

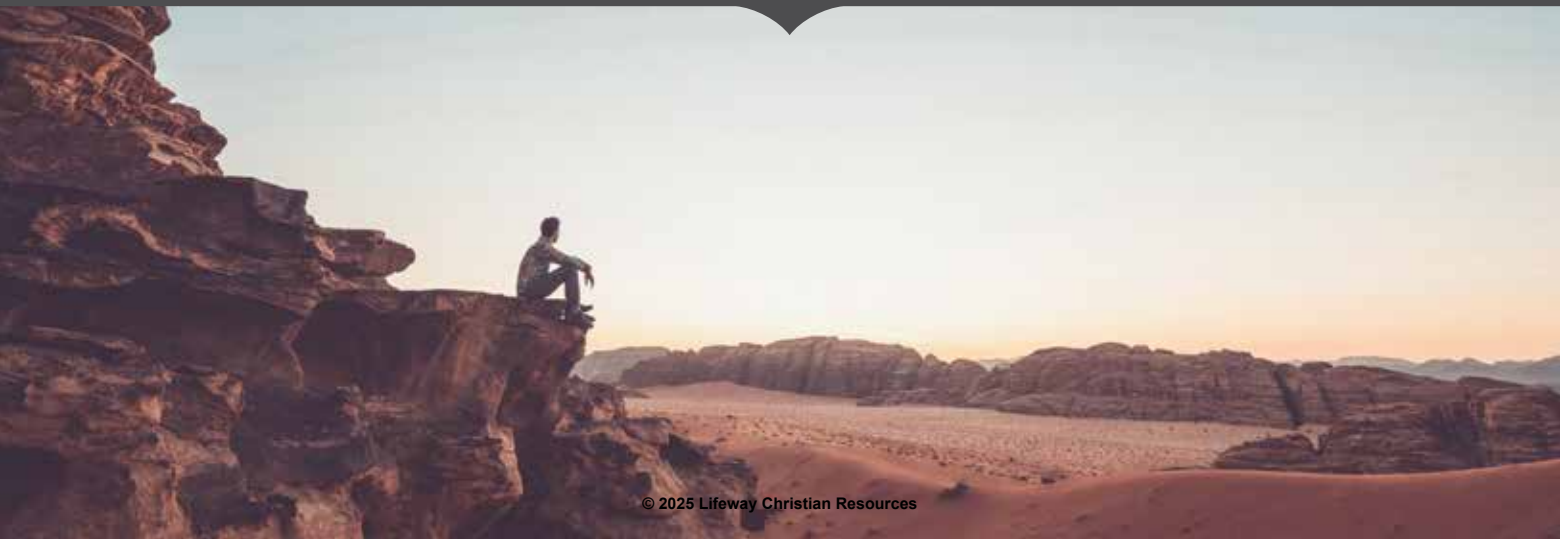


EXPLORE **THE BIBLE.**
Adults

Numbers & Deuteronomy

QuickSource

Fall 2025



STEP BY STEP

In poetry and music, various metaphors have been applied to life on earth. For example, one song tells us that “life is a highway,” a journey that never stops and takes us on any number of adventures if we will take the time to embrace the magic. Decades earlier, a poet suggested that life is more like a choice between “two roads” that split at the edge of the woods. We’d love to try them both, but we have a choice to make—and the road we choose makes “all the difference.”

For all the images used for our short time on this earth, roads and highways might resonate more than others. It’s the simple process of putting one foot in front of the other each day that keeps us going. No matter how hard life gets, if we can just move a little farther down the line, we’re confident that better days will shine on us.

Humans are incredibly resilient that way.

Speaking of resilient, the ancient Israelites had started a life journey on pretty solid footing. They escaped the slavery of Egypt, walked through the walls of the Red Sea, and received God’s gameplan at Mount Sinai. Before long, they were on the edge of the promised land . . . until they weren’t.

Stubborn rebellion and disobedience moved them back to “Start” in the game of life. Now, their journey entailed forty years of walking around in circles until an entire generation died out. But while putting one foot in front of the other raised new struggles, they never lost God’s presence or His promises. Even as they were marking time in the desert, He was leading them—step by step—toward a second chance at Canaan.

