

Join Crickett Keeth in studying eight prayer warriors from Scripture who turned to God when times turned bad. As you encounter God through prayer, you'll find that He supplies the strength you need to face whatever is before you. That's the privilege you have when you come *Before the Throne*.

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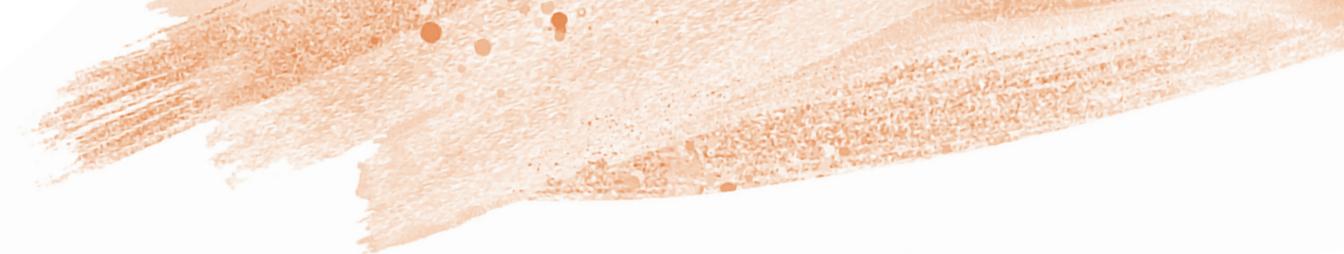
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WEEK ONE:

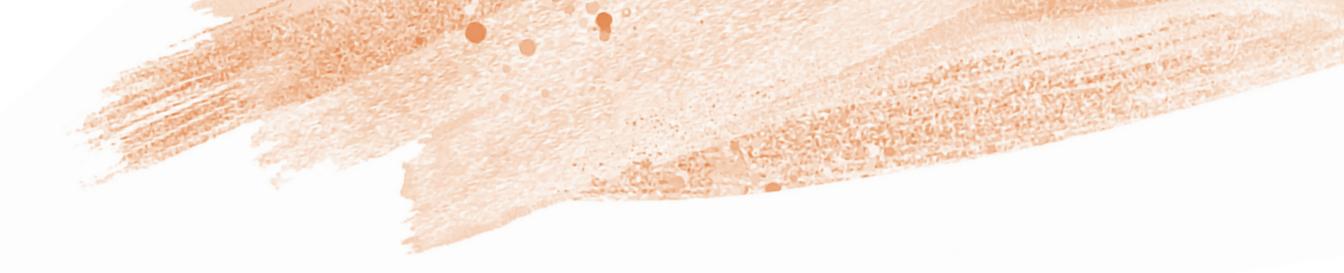
MOSES

FINDING STRENGTH IN TIMES OF DISAPPOINTMENT

Most of us have probably had people in our lives who were difficult and challenging. Moses had his fair share of dealing with difficult people who disappointed and frustrated him, especially after God called him to lead the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and through the wilderness to the promised land of Canaan. He made some mistakes along the way, but God never gave up on Moses. That encourages me as I make mistakes on the journey to which God has called me.

One thing that stands out to me about Moses is his commitment to prayer and meeting with God before His throne. The book of Exodus gives us a glimpse into his prayer life and how he prayed in various circumstances. The passages we're going to look at this week in the book of Exodus all take place after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and were wandering in the wilderness. They had seen God miraculously bring them out of Egypt, but they quickly forgot as challenges arose.

Moses had his hands full with the people and their actions, but he set an example of how to pray for others when they're not easy to love and when they disappoint us. As you go before the throne, ask God to deepen your prayer life as you learn from these examples of prayer in the life of Moses.



WEEK 1 | DAY 1

A PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God had delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, and within only three days in the wilderness, the Israelites were grumbling about having no water. Soon afterward, they complained about being hungry, and God provided both water and food for them. The Israelites had a habit of grumbling, but God always provided what they needed. In Exodus 20–31, God met with Moses on Mount Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments and instructions for the children of Israel, including instructions for building the tabernacle.

Today we pick up the story in Exodus 32. The people had become impatient waiting for Moses to return from Mount Sinai, so they asked Aaron to make a god for them. The result was the golden calf. As we begin our study today, God told Moses on Mount Sinai what was going on in the camp below. Imagine what Moses must have felt at this time.

Father, I confess I complain and grumble. I know that displeases You, and I'm sorry. Help me cultivate a heart of gratitude. Thank You for the example of Moses and the way he prayed for the sons of Israel. Teach me how to intercede for others the way Moses did.

