

A 7-DAY BIBLICAL STUDY



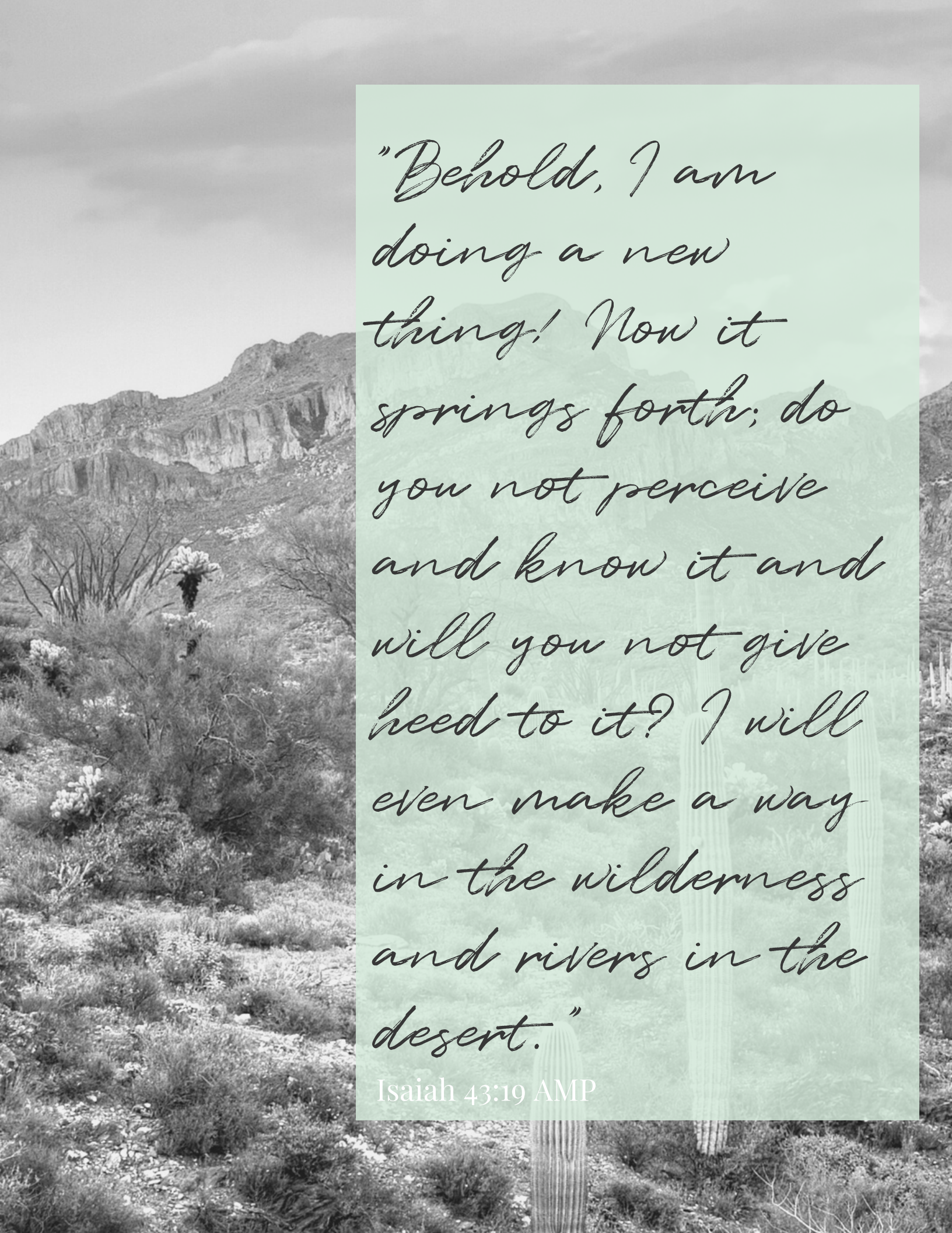
STANDING

in the wilderness

DING

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"Behold, I am
doing a new
thing! Now it
springs forth; do
you not perceive
and know it and
will you not give
heed to it? I will
even make a way
in the wilderness
and rivers in the
desert."

