The Wilderness Within: A Study Guide by Faith Alvis Taylor
For use with The Wilderness Within by Beneth Peters Jones
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CHAPTER 1

DISCOVERING THE WILDERNESS

SCRIPTURE READING: GENESIS 3

1. What is the internal wilderness that is the topic of this study?

2. Define *attitudes* and *emotions*.

3. Every woman struggles with the power of her emotions and attitudes. In your own words, restate Beneth Jones’s purpose for writing this book.
THE STARTING POINT

4. What was the original cause of our wilderness, both in the physical world and within?

5. As a result of the curse, what types of suffering do women face?

6. What are the positive effects of our emotions?

7. How does Beneth Jones describe a woman’s responses to life’s experiences?
THE PERSONAL CHALLENGE

8. We must both recognize and resist our natural emotional tendencies. What does Proverbs 25:28 teach us regarding our emotional wilderness?

9. What three spiritual facts can we draw strength from as we consider our emotional wilderness?

10. What parallel does Beneth Jones use in this study to help us understand and deal with our emotions?
11. Fill in the chart to show the parallel between the Israelites’ wilderness and our wilderness.

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12. What is your goal for this Bible study?
CHAPTER 2

ENTERING THE WILDERNESS

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 12–13

1. According to 1 Corinthians 10:11, what was God’s purpose in recording the wanderings of the people of Israel?

2. The people of Israel had to do two things to go to the Promised Land. However, there was only one way to accomplish them. What was the way?

3. The beginning of Israel’s journey was both corporate and physical. What about ours?
4. According to Exodus 12, what was the only way to escape the death angel?

5. Why has the judgment of death (eternal separation from God in hell) been pronounced upon every individual?

6. The moment an individual begins her new life in Christ, she begins moving toward the Promised Land. What is the Promised Land for the believer?

7. The Jews had a temporary “gathering place” called Succoth. What would be considered a “Succoth” for the believer?
8. Although the Israelites were rescued from slavery and death in Egypt, they were not instantly translated to the Promised Land. What did God’s choice for Israel mean, exactly, in human terms?

9. Although you have a plan for your life’s journey, who directs your paths according to Proverbs 16:9?

10. God chooses your routes and your detours along life’s journey. What is your correct response, and what is the wrong response?

11. Why are we as women so shaken by change?
12. When does a woman’s internal wilderness first become reality?

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

13. God created the mature female body to be a cyclical body including three intricately integrated compartments. What are the three compartments?

14. List at least twelve symptoms that you may experience during your premenstrual syndrome. Be honest with yourself!

15. What encouraging reminder are we given in 1 Peter 2:11?
16. Those who know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior have three things available every moment. What are they?

17. What did you find most encouraging about this chapter?
CHAPTER 3

FEAR AT THE RED SEA

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 14

1. In Exodus 14:9–10, what circumstance did the Israelites face that caused fear?

2. According to Exodus 14:1–4, who placed them in this circumstance and for what purpose?

3. Give an example from The Wilderness Within or from your own experience of a “place of threat” in which we might find ourselves.
4. In your own words, summarize the Israelite’s response to their circumstance as described in Exodus 14:10–12.

5. What characteristic of God did the Israelites need to focus on in their “place of threat”?

6. What was the response God desired from the Israelites as stated by Moses in Exodus 14:13?

7. What gift of God was available to the Israelites and is available to us in our threatening situations?
8. What New Testament passages describe this gift?

9. What was God’s command for the Israelites in Exodus 14:15? What choice did they make, according to Exodus 14:22?

10. What was the result of their obedience as recorded in Exodus 14:22, 31?

11. Exodus 15:1–21 records the Israelites’ song of praise to God following His deliverance. What characteristics of God are mentioned in the song?
12. Following this experience of God’s protection and provision, what should have been the Israelites’ response to threatening circumstances in future days?

13. Think of a time in your past when you have seen God’s protection and provision evidenced in your life. How can reflecting on God’s deliverance in that situation help you in your current “place of threat”?

14. What is your biggest fear? And who is in control of it?

15. As you conclude this chapter, spend a few minutes in prayer thanking God for His faithful deliverance in the past and committing to look to Him in simple trust for deliverance from your future fears.
CHAPTER 4

DISAPPOINTMENT AT MARAH, INGRATITUDE AT ELIM

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 15:22–27

THE WATERS AT MARAH

1. In Exodus 15:22, what physical need did the Israelites face in the wilderness of Shur?

2. According to Exodus 15:24, how did the people respond to Moses after they drank the bitter water at Marah?

3. What was Moses’ response in Exodus 15:25?
4. What is an example of a “bitter disappointment” you have faced at some point in your life?

5. How does Beneth Jones define disappointment?

6. According to Exodus 15:25, how did God undertake for the Israelites in the midst of their disappointment?

7. What does Exodus 15:25 state as God’s purpose for allowing this disappointment in the Israelites’ lives?
8. Where does Beneth Jones encourage us to focus when life’s disappointments are bitter? What will be the result of this focus?

