

Day 6

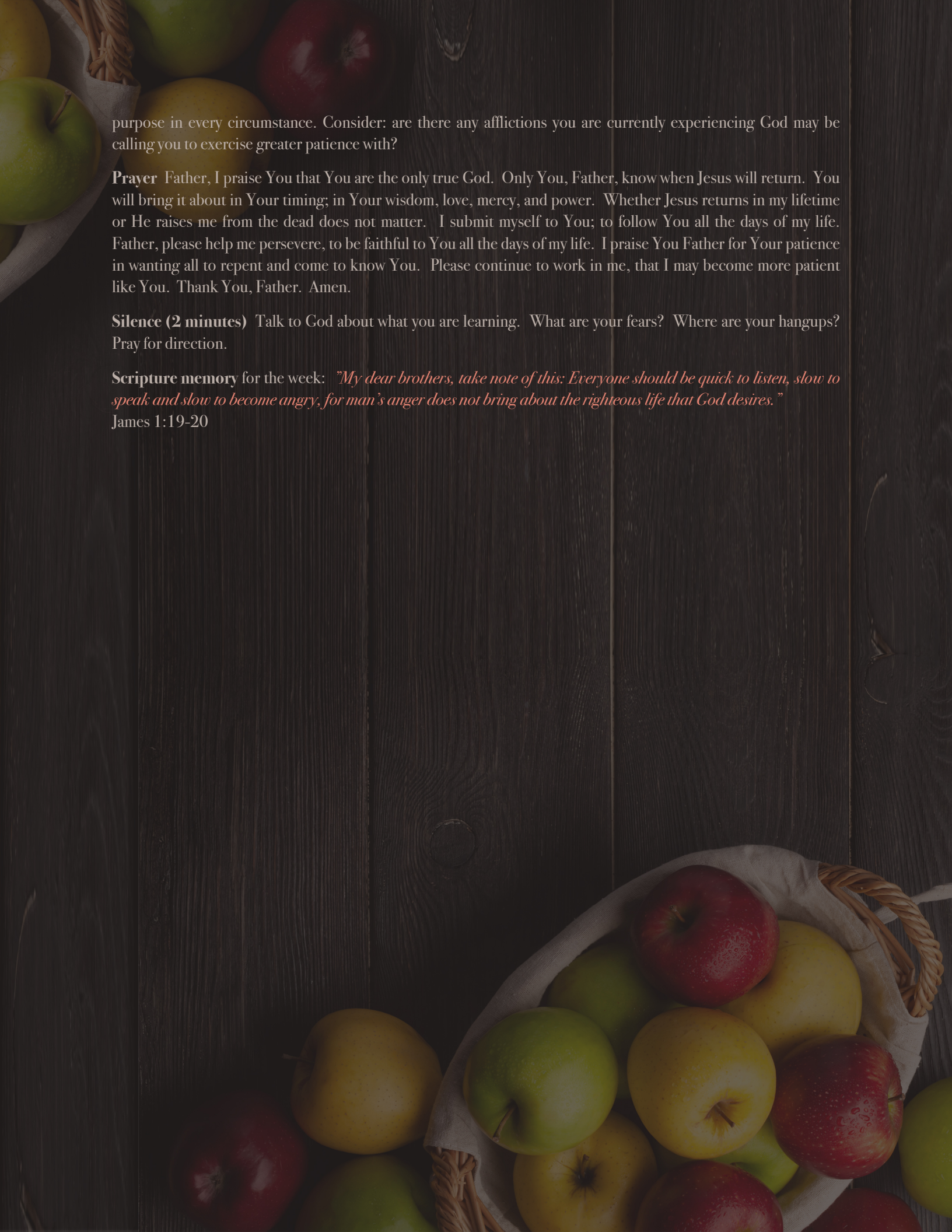
Patience

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *“Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”* James 5:7-11

Discussion James calls on believers to be patient for Jesus’ return; particularly to be patient during suffering. He gives three examples for us to consider: farmers, the prophets, and Job. Farmers are eager for the autumn and spring rains which are essential for a valuable crop, just as we are all eager for Jesus’ return. The farmer has taken care of other responsibilities, such as planting and weeding, but has to wait for the rain; there is nothing they can do to make it happen. They need to stand firm as farmers, and not abandon the field or their life as a farmer. As followers of Jesus we also need to stand firm and wait for Jesus, not becoming impatient and having conflicts and divisions with each other. A grumbling farmer doesn’t make it rain any sooner and a grumbling Christian doesn’t make Jesus return earlier. Jesus is at the door and might return at any moment; He hears whatever we say and knows how we treat each other. *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you...Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them”* (Jn. 13:14, 15, 17). *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”* (Jn. 13:34-35). We need to wait patiently, taking good care of our relationships with other believers. James also presents the prophets as an example of patience. The prophets’ responsibility was to speak in the name of the Lord. In the face of suffering they persevered, continuing to speak in the Lord’s name, being faithful to and obeying the Lord. We too are to be faithful to whatever the Lord has called us to do; to persevere and be faithful to God’s direction for us, even in the midst of our suffering. In his third example James describes Job as blessed due to his perseverance. Most people think of Job’s suffering and probably wouldn’t use the word blessed to describe him. But James does. James is focused on Job’s perseverance and faithfulness to God, as well as how God blessed him after his suffering and confrontation with God. Job had great suffering and was irreverent in his challenge of God. However, he faithfully maintained his belief in God while he suffered and submitted when God confronted him. As we wait for Jesus’ return we too may experience great suffering and we too may have intense emotions and unanswered questions for God. But like Job, we need to persevere and maintain our faithfulness to God. Jesus will return in His timing and He will bless us. James calls us to be patient about what we cannot control, make sure we are not engaging in speech and behavior which brings conflict or division in the Church, and to persevere in being faithful to follow Jesus in the midst of extreme hardship. We are to continue to be faithful to God in what He has called us to do: Love God, love and show mercy to our neighbor, love one another, make disciples, and use our gifts to build up the Church.

Application Affliction is the ultimate test of our patience. Often times when we are in the midst of suffering we can lose sight of anything other than easing that suffering in whatever way we can. Patience in the midst of these afflictions doesn’t mean needlessly prolonging them through inaction, but trusting God to reveal to us His



purpose in every circumstance. Consider: are there any afflictions you are currently experiencing God may be calling you to exercise greater patience with?

Prayer Father, I praise You that You are the only true God. Only You, Father, know when Jesus will return. You will bring it about in Your timing; in Your wisdom, love, mercy, and power. Whether Jesus returns in my lifetime or He raises me from the dead does not matter. I submit myself to You; to follow You all the days of my life. Father, please help me persevere, to be faithful to You all the days of my life. I praise You Father for Your patience in wanting all to repent and come to know You. Please continue to work in me, that I may become more patient like You. Thank You, Father. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."*

James 1:19-20