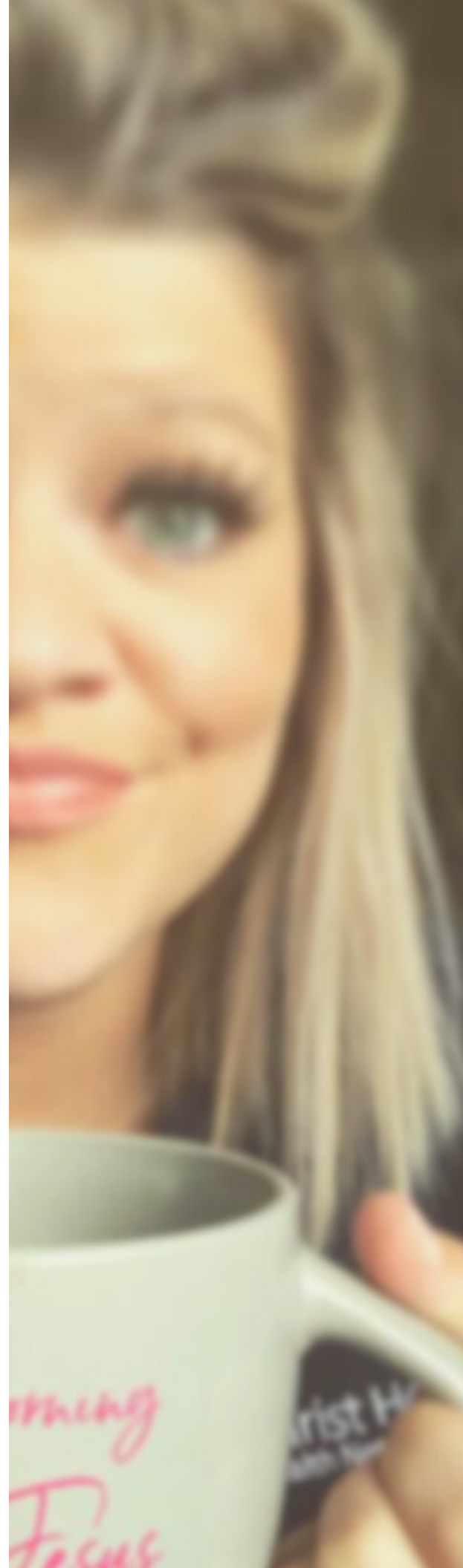
Isaiah 43:19 AMP

Let's Get Real...

Okay girl, grab your favorite mug, pour some coffee, snag your bible and let's chat. We like to pretend the sun is always shining and we are hanging on tight to our promises, but what about when nothing around you looks promising?

You don't have to go far in the holy scriptures to discover men and women who received promises from God that seemed to defy all current odds. Something that I think is interesting is that God's promises always seem unreachable from our viewpoint.

I once watched an illustration by John Bevere on the wilderness. It was powerful and I'll do my best to explain it. It was an illustration of a father and a daughter. These two always ran together through the nature where they lived. A medical diagnosis suddenly leaves the daughter blind. She still wants to go on runs with her father and in the beginning he leads her by the hand. Then he realizes that's she is becoming too dependent on him versus her learning how to thrive with the diagnosis. So rather than leading her by the hand he allows her to stumble on these runs through "the wilderness". The daughter becomes frustrated and assumes that the father has left her alone. But what she doesn't realize is that the father is actually three steps ahead of her no matter what she is doing, he is moving deadly danger away from her. The short video brought tears to my eyes as I instantly identified with the daughter in the film. Trying to feel my way through life by faith (not sight) only to stumble and fall, assuming each time that I am failing and God is disappointed and nowhere near leading me. But what is really happening in the spiritual realm is that as we stumble while we walk by faith our Heavenly Father is interceding for us, pushing back the darkness, closing the mouths of lions and silently cheering us on, knowing good and well that through our stumbling we are getting stronger.