9. In Exodus 15:26, what covenant did God make with the Israelites?

THE OASIS AT ELIM

10. Following this proving incident in their journey, God provided abundant water for the Israelites at Elim (Exodus 15:27). What response is significantly absent from this record of God’s provision?

11. As we leave the oasis at Elim, take a moment to consider the need for praise and gratitude in your life. Write out a favorite verse or passage that you can meditate on in future days as you consider God’s goodness in your life.
CHAPTER 5

DISSATISFACTION IN SIN

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 16

1. What physical need did the Israelites complain about in Exodus 16:3?

2. Describe their location (the wilderness of Sin).

3. Why is the time that has passed since the Israelites left Egypt significant (Exodus 16:1)?
4. Give an example of a circumstance you have faced in which you thought you could “handle it” until the difficult circumstance continued for an extended period of time. Describe your emotions in this situation.

5. According to Exodus 16:2–3, what did the Israelites say in response to their circumstance?

6. According to both *The Wilderness Within* and Exodus 16:3, in what way did the Israelites exaggerate?

7. The Israelites blamed Moses and Aaron for their predicament. However, who was their complaint actually against?
8. What New Testament instruction have we been given regarding complaining?

9. What was the Lord’s first response to the Israelites’ complaints?

10. What was the Lord’s second response to the Israelites’ complaints?

11. The Israelites did not obey God’s instructions for gathering the manna (Exodus 16:20, 27). What attitude do you think their disobedience reveals?
12. God’s instructions for gathering the manna included observing the Sabbath. When we ignore biblical principles for a day of rest, what effects do we experience?

13. Beneth Jones concludes chapter 5 by stating that the wilderness of Sin did not cause Israel’s attitudes. Rather, it simply revealed what was already in their hearts. What is also true of our “wilderness” experience?

14. List five statements or principles that you will seek to implement in your life this week.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)
CHAPTER 6

ANGER AND WARFARE AT REPHIDIM

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 17

1. In Exodus 17:1, the Israelites arrived in Rephidim, where they once again encountered a physical difficulty. What problem did they face this time?

2. In spite of the demonstrations of God’s power over water that they had seen in the past, how did the people respond (Exodus 17:2–3)?

3. The Israelites emotions have intensified since their last disappointment in the wilderness of Sin. Describe this intensity as seen in Exodus 17:2–4.
4. Although we recognize the ugliness and danger of blatant anger, how do we often disguise it in our lives?

5. List and define the six forms or degrees of anger found in Ephesians 4:31.
   (a)
   (b)
   (c)
   (d)
   (e)
   (f)

6. What are the boundaries of anger as established in the following passages?
   Proverbs 15:1
   James 1:19–20
   Proverbs 30:33
   Proverbs 29:11
   Ecclesiastes 7:9
   Proverbs 22:24–25
7. According to Exodus 17:5–6 and Psalm 105:41–42, what was God’s response to the Israelites’ anger?

8. Exodus 17:8–11 describes an enemy attack. What was the two-fold response of the Israelites according to these verses?

9. What lesson should we learn from this response?
10. Exodus 17:14 records an instruction given by God following this victory. What is Moses told to do in order to help the Israelites and future generations remember God’s blessings?

11. In this chapter we have seen the deliverance of God and the instruction the Israelites received to keep a record of it in order to remember His faithfulness in the future. What type of record could you keep to help you remember God’s past faithfulness to you?
CHAPTER 7

LAW AND IDOLATRY AT SINAI

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 19–20; EXODUS 31:18–32:35

1. After reading the Exodus passages, summarize the events that took place at Sinai.

2. In Exodus 19:4, what metaphor does God use to describe His care of the Israelites?

3. According to Deuteronomy 32:11, specifically how is God’s care like that of an eagle caring for her young?
4. In contrast to God’s description, how do you think the Israelites would have described their journey from Egypt to Sinai?

5. In the last phrase of Exodus 19:4, what does God state as His destination for the Israelites as they journeyed through the Red Sea, Marah, Elim, the wilderness of Sin, and Rephidim?

6. According to Exodus 19:5, God made a covenant with the Israelites at Sinai. What was their responsibility in this covenant, and what was His promise?
7. According to Exodus 19:9, 11, and 16–19, prior to giving the Israelites His law, God revealed Himself to them. Describe this revelation, and explain what God’s purpose may have been.

8. God then took Moses up into the mountain for forty days to give him instructions for the Israelites. The people grew restless during this period of waiting and eventually turned to idolatry (Exodus 32:1–6). Give an example of a time of waiting and restlessness a woman might face. What might she turn to rather than waiting on God?

9. The Israelites worshiped an idol of gold. According to The Wilderness Within, what are some of the idols we might worship?
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

10. At Mount Sinai God provided the Israelites with clear guidelines for living when He gave them the Ten Commandments. Beneth Jones challenges us to consider how the commandments apply to our emotions and attitudes. Choose one commandment from Exodus 20:1–7, and share how obedience to this command might be a struggle in our emotions and attitudes.