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 32:1-14

1. In what ways had the people sinned against God (vv. 1-8)?
2. How did God view the Israelites (vv. 9-10)? What was His response to their actions?
3. Why do you think Moses prayed on their behalf instead of agreeing with God to destroy them, especially in light of how difficult they were for Moses?
4. What was the tone of Moses' prayer in verses 11-13? What was he most concerned about?

5. Why did he remind God of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 13)?

6. How did God respond to Moses' prayer (v. 14)?

LOOKING UPWARD

7. What stands out to you about Moses in this passage?

LOOKING DEEPER

8. Psalm 106:19–23 refers to the situation we read about in Exodus 32. What additional insights does this passage give?

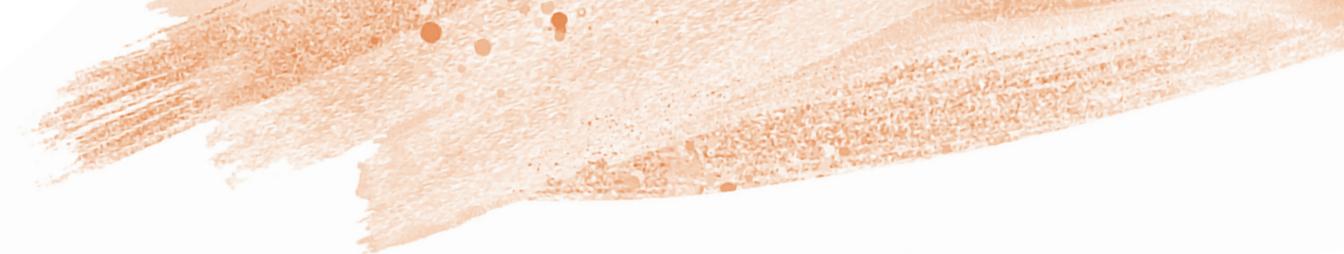
LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

When I look at this passage and put myself in Moses' shoes, I'm not sure I would have responded as graciously as he did to their behavior. I probably would have agreed with God. "Go ahead and destroy them, Lord!" I would have been angry and frustrated just as Moses was when he returned to the camp and saw what they had done—so angry that he shattered the tablets at the foot of the mountain. Yet, he didn't let his anger consume him. He turned from his anger and interceded for them. That's a great lesson for us: no matter how angry we may be with someone for their disobedience, one of the best things we can do is stop and pray for them.

- We've probably all been frustrated with friends and family who chose to disobey God and follow their own leading. How did you respond to them? How should you have responded?
- Moses prayed with the motivation that God's glory would be magnified to the nations. What is the motivation behind your prayers?
- Is there someone today you need to intercede for who is not pleasing God in their actions? Take some time to pray for them now.

“Are we worshiping God in a way that will raise us up to where we can take hold of Him, having such intimate contact with Him that we know His mind about the ones for whom we pray? . . . Be a person who worships God and lives in a holy relationship with Him. Get involved in the real work of intercession, remembering that it truly is work—work that demands all your energy, but work which has no hidden pitfalls.”¹

—OSWALD CHAMBERS



WEEK 1 | DAY 2

A SECOND PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

The Israelites had displeased God by worshiping the golden calf at their camp while Moses was on Mount Sinai with God. But Moses interceded for the people, and God chose to not destroy them. I can't help but wonder if Moses had second thoughts about his prayer when he returned to the camp and saw the golden calf and the people dancing around it. Perhaps he was ready to go back to God and say, "You were right. Take them out!" We don't know all that was going on in his mind when he saw firsthand what the people were doing, but we do know his anger burned, and he shattered the tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them.

Peter Enns comments, "By smashing the tablets on which is written the law—by God's finger, no less—the law is symbolically undone. Moses' act says to the Israelites that if they are not prepared to obey the law, they do not deserve to have it."²

Moses even made the people drink the water scattered with the powder from the golden calf after he burned and ground it up. When Moses asked Aaron for an

3. What stands out to you about his prayer?

4. Why do you think Moses prayed as he did in verse 32?

One commentator observes, “Some say this was the book of life (Rev. 20:15; 21:27) that lists believers’ names but, more likely, it was the census of the people.”³ In other words, Moses was saying, “Kill me instead; let me die in their place as a sacrifice for their sin.”

5. What was God’s response to Moses (v. 33)? What do you think that means?

6. What was God’s response to the people’s sin (vv. 33–35)?

7. What were God's instructions to Moses in 33:1–3? How did God feel about the Israelites, and what result did that have?

