



SMALL GROUP STUDY

On the Road Again

Three million people with their livestock and pets going through the wilderness. The Hebrew title for the book is “in the wilderness.” What should have been a two week journey has turned into an almost 40 year trial. They wander in the wilderness for almost 40 years! There are great lessons about faith and unbelief in the book of Numbers. It is evident that both faith and unbelief are very contagious.

Organization of the People and the Priesthood (Numbers 1-10)

Faith results in obedience and brings blessings. A census is taken of all the men 20 years old and above. Names and numbers of people are given. It’s as if God is saying to all the people “I love you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you.” In Egypt they were just a hoard of slaves. Now they were God’s own. God knows every person’s name and every hair of your head. (Matthew 10:30) First the men of fighting age and above are numbered. Then Aaron and the Levites have their own census for the priesthood. Throughout their journey in the wilderness God led them with a cloud by day and a fire by night. Whenever the cloud would stop they would set up the tabernacle and the camp of Israel. One of the things that marked the children of Israel from all the other people of Canaan was that God’s presence was with them in this cloud.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Who are the two sons of Aaron? What were their responsibilities?
- b. Who is our great high priest?
- c. Have you ever been infected by someone else’s attitude and speech?
- d. Examine your heart: How does your attitude infect others? What attitude do you have?

Disorganization (Numbers 11-14)

Twelve leaders, one from each of the tribes is sent to spy out the land. They are to determine the nature of the land and the strengths and weaknesses of the inhabitants. After 40 days they return and give a good report regarding the bounty of the land. However, in spite of the evidence of God’s provision, they have a fear of the people -- there are giants in the land and the cities are fortified. Two of the spies wanted to go in and take possession of the land, but the other ten did not. This disbelief brought disobedience which led to failure. And, despite their past blessings, the people began to complain. The children of Israel seem to have forgotten that they used to be slaves. The whole congregation cries out “why didn’t we just die in Egypt?” and, “we should just die in the wilderness?” Sometimes we remember things that we should forget while at other times we forget the things we should remember. They forgot their oppression and remembered the leeks and onions. Even God’s children can develop selective memory disorder. We forget the bad part of the “good ‘ol days.”



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Discussion Questions:

- a. Is the majority always right?
- b. What is the punishment that God spoke on the children of Israel for their lack of faith?
- c. Examine your heart: The Bible has many things to say about our tongue. Read these verses: Psalm 34:11-14, Psalm 39:1, Proverbs 10:20, Proverbs 10:31, Proverbs 15:2, James 3:6. Do you grumble and complain about things in your life? Ask God today to help you to speak good things, to be ever thankful and to cleanse your complaining heart. Determine today to guard your tongue and heart from complaining.