11. What are the results of our obedience or conformity to the law of God?

12. Name one main principle that you have learned in this lesson.
CHAPTER 8

TEARS IN PARAN

SCRIPTURE READING: NUMBERS 11

1. As the Israelites continued their journey into Paran, what “spiritual treasures” did they carry with them?

2. In spite of these spiritual treasures, the people continued to complain. How did God respond (Numbers 11:1)?

3. In our studies of the Israelites in the wilderness, we have seen their continual verbal complaining. In what way did they express their complaint in Paran, according to Numbers 11:4?
4. This verse identifies the cause of the Israelites’ tears. What would have been legitimate reasons for their shedding tears?

5. According to Beneth Jones, what group of people in our lives could represent the “mixed multitude”? How can that multitude influence us?

6. What are some examples of ways we wallow in self-pity?

7. What is the end result of self-pity?
8. How do you think we should deal with self-pity in our lives?

9. Beneth Jones concludes this chapter with a thought-provoking question. What does she encourage us to consider regarding our tears?
CHAPTER 9

PREPARING TO REENTER OUR WILDERNESS

SCRIPTURE READING: DEUTERONOMY 11:18–32; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16–17

1. What is the focus of part 2 of *The Wilderness Within*?

2. Although our attitudes and emotions are elusive, how can we direct them?

3. Our will or “choice-determiner” operates in what two ways?
PHYSICAL RESOURCES

4. What three areas that contribute to controlling our emotions and attitudes do we need to evaluate?

5. What verse teaches you to take care of the body that God has allowed you to presently live in?

6. Write out the verse and begin to memorize it.

7. List six ways that we can be good stewards of our bodies.
   (a)
   (b)
   (c)
   (d)
   (e)
   (f)
TRIGGER POINTS

8. *The Wilderness Within* lists several specific areas of life, or trigger points, that potentially aggravate our attitudes or emotions. What are some additional trigger points in your life of which you are aware?

9. What should be done about trigger points?

POSITIVE RELEASE MECHANISMS

10. List two “release mechanisms” suggested by Beneth Jones.
11. Describe an incident from your life when laughter provided the emotional release needed to help you through an intense situation.

12. Which of Beneth Jones’s practical suggestions in this chapter did you find most helpful for controlling your emotional wilderness?
CHAPTER 10

FOCUS ADJUSTMENT

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 PETER 1

1. Throughout our studies, what was the number one problem that caused the Israelites to respond incorrectly?

2. What principle does Beneth Jones share that can help us guard our focus?

3. According to 2 Peter 1, how do we experience spiritual victory?
4. What word in 2 Peter 1:5 reveals the hard work necessary to grow in our knowledge of God? Define the word.

5. Second Peter 1:5–8 lists areas of growth that are to be added to our faith. Using Beneth Jones’s explanations, describe each area of growth.

Virtue:
Knowledge:
Temperance:
Patience:
Godliness:
Brotherly kindness:
Charity:

HOLD THE LENS STEADY

6. When we realize that a negative attitude or emotion is flaring up, our natural tendency is to look for someone or something to blame. What should we do instead?
7. It is our human nature to defend our fleshly reactions. How does God evaluate our tendency to justify ourselves in our responses, according to Jeremiah 17:9 and Proverbs 28:26?

8. Beneth Jones states that “manipulation is often the engine driving female responses.” Share an example of how a woman might attempt to manipulate someone with her emotions.

9. In what way might our response show that we have lost self-control?
REDIRECT THE LENS

10. Examining our responses will not be profitable unless we turn our minds in what direction?

ACCEPT GOD’S VIEWPOINT

11. One step in accepting God’s viewpoint is recognizing sin for what it is. Our “goofs” or “mess-ups” may not be sins of the body, but may be what type of sins?

12. What does Scripture teach us about acknowledging our sins?
13. We are not to eliminate our emotions. What is our goal instead?

14. How does *The Wilderness Within* define the following?

   *looking*

   *unto*

   *Jesus*

15. What principle has the Lord brought to your attention in this chapter?
CHAPTER 11

RE-EQUIPPING AND REJOICING

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 1

1. On what does “improved journeying” depend?

2. Three essential items for the “survival kit” in our wilderness journey are water, food, and a compass. Where do we find these three items?

3. What was the repeated cause of Israel’s failure as they responded to the circumstances of their journey?
THE BIBLE AS WATER

4. Just as our physical bodies need water, so our spiritual beings need “consistent, abundant hydration.” How do we often seek to meet this need rather than through the water of the Word?

5. What should be our heart’s cry, as stated by the psalmist in Psalm 143:6?

THE BIBLE AS FOOD

6. Beneth Jones correlates our need for the Word to our need for food. She points out that spiritual famine is self-chosen. Why do we neglect feeding on the Word?
7. How is the bread of the Word unique?

8. What do the following verses teach us about our consumption of the Word?

   Joshua 1:8
   
   1 Timothy 4:15
   
   James 1:22
   
   James 1:25
9. The following verses exemplify for us the effect of the Word of God. What picture does each verse use to describe the nourishment Scripture provides?

   Job 23:12

Psalm 119:103

Psalm 119:162

THE BIBLE AS COMPASS

10. What does the compass of God’s Word direct us to?
11. List and describe the three qualities we need to practice in our lives in order to use the Word of God effectively.

12. What suggestion from this chapter do you need to implement in your life?