That’s the story of Numbers and Deuteronomy. It’s all about God leading and protecting a band of imperfect people through a wilderness as they learned to trust Him. And as they learned to trust Him, they moved closer to the promised land.

That’s not just the story of the Israelites, though. It’s our narrative, as well. Rebels against our Creator we are born into a wilderness of sin that we can’t escape on our own. But God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die in our place, to pay the price for our sin. All we have to do is put one foot in front of the other, step toward Him, and trust Him with our lives. If you’re ready to take that step, here’s what you must do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God’s Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus also rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.”

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

MEET THE WRITERS



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FROM THE TEAM LEADER



Steadfast faith. Time-tested devotion. We each desire a deep faith in God that enables us to persevere through the valleys and rejoice on the mountaintops of life. In the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, we get a front-row seat as the Israelites journeyed from Mount Sinai through the wilderness to the edge of the promised land. Like most expeditions, this journey was packed with unexpected events, a longer-than-expected timeline, and unforeseen challenges. The Israelites responded to these circumstances with grumbling, frustration, and disobedience to God's commands. Upon reaching the Plains of Moab, Moses called the Israelites to commit to wholehearted devotion—following God, His commands, and His ways.

Through the twists and turns of events, God's faithfulness to His people never faltered. He was with them. Time and again God demonstrated His loyalty to provide for and protect them as He led them to the promised land. His promise to be their God was neither forgotten nor dismissed. Despite their unfaithfulness, He remained fully faithful.

The lessons learned by the Israelites prove to be powerful truths we can cling to today. Our journeys will take unexpected turns, leaving us frustrated or unsure of what may lie ahead. Thankfully, we aren't left on our own to navigate our experiences. Like the Israelites, we can choose to follow Him each day. We serve a God who is wholly trustworthy. He is with us!

In Him,

Amber Vaden

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Explore

Discover



What Preschoolers Taught Me about Leading Adults

Dwayne McCrary

One of the more desired rewards to earn in a preschool class is being the line leader. The first thing children will reveal to their parents at the end of the day is that they got to be the line leader that day. They won the prize by setting an example for the rest to follow. In most cases, the line leader is the one exhibiting the behavior desired by the teacher. In some cases, the child is selected by the teacher, who hopes the child will exhibit the desired behavior. Either way, the line leader sets the standard for that day.

When we accepted the role of leading an ongoing Bible study group, we became the line leader for that group. It is even possible that we too shared with our parents that we are a group leader! Let's think about how the line leader in a preschool class helps us understand our role as an adult group leader.

SETS THE EXAMPLE

As already stated, the line leader serves as an example for everyone else to follow. That is how he got to be the line leader in the first place. The other preschoolers know that the line leader represents the expectations for the rest of the class.

When we accepted the role of a group leader, we also accepted the responsibility of representing what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus. That willingness to follow Jesus should be one thing that qualifies us to be the group leader. Following matters.

As strange as this may seem, the title of leader is earned by a willingness to follow. The preschooler follows the expectations defined by their teacher, and adult group leaders follow the expectations defined by the Teacher. Following makes us capable of leading.

FOCUSES ON THE TASK

The preschool line leader focuses on the assigned task, which can include holding on to the rope, walking with purpose, and arriving at a specific destination. Holding the rope may be the



“HOLDING ON TO THE ROPE, WALKING WITH PURPOSE,



biggest challenge for the line leader because children often let go of the rope as they make their way down a hall or through a group of other preschoolers.

Lots of distractions exist that can take the attention of an adult Bible study group as well. We can become focused on physical needs, world events, and class socials, and forget about some of the larger items. None of these are bad if they do not become the primary focus of the group.

One of the roles we play as the group leader is maintaining a focus on reaching those far from God. This focus includes challenging ourselves to be more intentional in praying for those far from God and making sure our group does the same. If we lose sight of the main thing, so will everyone else in our group.

BRINGS OTHERS ALONG

The preschool line leader brings others along for a walk. She encourages other classmates to grab the rope and join her in the journey. She also helps those who get disconnected and lose their grip to reconnect. She makes sure everyone arrives safely.

As adult Bible study group leaders, we get to encourage others to join our group, so they can discover some biblical truths together. We may be called upon to contact others who are struggling and in danger of becoming stragglers. We want to do our best to give everyone an opportunity to arrive safely.

