

Show Me Your Glory

Lessons from the Life of Moses

Lesson 12

Exodus 33

Day One: The Command to Leave Mt. Sinai

God judged the great sin Israel had committed at the foot of Mt. Sinai; three thousand died by the sword and an unknown amount were destroyed by a plague. But there was still more to come as a consequence of their disobedience. An even harder lesson lay ahead.

Read Exodus 33. Today we'll look at verses 1–6.

God issued the directive to move on from the mountain, to the land He had sworn to give to them (v. 1).

1. How does God refer to the people in verse 1?

2. Though He would keep the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, what stipulation does He now make? v. 2
 - a. What was the reason for the change? v. 3

 - b. What term does He use once again to describe them? What does this term mean?

There would be one big difference from this point on: God himself would not go with them! But better He did not go with them than that He consumes them out of anger along the way.

3. How do the people respond to the news? v. 4
 - a. Do *you* think they were sincere—why or why not? Please share your thoughts.

The Israelites had begun to take off their gold ornaments as a sign of their repentance, but now God required them to do so. They were to discard the very thing that had aided them in their sin. In addition to His anger, can you sense the mammoth disappointment God experienced at this moment? His desire—aim—purpose in setting His people apart was precisely to *draw near* to them in close communion. Now He would withdraw His presence, both to protect them from His anger, but also to punish them for their sin.

Selah . . .

If you're a believer then you know that God's Spirit has come to indwell you permanently—His seal is set upon you forever! But did you also know that it is possible to *grieve Him* and keep Him at a distance?

- ❖ Ephesians 4:25–32 lists some of the things that grieve the Holy Spirit and keep Him from interacting with us. Itemize these below in the space provided.

- ❖ Personal: Think about it . . . can *you* identify any on this list that pertain to you? Would you single them out and *put them off*—do away with them—just as God required the Israelites to do? Give them over to Him today with a repentant heart, asking Him to forgive you.

Heartbeat . . . (Memory verse) “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*” Ephesians 5:15–16

Day Two: The Tent of Meeting

Sin is costly! Sadly, many people today have the notion that because God is love, He is willing to look the other way and tolerate His people's sin because He loves them. This passage teaches us quite the opposite. He is a God of love, but walking with Him requires absolute obedience to His commands; He will tolerate nothing less!

Read Exodus 33:1–11. Today we'll look closely at verses 7–11.

We know there are things that drive God away and keep Him at a distance: refusing to keep His commands; allowing other things to compete for our attention and affection; conforming to the world's standards; worship for the sake of entertainment rather than to draw closer to God, to name a few. Today we'll see a further consequence of sin.

Moses set up a *tabernacle—or tent—of meeting* while the people mourned and pondered what they had done.

1. Where did Moses pitch his tent? v. 7 Why is this significant?

Now everyone felt the distance: “*And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.*” This is not to be confused with the Tabernacle we see erected and arranged in chapters 35–40; it is rather a temporary meeting place used until the more permanent structure was built.

2. Whenever Moses desired a meeting with the Lord, he went out to the tent. What did the people do? v. 8
 - a. What took place when Moses entered the tent? v. 9
 - b. When the people saw the pillar of cloud at the tent entrance, what were they moved to do? v. 10
 - c. How did the Lord communicate with Moses? v. 11 (See also Numbers 12:8 and Deuteronomy 34:10.)

Look closer . . .

Moses had to take special measures to meet with God outside the camp. When he did, the presence of the pillar of cloud at the tent entrance stirred up a spirit of worship among the people, and rightly so. But when the people sought the Lord, they too had to lay things aside and be willing to go outside the camp. What about you? Are *you* enjoying the *presence* and *power* of God in your life? If not, could it be because . . .

- You’ve not been willing to lay things aside and go out of your way to meet with Him?
- You don’t even realize that He is missing?
- You’re content to just stand by and look on at others meeting with Him?
- ❖ What action can you take to change things?

Review this week’s memory verse.

Day Three: The Promise of God's Presence

Read Exodus 33:1–16. Today the focus of our study will be verses 12–16.

It's evident from our passage that Moses not only erected a tent; he also made good use of it! Looking again at the example of this one man we see the importance that prayer occupies in the life of a child of God. The intimacy of the conversation between Moses and God in today's text reveals not only the desperation of one man's heart, but also the compassion and faithfulness of God's! Let's draw near to listen in and see what we can hear and apply to our own lives.