Wow, now that will preach a message in itself won't it?
Now that we have a fresh mindset to understand the truth
that we know Christ will never leave or forsake us, and
that we walk by faith and not by sight, we can feel
encouraged knowing that we are not alone. Not only are we
surrounded by faith filled sisters (if you can't think of any-
I'm here for ya!) but we have the wisdom passed on
through the holy scriptures that we must hold within our
hearts.

Read: Isaiah 43

It's day 1 of our 7 day journey together so let's lay out some tips for
success.

1. Make it a point to set aside time daily where you can read the assigned scriptures, read the daily text and pray over the challenge questions.

The challenge questions are meant to cause you to search your heart.
2. Take them to the Lord in prayer and allow Him to speak to you.
Write the answers to these challenge questions in your journal, or on the spaces provided within this study.
3. Let's be friends! Reach out on Social Media and let me know you're walking through this study. I'd love to chat with you and agree with you in prayer over whatever wilderness season you're facing.

Last but not least - open up to your fellow sisters. There is power in
4. agreement. Ask them to agree with you in prayer over challenges you are facing, words you are struggling to hold onto and dreams you are believing God for.



Noah - Working Against all Odds

Day 2 *Read: Genesis 6-7*

Just six chapters into the beginning of the Earth and humans are already screwing things up. In Genesis 6:5 the Lord sees the wickedness of man, (6) sees that his mind is on evil continually and then (7) regrets ever making man from the dust. This time around when reading I can see clearly that once sin entered the picture of our world (remember the serpent in the garden?) it was all downhill from there. There's no amount of animal sacrifice, or religious tradition that could possibly help us push past sin and press towards holiness. Nothing but the redeeming blood of Jesus and the empowering of the Holy Spirit every single day can allow us to live a life free of bondage.

So, back to Noah. God realized the abundance of sin and decided to start over and save Noah and his family. Could you imagine being the ONLY family left in creation who lived a life consecrated to God?

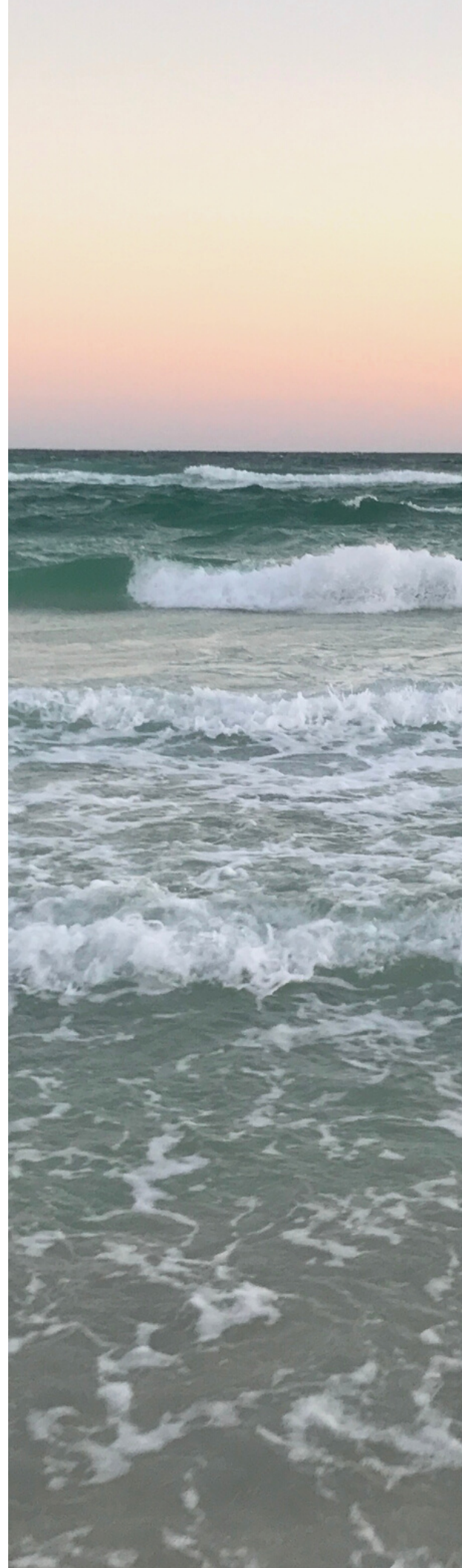
I know the enemy likes to convince us that we are walking this road to heaven alone, which is a total lie, but here Noah actually was. He was clinging to stories of God's goodness from Eden, passed down from generation to generation. He didn't have a Bible to reference but he had knowledge of God. You know, while I was praying about this study the other day the Lord said something that seemed backwards, until just now as I write about Noah. The Lord said "Sometimes, in order to go forward, you must look back". Now, I know you've heard the saying like I have, that you can't drive a car looking in the rear view mirror. And while this is true, and God requires us to let go of past baggage to walk forward with him, in saying this He showed me the significance of gleaning on testimonies from my past and miracles God has done for my family members.