8. How did the people respond to God's words to Moses (vv. 4–6)? Why do you think they responded in this way?

LOOKING UPWARD

9. How would you describe Moses' heart in this passage? What can we do to develop a heart like this?

LOOKING DEEPER

10. Spend some time reflecting on Paul's words in Romans 5:6–11. What has Christ done for us and why?

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

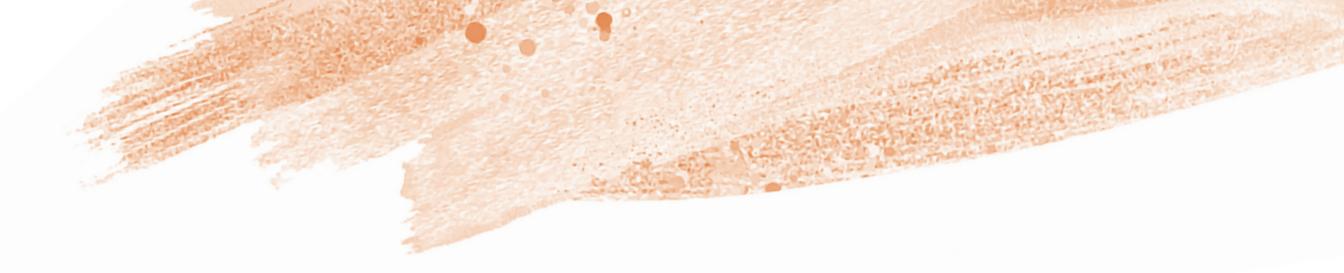
We see the extent of Moses' love for the people of Israel, even in their sin. He was willing to die for them, in order that they might live. Moses loved the Israelites and was willing to sacrifice himself in their place. But because he himself was a sinner, he was not the perfect sacrifice. Many hundreds of years later, Jesus came to this earth to be the perfect sacrifice who would die in our place so we would not have to pay the penalty for our sins.

We also see the extent of God's hatred of sin. Our sin stirs up God's wrath, but Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's wrath. Now we can have a personal relationship with God in which He loves us unconditionally.

- Write a psalm of thanksgiving for the Father's great love and the Son's great sacrifice for us.

“The outstanding quality God requires of all intercessors is not sinlessness (otherwise no one could qualify) but utter selflessness. Moses was willing to be blotted out in order that Israel might be spared destruction.”⁴

—W. GLYN EVANS



WEEK 1 | DAY 3

MOSES' MEETING PLACE WITH GOD

This had been a challenging time for Moses as a leader. The people were disobeying God's commands, and he needed time alone with God in prayer. In today's passage, Moses met with God, not on Mount Sinai, but in a tent designated as a meeting place for them. This was not the tabernacle that he had been given instructions for building, but this was a temporary tent of meeting before he built the tabernacle.

We, too, will have challenges in life, and sometimes those challenges will be difficult people. Prayer is the key to walking through those challenges in a way that pleases God. Ask God to teach you from the interaction between God and Moses in the tent of meeting.

Father, thank You that I can spend time in Your presence anytime I want to. You are always there, waiting for me to slow down and look to You for wisdom and strength. Forgive me when I get so busy that my time with You gets shortened or pushed aside completely. Lord, help me make time with You every day a priority.

*Help me take time to listen. My tendency is to do all the talking,
but I want (and need) to hear from You—through Your Word
and the prompting of Your Holy Spirit in me.*

Thank You that You are always available. I love You, Lord.

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 33:7-11

1. What can you learn from Moses' meeting with God that you can apply to your time alone with God?

2. Why do you think he pitched the tent outside the camp instead of having it inside the camp, especially in light of the golden calf incident?

3. Describe the interaction between God and Moses in the tent.

4. Why do you think the people responded as they did while Moses was in the tent (vv. 8–10)?

5. Why do you think Joshua “would not depart from the tent” (v. 11)?

LOOKING UPWARD

6. Exodus 33:11 tells us, “The LORD used to speak to Moses face to face.” What do you think that means? Did he actually see the Lord’s face? Why do you think he did or did not?

LOOKING DEEPER

7. What do we know about the pillar of cloud from Exodus 13:21–22? What did it signify?

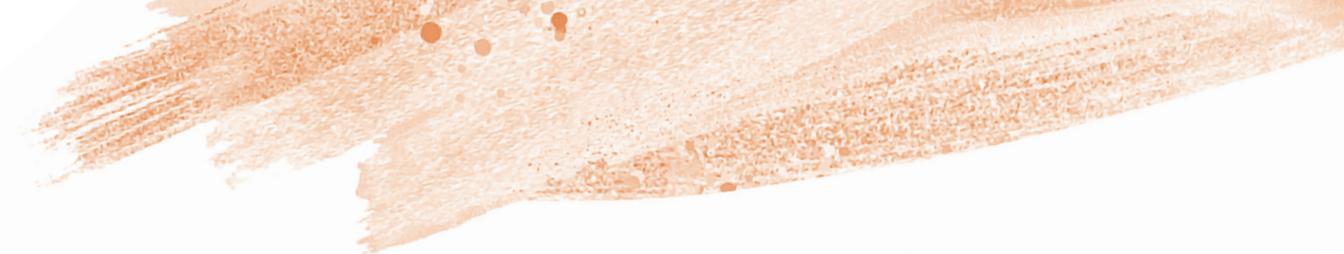
LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

I love how Moses consistently went to meet with the Lord. What was his motivation? Was it a sense of desperate need for God's presence and help, a need to vent what he was feeling about the people, a heart for wisdom in leading the people, or just wanting time alone with God? Moses was committed to going to the tent of meeting to spend time in God's presence. We, too, should long to meet with God every day.