Everyone arriving safely may mean we add a second “rope” and show others how to be a group leader. We then can make room for more people to grab part of the rope. Apprenticing others to become great line leaders may be more important than we realize. There really is no better way for another person to become a great line leader than learning from those already doing it.

We have the privilege of being line leaders for the Bible study group we lead. We can set an example, help the group remain focused, and bring others with us for the journey. We make our heavenly Father proud when we serve well as a line leader.

Dwayne McCrary is the manager of Adult Ongoing Bible Studies at Lifeway.

and **ARRIVING AT A SPECIFIC DESTINATION ”**



HOW TO USE QUICKSOURCE

Using **QuickSource** as your primary resource for preparing to lead a small Bible study group (with the group using the **Personal Study Guide**).

1. Read the core passage, using the Key Words as a quick commentary on the passage.

2. Review the outline provided on the Talking Points page (page two of each session) to organize your thoughts and identify the key points in the passage.

Tip: You can record your notes on the second page if you desire, giving you a way to remember insights gained.

3. Review the questions with response prompts on the Discussion Plan page (page three of each session), recording your response to the questions as you do so.

Some questions/prompts are included in the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide*. The corresponding PSG page numbers for these questions are noted. These page numbers correlate to the regular print version of the PSG and may differ from large print versions. The prompts are adapted from the comments in the *Personal Study Guide*.

Tip: Additional “Bonus” questions are also provided in the Discussion Plan, along with the For Further Discussion QR codes. These extra questions are found only in *QuickSource*.

4. Consider ways of using the Bible Skill and Object Lesson ideas to lead your group.

Look for ways of using these ideas, in addition to the questions included on the Discussion Plan page.

5. Read the Dig Deeper feature (page four of each session), looking for ways of using that information when leading the group.

The information found in the Dig Deeper feature is available only in *QuickSource*.

6. Review and refine.

- Add transition ideas to move from one question to the next.
- Consult the *Explore the Bible* Extra page (goExploreTheBible.com/leaderextras) for an idea about using a current news event to begin and end the group time.
- Listen to the weekly *Explore the Bible* adult podcast to gain further insights about this week’s study. The podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training, or on MinistryGrid (MinistryGrid.com/ExploreTheBible).

7. Gather the items needed to lead the group.

If you plan on using a visual from the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* or creating your own (see p. 65 for a listing of items and suggested sessions for using them), do so early in the week. Be sure to have extra copies of the *Personal Study Guide* on hand to be given to guests.

8. Arrive early.

The group time starts when the first person arrives. Make sure you are that person so you can set the tone and direction for the group Bible study time.

9. Lead the group in a time of Bible study, following your plan.

10. Evaluate the group time.

Note what you learned about the people in the group as well as things you may need to work on to improve as a teacher. Also make sure any follow-up actions promised to the group are carried out.



Using QuickSource as a Supplement.

Leader Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the *Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide*.

After completing your study using the commentary provided in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide*, consult the Key Words section, the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the “Bonus” questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Daily Discipleship Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the Leader Helps in the *Explore the Bible Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*.

Look at the Key Words section to identify additional key words not included in the *Daily Discipleship Guide*, the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the “Bonus” questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Other resources that might be helpful.

Leader Guide

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide provides extensive group plans and additional Bible commentary that builds confidence when preparing to lead a group. Additional teaching options based on learning styles are also included. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Pack

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Pack provides ready-made posters and handout masters that add to the learning experience and make it easier on the teacher. DOC files of the Leader Guide commentary and Leader Guide group plans are also included as a digital download. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Commentary

Explore the Bible Adult Commentary provides an extensive Bible commentary written by recognized conservative Bible scholars. Available at goExploreTheBible.com.

Find out more or order at goExploreTheBible.com

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Numbers and Deuteronomy comprise the fourth and fifth books of the Pentateuch (a Greek term meaning “five books” and covering Genesis–Deuteronomy). Scripture, as well as both Jewish and Christian tradition, ascribe their human authorship to Moses.

Exodus 1–3 describes Moses’s birth in Egypt and how he was saved from death. Later, he was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter and raised in Egypt’s court. He fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian and took up residence in the wilderness of Midian.