Because sometimes it's those stories that give us the strength to keep stepping, and the confidence to know that if God did it then , He can do it now.

What Testimony from your life
do you know you must pass on
through the Generations?

Can you prove God as a healer? A sustainer? A friend who sticks closer than a brother? What part of your testimony is begging to be shared? Write it below.

Notes



Noah - When Standing means Floating,

Day 3
Read: Genesis 8-9

Notes

As we think of Noah, let's think of the instructions God gave him for the arc. God was SO specific. And while this doesn't tend to happen too much in the modern world as we pray for direction we must realize that no one had ever built an arc before. Thankfully we have testimonies and advice of other believers to lean on when we are walking out our story and stepping by faith. So, the Lord gives Noah very specific instructions and Noah not only hears the words of the Lord, but he heeds the instruction. He begins to build. Yes, it looks crazy. It sounds crazy. The onlookers think he's crazy but he's leaning on a word from the Lord. Have you ever been there friend? Have you ever felt called to step out on one word from God? One dream? Or have you drawn back thinking some will call you crazy? Too big of a dreamer? Well- I'd dare say they said these same things to Noah. And to his family. Y'all .. he was building a boat because God was going to flood the earth with water from the sky, and it had NEVER rained from the sky before. Never. Water came from the ground to keep the plants thriving, but never rain from the sky. God was asking him to BUILD something based around a PROMISE, for something that had NEVER happened before.

How often do we fail to build things correctly, or even fail to start because we cannot fathom it? We've never seen it before.. so how could God do that through us? **Did we forget that HE is THE creator?!** What a slap in the face of God when we refuse to believe that he is capable enough to create again. To do a new thing again. To use us to manifest His goodness through again. Ouch. I know .. but it's true. Where is God leading you? What big dream do you have that almost feels too silly to write down? Not a vain dream, girl. A big, God-breathed, touching the world for Him dream. Let's see it, swallow your pride and write it in the green space to the right.

"And God remembered Noah..."

Gen. 8:1

Notes

So, once Noah builds the arc, and the rain comes just like God said it would Noah and his family are resting safely inside the arc. Which by the way took 120 years to build (Noah certainly gets an A+ for stamina..). They are literally living inside of an actual promise and God is sustaining them in the middle of the flood. Could you imagine looking outside of the arc and seeing nothing but high waters over the mountains, likely floating bodies of those who refused to heed Gods warning? I'd imagine the waters were rough, that it wasn't a smooth sail, but rather a rough ride through the physical manifestation of God's wrath and judgment on a sin cursed world. Animals howling (also likely stinking..), the babies crying and adults aboard the arc constantly reminding themselves of the goodness of God to keep their minds from wondering...