1. Moses was now in a position of wondering about a few things. What immediately was most important to him? Why? v. 12
 - a. What reminder does Moses bring to the Lord's attention? v. 13
 - b. What petition does he ask of Him?

Do God's ways sometimes perplex you? Are His workings at times mysterious? You're in good company; Moses felt that way too. Moses took his present concern and many more questions to God in prayer, and so must we. As we learn to do that, we may not gain all the answers we seek, but we will gain greater insight as to who God is and we will certainly know His peace.

Look closer . . .

What does Isaiah 55:8–9 have to say about God's ways?

- ❖ Looking further on to verses 10–12 of this passage, what promise does God make regarding His Word; His child?
2. How does the Lord respond to Moses? v. 14
 - a. Did Moses accept what God said to him? How did he respond? v. 15
 - b. Moses would not accept for himself anything that did not include his people. What reasoning did he use in verse 16?

In essence Moses exclaimed that no one else—not even an angel—would suffice! He said “*Lord, I must have YOU!*” Such determination must please the heart of God.

Selah . . .

Can you relate to Moses’ cry not to settle for anything or anyone less than God himself? Remember that what had brought the people to their present predicament was their outrageous disobedience and, as a result, God had withdrawn from them. It was only the persistent intercession of God’s servant that made the difference for them.

We surely cannot look at this picture and not think of the Lord Jesus Christ and His labor in prayer for His chosen ones. There are many instances in Scripture of Jesus interceding for the believer; let’s look at one of them. Read through John 17:20–26, with the understanding that this includes *you!* Write down what you see regarding *His will* for you and how He wants you to *view Him*. When you’re finished, you may want to thank God that this is a prayer He has answered on your behalf—it is done!

Day Four: “Show Me Your Glory”

God will only return and show Himself to be powerfully present among His people when they realize their sin, grieve over it with a repentant heart, and persistently say to Him, “*We must have Your presence go with us!*”

Read Exodus 33:1–23. Today the focus of our study will be verses 17–23.

Moses set up the *tent of meeting* solely for the purpose of meeting with the Lord. As Moses sought Him, the Lord granted him a wonderful answer to his petition.

1. What was the Lord’s reply in verse 17? What reason did God give for answering Moses’ prayer?

It was for Moses’ sake—not the people’s—that God agreed to answer his prayer. Here is a lesson for us: that we are no more worthy to receive God’s blessing than the Israelites were! It is our relationship to Jesus Christ—*our Mediator*—that merits God’s attention and His answer.

It would have sufficed for Moses to leave his petition there; but he didn’t. Why? Because he wanted much more!

2. What more does he ask for? v. 18

- a. What does God's answer reveal about His character? v. 19

- b. What restriction does God place upon His answer? v. 20

- c. In your own words, describe how God would reveal His glory to His servant.
vv. 21–23

Look closer . . .

One important lesson we can learn from Moses' experience is that God is willing to give His people a glimpse of His glory—if we are willing to earnestly pray for it! Listed below are the three aspects Moses prayed in this week's chapter. Take each aspect and personalize it according to your own needs at this particular time. Be specific. You may want to add a truth or a promise from Scripture to your petition. When finished, take a moment to pray these back to Him. Remember, you are petitioning the One who is "*able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that [you] ask or think!*" (Ephesians 3:20).

Pray to know God's way (v.13):

Pray to have God's presence (v.15):

Pray to see God's glory (v.18):

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying with Purpose

Selah . . . Be still and consider how to *work out* in your daily life what God has *worked into* your heart through your study of His Word. Then pray each aspect through.

❖ **A Point Pondered:** Is there an example from the lesson or a truth from Scripture that has taken on a new meaning this week? Please note it below.

❖ **A Path Pursued:** Knowledge must be applied in order to make a difference. Name one thing you can act upon in obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading.

❖ **A Promise Possessed:** If God has spoken a particular verse or word of hope to your heart, write it down and pray it back to Him.

❖ **A Praise Proclaimed:** God loves to hear you praise Him! What aspect of God's character particularly blessed you this week? Will you praise Him today?

❖ **A Prayer Presented:** Write out the most pressing request on your heart and lift it to the Lord.

Other requests:

Notes