

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide CSB, Unit 6, Session 2

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A Place for God's Presence

Session in a Sentence: God desires to be with His people and made a way for sinful people to be with their holy God.

Main Passages: Exodus 36:2-7; 39:42-43; 40:34-38

What are some souvenirs you've collected? What memories do these souvenirs elicit?

As we read through the Book of Exodus, we may wonder how the Lord could dwell with His people when they were so quick to doubt Him, grumble against Him, and worship idols. How could a holy God be with such sinful people, and why would He want to? Israel did not deserve God's presence, but despite their sin, with mercy and compassion, God promised that He would continue to be present with His people, just in a yet-to-be-constructed tent. As God moved in their hearts, the people of Israel took up God's blueprints for this tabernacle and got to work. The tabernacle would be a long-term, life-size souvenir, a constant reminder of God's presence among them.

Group Time

Point 1: God provides the resources for the tabernacle by moving in the hearts of His people (Ex. 36:2-7).

2 So Moses summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every skilled person in whose heart the LORD had placed wisdom, all whose hearts moved them, to come to the work and do it. **3** They took from Moses's presence all the contributions that the Israelites had brought for the task of making the sanctuary. Meanwhile, the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning.

4 Then all the artisans who were doing all the work for the sanctuary came one by one from the work they were doing **5** and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than is needed for the construction of the work the LORD commanded to be done."

6 After Moses gave an order, they sent a proclamation throughout the camp: "Let no man or woman make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." So the people stopped. **7** The materials were sufficient for them to do all the work. There was more than enough.

The Israelites weren't a wealthy people. Yes, they left Egypt with gold and jewelry, but this was given to them by the Egyptians at God's prompting (see Ex. 12:35-36). When Moses asked the people to give their possessions to the Lord for His tabernacle, they didn't give because they had so much they'd never miss anything; they gave because God had been at work in their hearts. God was changing them.

What are some ways grace has changed your heart?

The Lord calls His people to give because our possessions don't rule our lives—He does. The Giver of all good things has willfully and cheerfully given us all we need, and we respond by giving our possessions, our hearts, and our lives to Him as a grateful sacrifice for His glory and the good of Christ's body, the church. When we give in response to God's work in our hearts, we grow in our likeness to Christ, who gave His life for us.

How does the gospel show us God's generosity?

Point 2: God builds the tabernacle through the obedience of His people (Ex. 39:42-43).

42 The Israelites had done all the work according to everything the LORD had commanded Moses. **43** Moses inspected all

the work they had accomplished. They had done just as the LORD commanded. Then Moses blessed them.

God told Moses in Exodus 31 that He had given Bezalel, Oholiab, and other artisans the unique skills needed to plan and accomplish the work of the tabernacle according to God's standards. In Exodus 36:2, Moses summoned all of these people to come and do the work, and they did so willingly. The tabernacle's construction, from start to finish, was a work of God and for God.

How has God gifted you to serve His church and kingdom?

We have to understand that the Israelites' obedience in constructing the tabernacle didn't earn God's favor or merit His presence. This was not a test on God's part. God had promised Abraham, Isaac, Israel, and Moses that He would be present with His people, and God always keeps His word. Yet the people's obedience mattered because it showed their reverence for Him and their desire to be with Him. The thing they wanted most was a guarantee of God's presence, so where the golden calf revealed their disbelief in God's promises, the tabernacle completed according to God's command demonstrated their changed hearts and growing faith.

Temple of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both _____ and _____. This indwelling work of the Spirit _____ individual members of the church with _____ for the work of the ministry.

Voices from the Church

"Our obedience does not make God bigger or better than He already is. His essence is unchanged by our obedience or lack of it. Anything God commands of us is so that our joy may be full—the joy of seeing His glory revealed to us and in us! Two major reasons for obedience are that we may become targets of blessing and that He may have the pleasure of bestowing it." 1

—Beth Moore

Point 3: God fills the tabernacle with His presence (Ex. 40:34-38).

34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle throughout all the stages of their journey. 37 If the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages of their journey.

The grandeur of God's creation and His commands reminds us of just how amazing He is and the grace He has shown us. This was the message of the tabernacle. God's glory filled it, and for a time, no one, not even Moses, could enter it. But the glory the people were able to see was just a fraction designed to stir their hearts, to move them to understand that their God is bigger and greater than they could ever conceive.

God Is Omnipresent: God's omnipresence refers to His presence in _____ and _____ simultaneously. Because God exists apart from and outside of time and space, He is not _____ by their constraints.

God is too great to be contained by the world, let alone a tent in the desert, but He is still near to His people. This was also the point of the tabernacle. God was in the midst of His people, and the location of the tabernacle further illustrated this, being placed at the center of the camp (Num. 2:2). At the same time, God was near without compromising His holiness. He dwelled in the most holy place, the innermost room, which had a veil that barred sinful humanity's access to holy God.

The tabernacle, however, was temporary, a sign to be fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of God who took on flesh and "tabernacled" among us in glory (John 1:14). Those who believe in Him for salvation from sin receive the Spirit of Christ to dwell within them to teach them to love the Lord, trust Him, and obey Him (Rom. 8:9). As we grow in depending on God's Spirit, we learn that being near Him changes us from the inside out.

How should the truth that God dwells within Christians impact our everyday lives?