But nevertheless God sustained them. Forty days later they there were signs of dry land and later they began to repopulate the earth, no doubt retelling stories of the uncertainty felt night after night. But somehow the peace of God surpassing everything they couldn't understand. The mighty hand of God sustained them in their darkest, most trying time. Why? Because it said that God "remembered Noah" though we don't get too many details on this I'd dare say that this meant God knew the heart of Noah. He knew he could trust him to preserve His name, to build a shelter for His people and to carry His animal creation while He flooded away the sins of the earth. And now every time we see a rainbow in the sky we have the opportunity to tell our children this story of Gods saving grace. This story of how God can see the heart of an ordinary man who loves Him and use him to save an entire nation. And guess what that means? He can see your heart too. Can He trust you? Are you ready to cling to His promises?



Abram & Sarai - The Chosen Parents

Day 4

Read: Genesis 15-16

Just a few chapters into Genesis we can read about Abram and his lovely wife Sarai. In fact the Lord told Abram in Genesis that he would be the father of many nations. Keep in mind that when the Lord told him this, he wasn't living in a Brady bunch reality. He and his wife were very old and they had zero children at the time. I'm talking like buckeye club y'all.

In fact, this promise of a child from their union seemed so impossible to Sarai she decided she was going to help God. She told Abram God must have meant that the child would actually come from her servant Hagar. Well, after Hagar actually conceived with Abram she got pretty annoyed and actually mad at Sarai which then started an argument between Abram and Sarai (and a cascade of other things). See how the enemy works? He builds off your doubt from a promise from God, pushes you to act outside of God's will (because it only makes sense, right?) and then brings on even more confusion and strife.

Can you think of a time in your life where you may have forced yourself in a decision or direction only to discover that it wasn't God's will at all? In fact it was the enemy at work to try and derail you? As we ask God how we can stand on promises when all else seems to look less than promising I believe it's important that we fast and pray.

Not too long ago I was searching for God's heart on a certain situation. He'd given me words of encouragement and I needed to hear His voice on a decision that needed made. Of course everyone around you will have their thoughts but it's essential that you get alone with God and ask him to tune out every voice other than His. And sometimes this requires our flesh to silence by pushing away the plate, shutting off social media and opening our leather bound bible

For today's challenge I want you to set aside twenty minutes. Go to the Lord, worship him for who He is, thank him for all He's done for you and then seek His heart for whatever you're needing. Do you need a word of encouragement to keep you pressing on? Do you need a fresh dream to chase? Relationships reconciled? Feel free to use your journal or the space provided to record the way God is speaking. If we've learned anything so far, it's that we will need this very encouragement and seeds of hope to keep us sustained in the wilderness. Write about your encounter with the lord in your journal or here in the space provided.



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The Double E's - Mentorship & Plowing

Day 5

Read: 2 Kings 2

So let's recap, we've written down our big dream, hope, or prayer that we are believing God for. We've seen the importance of looking back on testimonies. We see how easily the enemy can slip in when we doubt the promises of God, and we've taken time to sit at His feet and allow His presence to bring us peace and encouragement.

Today we are shifting gears as we look at Elijah and Elisha. We have seen in the biblical text that Elijah was a servant of God who after many battles continued to show the hand of God mighty. There was a certain power in the words of Elijah because he sought direct counsel from the Lord, and spoke forth God's word. One thing that I think is important as we look at these two prophets is the literal zero tolerance they had for false Gods. Take a gander through the books of 1 and 2 Kings, you will realize rather quickly that Elijah didn't mess around when people consulted false Gods over the One true God. While the false Gods we face today may not be shapen from brass they still can have a foothold in our life if we are not careful. If one thing is certain regarding the coronavirus in the USA it's the absolute shut down of shopping / sports / and other hobbies that seemed to consume our time when in reality God must become first and foremost, not our jam packed schedules. Okay - back to the double E's. When Elijah was ready to begin training and teaching the next prophet of God he found Elijah. What was Elijah doing? Great question. He was PLOWING.

Elisha was plowing the ground when Elijah found him and cast his mantle (representing the anointing) over his shoulders. Sometimes when we are praying for a breakthrough, when we are asking God when the promotion is coming, when will the dream come to life, when we are feeling alone the best thing we can do is plow the ground.