God later met Moses at Mount Horeb. After Moses had spent forty years working as a shepherd for his father-in-law, the Lord called him to return to Egypt to lead His people out of slavery. As Moses did so, he wrote down the material we now know as the Bible’s first five books. These books, including Numbers and Deuteronomy, were recorded during the Israelites’ travels in the wilderness.

Besides the testimony of Jewish and Christian tradition, the books themselves describe Moses as recording God’s words (Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:9). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament also mention Moses as the author of these books (2 Chron. 25:4; 35:12; Ezra 6:18; Neh. 13:1; Matt. 19:7-8). Jesus Himself did, as well (John 5:46). It appears likely a few passages were written by another inspired author (Num. 12:3; Deut. 34), but the overwhelming majority came from Moses.

Israel’s exodus from Egypt occurred around 1445 BC, and the people spent forty years in the wilderness before they arrived at Canaan’s border. Thus, the composition of Numbers and Deuteronomy likely occurred between 1445 and 1405 BC.

NUMBERS

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the book of Numbers is known as *Bemidbar* because that is the first word in the Hebrew text. The term, which means “in the wilderness,” is a fitting

title for the events in the book. The English title of Numbers is tied to the Greek word *arithmoi* and relates to the census described in the book’s opening chapters.

Numbers is a transitional book, as the Israelites moved away from Sinai toward the promised land and from receiving the law to learning how to live it out. It also recounts the transition from one generation to the next.

PURPOSE

The book of Exodus traces the history of God’s people from Egypt to Horeb (Mount Sinai), where they received God’s commands (Ex. 19–24). Leviticus records more commandments and emphasizes the personal holiness God expected from His people. Numbers highlights the journey of God’s people through the wilderness from Horeb to the edge of Canaan, followed by forty years of wandering after that generation refused to enter God’s promised land. The book ends with a new generation’s arrival at the Plains of Moab, looking across the Jordan Valley at Canaan.

MAJOR THEMES

Numbering the People. As noted, the book gets its English name from the numbering of the people, an event that actually occurs twice in the book. God instructed Moses to number the people (Num. 1) and to organize them into camps by their tribes (Num. 2). He then took the tribe of Levi as His special tribe to serve Him (Num. 3–4). Later, Moses conducted a second census (Num. 26) that did not include those who had died in the wilderness because of their unbelief.

Wilderness Wanderings. The wilderness wanderings constitute a central theme of the book. Numbers 13–14 record how the Israelites arrived at Kadesh-barnea at Canaan’s southern border and sent twelve scouts to determine the best strategy to take the land. When the scouts returned, ten gave a negative



report. God's judgment came, as He decreed that the unbelieving generation would wander in the wilderness until they died.

Return to Canaan. During the course of Israel's travels, God's people defeated Sihon and Og, two mighty kings east of the Jordan River (Num. 21:21-35). The tribes of Reuben and Gad, along with the half tribe of Manasseh, later settled this area (Num. 32). At last, the Israelites arrived in the Plains of Moab, where the Lord provided them further instructions on the conquest of Canaan (Num. 33:49-56).

DEUTERONOMY

The English title for Deuteronomy comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the "Septuagint." The name means "second law," even though the book is a repetition of the law rather than a revision.

Like Numbers, the Hebrew title for Deuteronomy comes from the book's opening line and means "the words." Among Old Testament books, only Psalms and Isaiah are quoted in the New Testament more than Deuteronomy.

PURPOSE

Deuteronomy highlights Moses's "farewell speeches" to Israel. We might think of the book as a review as God prepared to lead His people into their new land. Some interpreters have noted the similarities between the structure of Deuteronomy and treaties that ancient Hittite kings made with subordinate kings. If so, God was communicating His covenant with the people in a way that was familiar to their understanding and culture. They were His people, and they needed to follow the stipulations of their King.

MAJOR THEMES

Remembering. Moses commanded God's people to remember the past. He recounted how God had led them from Horeb to Kadesh, where the spies gave a bad report (Deut. 1).

He then highlighted God's faithfulness during their wilderness wanderings (Deut. 2-3).

Moses also challenged God's people to let their past inform their present (Deut. 4-11). He wanted them to remember that God had chosen them (Deut. 4: 6: 7), so they needed to obey His commands (Deut. 5). His provision (Deut. 8), their rebellion (Deut. 9), and their responsibility to serve God faithfully (Deut. 10-11) were milestones that should define their life as a nation.

