

God Story Week 3

Key Verse

The whole Israelite community complained against Moses and Aaron in the desert. The Israelites said to them, "Oh, how we wish that the LORD had just put us to death while we were still in the land of Egypt. There we could sit by the pots cooking meat and eat our fill of bread. Instead, you've brought us out into this desert to starve this whole assembly to death." Exodus 16:2-3

Summary

If the Bible is one grand story, then Exodus is the Rising Action. The Rising Action of a story is the point when the basic conflict of the story is complicated by other secondary conflicts and various obstacles. As the Israelites face conflict and obstacles in the wilderness, they are distracted from their goal and begin to complain. They begin to wonder if God will indeed take care of them in this difficult time. They learn over and over again that *God will provide all they need for the journey* (Thread #3). In our journey as followers of God, we will face conflict and obstacles that seek to distract us from God. We will be tempted to believe that we were not adequately equipped for the journey, and we may even be tempted to turn back. We must remember that God will provide all we need for the journey.

Session Goals

- **Group will discuss how easy it is to become distracted on the journey. Even in the midst of God's provision, we will be tempted to think that we are ill equipped for the journey;**
- **Group will share common frustrations and obstacles that Christians face as they seek to live faithfully, and**
- **Help participants find hope in difficult situation and to see this as a normal part of the Christian journey.**

Discussion Starter

Ask participants to share stories of when they saw God provide for them or someone they know when it seemed all hope was lost.

Read & Discuss

Exodus 16:4-16

How do you think it felt to see the manna on that first morning? How do you think it felt on the one-hundredth morning? Why do you think God wanted the people to gather only enough for that day? How do we experience God's daily bread in our lives?

Numbers 11:4-6

Why do you think the Israelites so quickly began to romanticize their time in Egypt? In what ways are we tempted to hearken back to previous times when we should be focused on moving forward? What could Moses have done as a leader to keep the group focused on the Promised Land?

John 6:26-40

Jesus said that he was the bread of life. How is Jesus like the manna that the Israelites had in the wilderness? How is he different? How can we rely on Jesus like the Israelites relied on that daily provision? How can Jesus be a source of life to us when we face difficult situations?

Further Questions:

Are you in a chapter of transition?

Are you in between jobs, moving towards a new life stage, or simply hoping the next page will turn?

You may very well be in a chapter of transition, which can mean that you are in a chapter of deliverance. We learn from the Exodus story there are some things we should be wary of when we find ourselves in transition.

Transition times are one of those strange times when things seem to be moving very slow and very fast at the same time. It feels slow in that you wonder when it will ever end. It moves fast in that it is hard to take stock of everything that is going on.

We learn from the Israelites that this slow/fast transition time is an easy time to become distracted. It is also an easy time to become exhausted.

As you grow increasingly distracted and exhausted you become vulnerable, vulnerable to turn around and to turn away from where God is sending you.

Surely if the Israelites thought about it real hard they would not have preferred to live in Egypt again. It was a place of slavery and abuse. Life in the desert, though, is a transition time that crawls by and goes fast at the same time and you rarely stop to realize where you are and where you are really going. You can easily become distracted by those things that frustrate you about the journey and seek quick relief. You can easily become exhausted which leads to complaining, grumbling, and unhealthy desires.

God does have good things in store for you! Your story has purpose. So it could be helpful today to take stock of a few things.

Where are you and where do you think God is leading you?

What is it that easily distracts you?

Are you rested today or exhausted? If exhausted, how can you find rest today?

Closing Prayer

God, if I have any hope of leaving behind hurtful things in my past it will be because you deliver me. Thank you that you are a God who delivers us out of slavery and leads us to freedom. Give me the strength needed to walk the journey toward the Promised Land that you have for me. When I get weary, uphold me, when I lose focus, give me clarity, when I want to give up, give me hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.