That means it's time to get to work. Don't just sit around waiting on God to move while you twiddle your thumbs. God is moving all the time and He is looking for a woman who will defy all odds and work while it is still day. It's time girl. Start plowing. Make reading your word a priority, sow His word into your heart and the hearts of others around you. When it comes to your dream, vision or promise from God Do what you can and let the Holy Ghost do His work. For example, it's a dream of mine to write books Joyce Meyer style. I want to reach women on a real level with the goodness of God's word. So, rather than simply sitting by wishing I had a book deal I am writing these small studies, I'm learning about publishing and I'm putting the word of God to work in the way that I can, from where I am now. And I am trusting God to breathe on it when it's His time. To open doors that no man can open because that's what He says He will do when we do our part. When we knock He will open, when we seek we will find. See girl? It's up to us to move. God has taken the classic first step to all of us, so don't get it twisted thinking God is lounging back blaming us for nothing good happening. Nope.



The lord took a giant leap towards you when he died on the cross for your sins. To cover them and to allow you access to the throne room as you cover yourself with His blood. Now he beacons you forward. He drops dreams, hopes, visions, prophecies and promises on your path in hopes that you'll pick them up, write them down, grab onto them as truth, and do everything in your power to work for Him in the season that you are in. Believing that you will reap a harvest in due time if you faint not. Aka - the mantle will fall on you, if you keep plowing.

Also important to realize that Elisha didn't simply take the mantle of Elijah, declare that he had suddenly arrived and go off proclaiming whatever. Nope. He humbly followed Elijah. Learning, gleaning and waiting on the timing of God before stepping into his calling of being a prophet. Will God use us where we are when we are humble? You bet. But also as He blesses us and works through us it's essential that yes, we keep plowing, but with a humble heart. Because God is never done with us until he takes us on to glory. And a humble and willing heart is a necessary attribute to have if we want to be used by God.

Today's challenge is to write three action steps that will drive you towards whatever you're believing for. And remember my motto, pray big but believe bigger.

1.

2.

3.



P.S.

While I'd imagine that as your
soaring on wings of hope six days
into this study the enemy is doing
his best to fog your mind with his
lies and doubts.

In order to stand in the wilderness
it's important to recognize the
voice of god versus the voice of
your flesh and the enemy. In order
to combat the enemy we must
speak the words of God (out loud).

So today as you continue to dive
into scripture feel free to put the
enemy in his place. Don't worry,
He deserves it.

xoxo -

Crystal

Emotions - From Mourning to Joy

Day 6

Read: Psalms 30

Maybe it's my current pregnancy, but here recently I have been feeling all of the possible emotions on a whole new level. Growing up as a preachers kid was a bit strict. One thing I constantly remember throughout the years was the way my dad demanded I "dry it up" when my feelings got the best of me and tears began to flow. While I appreciate that my earthly dad didn't allow me to waller (thats a country word for "sit" or "lay down") in self pity my whole life I have had to spend some time in my heavenly fathers presence to discover how He wants me to deal with emotions as a Christian. As women I think we certainly can benefit from taking some time to really think about our feelings and see how we can work through them. Something that God has shown me throughout the Bible is the time of weeping and grief that people took when there was a loss. Old Testament folk would "rent their clothes". Not indicating they they were paying by the hour but rather that they would rip their clothes off their body and cry as a sign of sorrow. The book of Isaiah talks of how Jesus will turn our mourning into dancing after our weeping endures through the night seasons. Now why would the Bible mention these feelings so much if he expected us to bottle ours up and never acknowledge them? God created us with feelings and emotions and as we encounter hurt in life, setbacks and disappointment we have a free pass to cry. But the good news is that we don't have to stay there, because we know that as children of God, He is working everything out for our good.

