

THE JOURNEY OF FAITH - THE LIFE OF MOSES - WEEK 7

The Relationships

Moses had successfully led the sons of Israel out of Egypt, but then had to deal with their grumbling and complaining. Their faith was weak in the God who had delivered them. They have been traveling for three months in the wilderness and finally have arrived at the wilderness of Sinai (19:1). This week we will focus on Moses' relationship with God and the sons of Israel. How did he relate to them in different situations? Notice how his relationship with God becomes more intimate this week. We can learn much about our own relationships with God and others as we study these passages.

Day 1: Respect For God

Today's reading is lengthy, but it is important to lay the foundation for God's relationship with His people and the role He had for Moses.

Looking To God's Word

[Exodus 19:1-25](#)

1. What was the condition of the covenant between God and Israel (v. 5)? If they met that condition, what was God's promise to them (vv. 5-6)?
2. What was the role of Moses during this time?
3. How did God communicate to Moses and the people that He is holy?

[Exodus 20:18-21](#)

Note: The order of the narrative appears to be different from the order of events, since 20:18 is most likely a continuation of 19:25.

4. How did the people respond to God and why?

Looking Deeper

Describe God's presence on Mount Sinai from these verses.

Ex 19:9

Ex 19:16

Ex 19:18-19

Ex 20:18

Ex 20:21

In [Exodus 20:19-20](#), what was God's purpose in coming to them?

Looking Upward

5. Define holiness. (You may want to use a dictionary or other study help.)
6. How does God's holiness affect your relationship with Him?
7. How should we prepare ourselves for "meeting with God"?

Looking Reflectively

God is a holy God. We are not to take that lightly.

Our "fear" of God should keep us from sin.

We have access to our holy God through our mediator Jesus Christ.

Is your heart right before God? If not, take a moment to confess any unconfessed sin.

Take some time today to reflect on God's holiness. Worship Him and praise Him for His holiness.

Day 2: A Disobedient People

Beginning in [Exodus 20](#), Moses is on Mount Sinai, where God lays out for Moses and Israel His laws that they are to follow. He begins with the Ten Commandments in chapter 20, and then covers the laws of the "book of the covenant" through chapter 23. Chapter 24 continues the story from 20:21. Chapters 25-31 cover the instructions for the building of the tabernacle. The laws and instructions are an important part of Exodus, but because we are focusing on the life of Moses and not on the book of Exodus as a whole, we will not read this section.

Today we pick up the story at the end of Moses' time with God on Mount Sinai. It is at this point that God instructs Moses to go back down because the people are out of control. Moses was on Mount Sinai with God for forty days and forty nights ([Exodus 24:18](#)).

Looking To God's Word

[Exodus 32:1-18](#)

8. Why might Moses' absence cause the people to demand that Aaron make for them a god?

9. How did God respond to what the people had done (vv. 7-10)?
10. How did Moses argue for the defense of the people (vv. 11-14)?
11. What can you learn about Moses' character from his decision to intercede for the people instead of agreeing with God to destroy them?

Looking Upward

12. What makes God angry, based on this passage?
13. What is an idol? What causes idolatry (other than sin)?
14. What are some potential "idols" that people may be tempted to "worship" today?

Looking Deeper

[Jonah 3:1-10](#)

As you look at another situation when God relented (changed His mind) from destroying a people, how did the Ninevites respond to Jonah's declaration?

What caused God to relent or change His mind (v. 10)?

What do you learn about God's character from these two situations in and Jonah?

What additional insights can you learn concerning God changing His mind from these passages?

[Psalm 106:44-46](#)

[Jeremiah 18:5-10](#)

[Joel 2:12-14](#)

[Amos 7:1-6](#)

Looking Reflectively

God desires our undivided, wholehearted devotion. Are you wholly devoted to Him?

Are there any "idols" in your life, anything that you are "worshipping" other than God? Ask God to show you if there are. Yield your heart to Him today.

Do any of your actions make God angry? If so, confess them. Go to God with a repentant heart.

Be encouraged that God is a patient God and slow to anger. Meditate on [Jonah 4:2](#), “You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.”

Day 3: The Response Of Moses

Moses had just left God on Mount Sinai after pleading with God not to destroy the people for their sin. Yet, when he came back to the camp and witnessed what was going on with his own eyes, it must have been difficult for Moses to see firsthand. He could have given up on the people, gone back to God on Mount Sinai, and told Him to go ahead and destroy them... but he didn't. Do you ever wonder why Moses didn't just let God wipe out the people? We get a glimpse into the heart of Moses as we look at the way he dealt with the people and Aaron.

Looking Upward

[Exodus 32:19-35](#)

15. How did Aaron's account to Moses in verses 21-24 differ from the actual account in verses 1-5? What can you learn about Aaron from this?

16. How did Moses respond to the people (vv. 19-20, 25-29)? What can you learn about Moses from this?

17. What exactly was Moses asking of God in verse 32? Why would he ask this?

18. What were the consequences of the people's sin?

Looking Deeper

As you look at other versions of this event, list any new observations you gain from these passages.

[Deuteronomy 9:7-21](#)

[Psalm 106:19-23](#)

What was the sin of the Israelites?

Looking Upward

19. When you see sin in the lives of those around you, how does it affect you and how do you respond?

20. What motivates you to intercede and pray for someone in sin?

Looking Reflectively

We should be intercessors for others who have sinned, even though our anger may tempt us not to pray for them.