- What is your motivation for meeting with God? Is it something you feel obligated to do, or something you **want** and **need** to do? If it's simply a duty you go through to check off your to-do list each day, ask God to change your motivation in meeting with Him. Ask Him to give you a heart that longs to spend time with Him.
- Do you have a place where you meet with God away from distractions and noise? Where is your favorite place to meet with Him and why?
- Spend some time alone with God today. Picture yourself meeting with Him face-to-face. Pray through Psalm 63:1–8.

“To be transformed by the presence of God, we must not be satisfied with mere head knowledge of God, or with keeping Him at the periphery of our lives. We must be intentional about stepping away from the hubbub of our daily lives, to commune with Him, listen to Him, and cultivate an intimate relationship with Him.”⁵

—NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH



WEEK 1 | DAY 4

A THIRD PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

As we saw in yesterday's lesson, Moses valued time alone with God before the throne. Today we get a glimpse into one of his conversations with God. He was honest and didn't hold back what was on his heart. David did the same thing in his prayers in the psalms. I believe God delights in our honesty instead of pretending everything's just fine. Moses grew to know more of God's character as he spent more time in prayer with God. That's also true for us today.

Father, I want to know more of You, and that comes from spending time alone in Your presence, listening to Your Word. Help me push aside distractions that would hinder me from prayer. Teach me to pray the way Moses did.

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 33:12-17

1. What was Moses' complaint to God in verse 12?
2. Why was this a concern in light of what God had told him in Exodus 32:34 and 33:2-3?
3. What did Moses ask of God in verse 13? Why?
4. Why do you think Moses repeated "found favor in Your sight" several times? If he had already found favor in God's sight (v. 12), why do you think he prayed that he would find favor in His sight (v. 13)?
5. What was Moses asking when he asked that he might know God's ways? How do we come to know God's ways?

6. What was Moses' argument as to why God's presence should go with them?

7. How did God respond to Moses and why (vv. 14, 17)?

8. What did He mean by "I will give you rest" (v. 14)? What insight do Deuteronomy 12:10 and Deuteronomy 25:19 give?

9. What was the significance of God's presence, and why was it so important to Moses (vv. 15–16)?

LOOKING UPWARD

10. Moses wasn't perfect and had insecurities (as evidenced in Exodus 3 when God called him to deliver His people out of Egypt). Yet he found favor in God's sight. How do we find favor in God's sight? Is God's favor something we earn or something God chooses apart from what we do?

11. What is the significance of God knowing Moses by name (Ex. 33:12, 17)?

LOOKING DEEPER

12. Who are some others who found favor (or find favor) with God according to these passages?

Genesis 6:5–10

Luke 1:30–33

Acts 7:46

1 Peter 2:19–20

Write down any observations that stand out to you. Can you think of other passages that talk about finding favor with God?

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

Moses didn't want to move forward without the assurance of God's presence because he knew he needed God. We would do well to grasp this principle: don't step out in your own strength, but rely on God and draw from His strength. When we step out in our own wisdom and strength instead of turning to God, we can cause ourselves unnecessary problems. Moses knew he needed God's presence with them as they headed toward the Promised Land. It's comforting to know that God's presence is always with a believer as Christ indwells us through the Holy Spirit. We are never alone in any journey or battle we face.

- Is there anything in your life today that is displeasing to God? Confess it and ask God to keep you from it. Ask someone to hold you accountable.

- How strong is your desire to know God better? What are you doing to get to know Him on a deeper level?

- What is He doing in your life to help you know Him better?

- Use Psalm 86:11–13 to guide you through a time of prayer, asking God to deepen your love for Him. You might do this by slowly praying each phrase, adding specifics about your own life or someone you’re praying for. Focus on a specific word or phrase, ponder its meaning, and personalize it to the situation. Tell Him what you’re thankful for as you read through verse 12.

*“Our God has promised to never leave us or forsake us.
We never need to fear His abandonment.
He is the same God who is walking with you
and me today—all the way to victory.”⁶*

—ERICA WIGGENHORN

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