We can feel the real-ness of these feelings. We can cry. We can eat that ice cream and sulk. But then it's time to pick ourselves up by our bootstraps and keep going. We can feel the feelings, and realize they are not to be trusted for decision making, consult the Lord and move forward. Today's devotion is rather quick but I hope it impacts you as much as it did me. We can be thankful that our emotions allow us to feel in a raw real way. We can then walk through those feelings with the confidence that something greater is on the other side because that is who God is. He calls us out of mourning into dancing. So, get your praise shoes ready, turn on your favorite worship song and dance before the Lord. He isn't a God whose afraid of your raw real emotions. He's a God who created them within you. A God who longs for you to bring Him every part of you. So that He can mend, heal and set free the only way that He can.

Today's challenge may seem silly, but trust me. You'll thank me. Remember when David danced before the Lord and even his wife said he looked crazy? Well love. It's time to look a little crazy. Crank up the music and let your feet loose. Dance before the Lord and allow him to flow through every part of you. He Longs to be loved by you.





Holiness - The Road less traveled.

Day 7

Read: 1 Peter 1

Sometimes the road to our destiny may look scarce. God may be pruning things from you, and that is okay. If you haven't been pruned before now, then honey it's coming. As you press towards Christ you can be confident that there are parts of your flesh that will have to surrender to him. Relationships you'll have to let go of and hobbies you will no longer find enjoyable. I'm not saying that God is calling you to be a no-fun-prude, but I am saying that God's Holy Oil will only flow through vessels that are clean and consecrated to him. As we talk about living a life set apart we can remember that the Bible talks specifically of not straddling the fence. Reminding us that pure and bitter water cannot flow from the same spout (James 3:11). And that we should not let our mouth speak forth blessing and cursings. Joshua even proclaimed that we should chose who we will serve, the true God or false Gods, leaving no grey area. However the most impactful verse that comes to mind when I think of living an on-fire life for God

comes from Revelation 3:15 when God says I know your works, and they aren't hot or cold, and i rather that they would be one or the other because the lukewarm I will spew out of my mouth. It's clear to us throughout the scripture that when God comes onto the scene in someones life, He radically transforms them. He meets you where you are, but He doesn't expect you to stay there. He compels us with His love to pick up our cross and follow Him. So, if this is the God of the Bible that we read about why do we, in our Christian modern world view of Christianity think that we can pick and choose parts of the scripture to abide by? Why do we decide that we can live comfortably following God from a distance? Close enough to call on when we are in trouble, yet not near enough to hear the whispers of his voice in the stillness of the day. God help us. If we want to stand for Christ in a world that is leaving Him behind we must examine ourselves, daily.

If we are longing for God to move in and through us it's time to get out of our own way. It's time to shut off the voices of the enemy and crucify our flesh. How? Great Question! You spend time searching the heart of God, rather than His hand. Sit at his feet with the worship music on and thank Him for who He is. Run out of things to say? Open the book of Psalms and start praising Him the way David did. Just as you begin to know a friend more and more after hanging out and talking with them, the same goes for the Lord. We must spend time with Him so that we can hear and know His voice. Because the word says in John 10, my sheep know my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And guess what sis? He will never lead us astray. Even when it seems like we are walking to a dead end, or walking alone, Christ is guiding us and sustaining us, even in the driest of seasons.

How can we know Christ as our peace when we are never among chaos?

How can we know Christ as the healer without a sickness?

How can we see that Jesus is our banner when we aren't fighting for the victory?

His train fills the temple friends, He has never lost a battle.



So, on this road to our destiny while we are standing in the wilderness holding onto promises in the middle of a wasteland we can be sure to remember a few things;

- God's promises always seem to come at the most inopportune times, and you are not alone in that my friend.
- We should trust God to do exactly what He said He would do, without trying to "help" Him (He is perfectly capable)
- God will sustain us in every storm. He is the living water and our daily bread.
- Feelings are meant to be felt, but they are not meant to lead our decisions.
- The best way to get a promotion in the kingdom is to serve where you are and plow the ground.
- It is no coincidence that there is a highway to hell and a stairway to heaven. Take the road less traveled by the world and walk with God.

Until God
opens the
door, Praise
Him in the
Hallway