Several years ago, I was in line to check my luggage at the Los Angeles Airport, getting ready to move to Asia for four years. All of a sudden, a young woman tapped on my shoulder and told me a man had just stolen my wallet out of my purse. I was sure she was mistaken, but as I looked down at my purse, it was unzipped and my wallet was gone. Because of the situation with my cash, credit cards, and luggage keys in the wallet, the airlines let me delay my departure. I was angry at first, and then burst into tears. As my friends returned from parking the car, I relayed to them what had just happened. As we drove back to where I had been staying, I suggested we pray together. I needed to calm my anxious heart and talk to God about the situation. As I began praying, God laid on my heart to pray for the person who took my wallet. God knew his situation. Perhaps he was in need of money for some difficult crisis in his life. I even prayed for his salvation, if he did not know Jesus Christ personally. After I finished praying, one of my friends said, "What was that all about? How in the world could you pray for someone who just robbed you? I can't and won't do it."

To be honest, I was surprised at my ability to pray for someone who had wronged me, and I knew it was totally of God, not me. By praying for the one who had taken my wallet, I had a peace that God was in control and that somehow He would use this for good. He did. I was not meant to get on the plane that night. I didn't have a peace in my heart about my assignment in Asia, but it was too late to change my mind. God intervened. By having my flight delayed for several days, I was able to share my feelings and reservations about this assignment with my leadership. As it turned out, another situation opened up for me in Asia that was a much better fit. Had I not been robbed, I would have gotten on that plane and gone to an assignment that I knew in my heart was not right for me. I could have been angry that night, wanting revenge and justice, but what would that have accomplished? Instead, God gave me the ability to trust Him in this situation and to pray for the person who was in the wrong. God taught me an important lesson that night about praying for others, especially those who are hard to pray for.

Are you a faithful intercessor for others, even for those who are disobedient? If not, what hinders you? Is there someone you need to be praying for specifically today?

Day 4: God's Presence

God punished the people for their sin (Ex 32:35), but as you read today's passage, you will see that God was still upset with the people. I am grateful that God is a merciful God and doesn't give us what we deserve.

Looking To God's Word

[Exodus 33:1-23](#)

21. What was God's plan for the Israelites at this point and how was He planning to be involved (vv. 33:1-6)?

22. What was Moses asking of God in verses 12-23?

23. What do Moses' requests show you about his heart and relationship with God?

Looking Deeper

In [Exodus 33:20](#), God said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live." How do you reconcile that with [Genesis 32:30](#), [Exodus 24:9-11](#), [Exodus 33:11](#), [Deuteronomy 34:10](#), and [Isaiah 6:1-5](#)?

Looking Upward

24. How does knowing that God is with you affect your daily life?

25. If your relationship with God is not as intimate as it should be, what needs to change? What can you do to improve it?

Looking Reflectively

God wants an intimate relationship with each one of us. Do you desire that intimacy with Him?

God's presence is enough for us. Do you live as if it is?

Take some time to thank God for His love, for Jesus' death on the cross for you, for the Holy Spirit who indwells you as a believer.

Spend some time alone with Him today and allow Him to speak to your heart. Don't do all the talking. Be still. Be quiet and listen.

Day 5: Loss Of Focus

At this point in the book of Exodus, God renews the covenant with Israel. Moses returns to Mount Sinai, and God lays out for Moses the laws and regulations that the sons of Israel are to observe. God gives specific details to Moses concerning the building of the Tabernacle, and the book of Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord in the Tabernacle.

However, the end of Exodus is not the end of the story of Moses. We pick up the story in [Numbers 10:11](#): "Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. So they moved out for the first time according to the commandment of the Lord through Moses."

Now they begin their wanderings in the wilderness after Mount Sinai. They journeyed for three days ([Numbers 10:33](#)), and then the Ark of the Covenant came to a resting place. How will the people respond now? How will Moses deal with the people in this new place, away from Mount Sinai?

Looking To God's Word

[Numbers 11:1-23](#)

26. Describe the attitude of the Israelites in verses 1-6.
27. Describe Moses' perspective of the situation (vv. 10-15, 21-22).
28. What had he lost sight of?

Looking Deeper

[Psalm 78:17-33](#)

This psalm recites the early history of the nation of Israel in order to warn future generations against a repetition of unfaithfulness. As you look at the section in which Asaph recalls their provocation of God in their wilderness wanderings, list all that is said about the Israelites.

What was their sin and how was it manifested?

Looking Upward

29. How can you determine if your desires are God-given or selfish desires?
30. What are some possible causes of "forgetting" who God is and what He can do?
31. In what areas do you struggle with trusting God? Why are those areas hard?

Looking Reflectively

God wants us to focus on Him and not on ourselves. He often places us in overwhelming situations to show us that we are inadequate and He is sufficient to meet our needs.

God's power is not limited. Our lives and attitudes should reflect that we believe there is nothing too difficult for Him.

Take some time today and ask God to show you if you are questioning His power and greatness in any way.

In your journal, make a list of ways you have seen God work beyond your expectations. Praise Him and thank Him for the ways He works in your life.

This week as we have looked at some of the relationships in Moses' life, think about the relationships that God has placed in your life. How has God used even the tough relationships? How has your relationship with Him grown more intimate over time?

Moses' relationship with God had definitely grown deeper since that day in the desert at Mt. Sinai when God appeared to him in a burning bush. Moses was placed in life situations that caused him to rely completely on God. It is in those dependent times on Him that we see our relationship with Him deepen. Thank Him for those times. Thank Him for the relationships He has placed in your life, even the tough ones.