My Mission

Because we are the people in whom God dwells, we manifest His glorious presence and bear the fruit that comes from the Holy Spirit so that through faith, Jesus may dwell with others as well.

- **How will the future hope of God living with believers for eternity frame how you live today?**
- **In what ways can we live in deeper community with one another and experience God's presence more fully?**
- **How can you demonstrate God's presence in your life to those around you to point them to God's glory in Christ?**

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Exodus 36:1-38

When did Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other skilled craftspeople understand how God had blessed them with their abilities and that He was going to use them in such an incredible act of worship to Him? Was it only when Moses called on them to begin working on the tabernacle or was it before that?

Even though we do not have the answer to this question in Scripture, it is interesting to think about. We have to wonder if Bezalel and Oholiab ever thought they didn't have much to offer God before the tabernacle. Did they see the ways in which they were gifted as useless? They weren't great leaders like Moses. They weren't priests like Aaron. They may not have even been warriors, but they were artisans.

If they ever had such thoughts and feelings, these crashed down around them the day when Moses called on them to work on the tabernacle. In that one moment, they finally realized that what they had deemed the sacred and the secular could actually be one and the same. Everything we do is to be done for God's glory as an act of worship. Apart from sin, it is all sacred.

In what "ordinary" ways has God gifted you? How have you or can you use these gifts in service to Him?

Voices from the Church

"The Lord still gives his people various abilities. But how many people today accomplish little out of lack of self-confidence or laziness? Do we think we are too poorly gifted, too poorly qualified, or too poorly skilled? ... The Lord who does not despise small beginnings will water the fruit of our hands himself so that we can bring honour to him (Zech. 4:10)." 2

—Africa Study Bible

Day 2: Read Exodus 37:1–38:31

For many of us, reading the second half of the Book of Exodus is challenging. It is full of details and can be repetitious. So we might be inclined to speed through these chapters or even skip over them. But we have to resist this urge and instead consider why God gave them to us. What is He wanting to communicate in this large section of Exodus? The answer is found in the very thing that makes us stumble: the preciseness of the details.

As we read of a table being made (37:10-16), it is noteworthy that God didn't just command His people to make a table. He prescribed the size, the materials, and even the intricate details of the table. In doing so, He expressed two things. First, that worship of Him is serious business. We are not to approach a holy God lightly. God takes His worship seriously, and we should too. And second, the same care for details that God expressed here is given to us as well. God cares no less for the small, seemingly trivial details of our lives than He did for the tabernacle. Knowing this doesn't make sections like this easier to read, but it at least helps us appreciate them.

What "small" details of your life do you need to trust that God knows and cares about?

Day 3: Read Exodus 39:1-43

As we have seen, God was precise in giving directions for the construction of the tabernacle, which, at least in part, revealed His character. But attention to details did not end with God; He held His people to the same standard as they constructed the tabernacle. This was why Moses inspected the work before the project was declared officially over. He wanted to make sure that they had done exactly as God had commanded. Not a single corner could be cut. God was worth their full obedience, and that is what they needed to offer Him before a single offering could be given in this new structure.

In a similar way, our faithful obedience reflects our love for and value of God. We too are called on to give God our best—of our time, energy, and resources—and to do so with joy. Nothing less will do. This is our act of worship. This is our sacrifice of praise.

In what areas of your life might you be holding something back from God? Why?

Day 4: Read Exodus 40:1-33

God's timing is perfect. It always is. God instructed the Israelites to set up the tabernacle on the first day of the first month of the year—their New Year's Day. It is hard to imagine a better way to begin a new year than with the establishment of the tabernacle. But there was even more to God's timing than that.

The Israelites had been rescued from slavery in Egypt through the Passover in the middle of the first month of the year (Ex. 12:1-11). Now, one year later, they were about to celebrate the first anniversary of the Passover with the tabernacle completed. It was a testament to God's faithfulness. He had delivered His people and He was with them, guiding them toward their home.

What are some spiritual markers in your life that remind you of God's faithfulness?

Day 5: Read Exodus 40:34-38

The Book of Exodus ends with a summary of what followed. The Israelites packed up and moved whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle. The cloud during the day and pillar of fire at night were ever-present reminders of God's presence and guidance, and of His grace and mercy.

The cloud and pillar were what the people followed out of Egypt the year before. Although the people had grumbled against God repeatedly, even though they had rebelled against Him by worshiping the golden calf, the book ends with Him leading them in the same way. He was faithful, even when they were faithless at times. And He would continue to be faithful, even after the people refused to enter the land He had given them.

It's a fitting end to the book. God's unchanging faithfulness on display for a people who did not deserve it. It's a fitting picture for God's relationship with Israel of the Old Testament, and it is a fitting picture for us. It is a picture of the gospel.

How have you seen God's undeserved faithfulness to you recently?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God provides the resources for the tabernacle by moving in the hearts of His people (Ex. 36:2-7).
- God builds the tabernacle through the obedience of His people (Ex. 39:42-43).
- God fills the tabernacle with His presence (Ex. 40:34-38).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

Why should the fact that God desires to be with us humble us? Why should this compel us to become more zealous to know Him?

What are some ways our obedience and character can help point unbelievers to the glory of God in Christ?

References

1. Beth Moore, *A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 2007), 79.
2. "Exodus," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International, Ltd, 2016), 137.