

Israel's time in the wilderness is of great importance to Christians because of the way Christ fulfilled so many of the themes and promises throughout the narrative. God's chosen people, the Israelites have been set free from their slavery but are now in the wilderness and in the process of learning what it means to be God's people before His plans come to completion. Does that sound a little familiar? For us, it's often representative of the fact that we were all born as slaves to sin but because of Jesus' great love and sacrifice we are free. We, too, are in our own wilderness as we have access to freedom but await the completion of God's promises and plans.

New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this series:

- The Old Testament can sometimes feel distant and confusing. Remember that if we wish to truly understand the message of the New Testament, we must know the message of the Old Testament—this rings especially true for the Israelites' time in the wilderness! When we read the Old Testament, we're crossing into different cultures, worldviews and time periods—that's a lot of differences and yet God is the same! Take each part little by little and ask God, "How would you have me know you more deeply because of this Scripture?"

Monday, March 3rd

Read Numbers 13:25-33

What did the spies observe and share about the land they explored? Are these things good, bad or a mixture of both?

After Caleb suggested to take possession of the land, what barriers did the spies name? What do you think their fears were?

If the land they had explored had good things (and God had said previously it was good), why do you think they allowed fear to rule them? Where was their focus?

When has your perspective shifted from what is good or the strength of God to your doubts or barriers? What would it look like to shift your perspective?

Is there something in your life that God might be inviting you into? How have you focused on the barriers or your lack of ability rather than God's strength?

Tuesday, March 4th

Read Numbers 14:1-4

Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night.² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!"³ Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

After the Israelites find out there could be difficulties ahead, they state that it would be better to be enslaved again. Why do you think they thought it would feel better to return to a life of slavery?

When have you attempted to flee a difficult situation that God has invited you into? How might disobedience lead you backwards towards a place of spiritual bondage?

How has God invited you to move forward? What tools might you need?

Wednesday, March 5th

Read Galatians 5:1 & 13-14

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ...¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

What does the yoke of slavery look like in your life? When do you feel tempted to flee obedience and return to slavery/sin?

This passage in the New Testament has a similar sentiment to Tuesday's passage. In light of both passages, what do you think it means to be called to freedom? What might it look like to live into that calling?

Why do you think the alternative to slavery given is serving other people and loving your neighbor? How might that apply to your current situation?

Thursday, March 6th

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Think back to Joshua’s message on the shema (Or better yet, check out the recording on the JW website!) and how God calls us to surrender our whole self to worship Him. How might this perspective change the way you obey God?

Are there decisions or invitations God might be extending to you? How might you apply the principles of the shema to them? What steps might you need to take?

Spend some time in prayer, asking God to lead you in the way of the shema in the midst of your invitation and decision-making processes.

Friday, March 7th

Read John 15:9-11

⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Why do you think love, obedience and joy are used together in this passage? Have you found that those words go hand in hand when it comes to your own walk with God? Why or why not?

Is there an area of love, obedience or joy that you feel is lacking? What’s missing? How might you rediscover love, obedience or joy by leaning into those things?



Wandering

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