely to complain or to give thanks? What does your response reveal about your trust in God?

3. Deuteronomy 8 teaches that God used Israel’s wilderness experience to humble and test them. How could viewing your trials as purposeful change the way you respond to them?

4. How can keeping your focus on eternal glory and God’s faithfulness help you endure a present difficulty with greater peace and gratitude?

Application Challenge of the Week:

Each day this week, identify one difficult or frustrating circumstance and intentionally thank God in the middle of it. Ask Him to show you what He is teaching you and how He is using that situation to deepen your dependence on Him. (Or come up with your own as the Lord leads):

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me trust that You have purpose even in the difficult seasons of my life.
- Teach me to respond to frustration and trials with gratitude instead of complaining.
- Give me an eternal perspective and draw me closer to You through every wilderness season.

“The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord cause His face to shine on you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His face to you, and give you peace.” Numbers 6:22-27 (NASB 95’)