Laws and Commands. Deuteronomy 12-26 contains laws on a variety of topics, including some that repeat and reemphasize God's earlier words from Exodus or Leviticus. God wanted His people to know and embrace life as He had designed it.

Commitment. Deuteronomy 27-30 describes Moses's call for the people to commit themselves fully to God. They were to publicly declare their commitment to Him on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim in Canaan's central region (Deut. 27-28; Josh. 8:30-35). Moses also put before them the path to blessing and the path to curses (Deut. 29-30). He encouraged them to choose life, for only through a covenant relationship with God would they experience all life had to offer. In fact, a covenant relationship with God was life itself (Deut. 30:19-20).

Transition. Moses had led God's people for forty years, but he would not enter the promised land (Num. 20:12). At God's direction, he commissioned Joshua as Israel's next leader (Deut. 31:7-8). The same God who had empowered Moses now would empower Joshua.

Deuteronomy 32-33 record Moses's song and blessing over Israel. The book concludes with an account of Moses's death on Mount Nebo, after which Israel mourned his death for thirty days and Joshua assumed his new leadership role (Deut. 34:1-9).



NUMBERS

- **I. First Census and Consecration of Israel at Sinai** (Num. 1:1–6:27)
- **II. Preparation for Departure to the Promised Land** (Num. 7:1–10:36)
- **III. From Mount Sinai to Kadesh** (Num. 11:1–15:41)
- **IV. Rebellion Against Aaron's Priesthood** (Num. 16:1–19:22)
- **V. From Kadesh to the Plains of Moab** (Num. 20:1–25:18)
- **VI. Second Census and Preparation of the New Generation** (Num. 26:1–30:16)
- **VII. Preparation for Entering the Promised Land** (Num. 31:1–36:13)

DEUTERONOMY

- **I. First Address of Moses** (Deut. 1:1–4:49)
- **II. Second Address of Moses** (Deut. 5:1–26:19)
- **II. Third Address of Moses** (Deut. 27:1–30:20)
- **III. Final Days of Moses** (Deut. 31:1–34:12)

The Journey

GOD GIVES DAILY GUIDANCE TO HIS PEOPLE.

Numbers 9:15-23

15 On the day the **tabernacle** **A** was **set up**, **B** the **cloud** **C** covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and it appeared like **fire** **D** above the tabernacle from evening until morning. **16** It remained that way continuously: the cloud would cover it, appearing like fire at night. **17** Whenever the cloud was **lifted up** **E** above the tent, the Israelites would set out; at the place where the cloud stopped, there the Israelites camped. **18** At the **LORD's command** **F** the Israelites set out, and at the LORD's command they camped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they camped. **19** Even when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle **many days**, **G** the Israelites carried out the LORD's requirement and did not set out. **20** Sometimes the cloud remained over the tabernacle for only a few days. They would **camp** **H** at the LORD's command and set out at the LORD's command. **21** Sometimes the cloud remained only from evening until morning; when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out. Or if it remained a day and a night, they moved out when the cloud lifted. **22** Whether it was two days, a month, or longer, the Israelites camped and did not set out as long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle. But when it was lifted, they set out. **23** They camped at the LORD's command, and they set out at the LORD's command. They **carried out the LORD's requirement** **I** according to his command **through Moses**. **J**

Exploring Key Words

- A** Israel's portable worship structure. It is also referred to as the tent of meeting and tent of testimony. It was built at the command of God "that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).
- B** The tabernacle was set up in the middle of Israel's camp, symbolizing God's dwelling place among His people.
- C** A visible sign of God's presence (see Ex. 13:21; 14:19-24). Before the tabernacle was built, the Lord appeared to Moses in a cloud outside the camp (33:7-10). After the tabernacle was completed, the cloud covered the tabernacle (Lev. 16:2,12-13).
- D** The fire of God's presence first appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). It led the Israelites out of Egypt (13:21-22; 14:24), rested on Mount Sinai (19:18), and settled on the tabernacle (40:38).
- E** The cloud and fire allowed Israel to travel day or night. The movement of the cloud/fire was God's signal that it was time to depart or make camp.
- F** This was not a verbal command, but a visual one that Israel could follow faithfully.
- G** Sometimes the cloud stayed for several days, as when Israel camped at Sinai. Other times, it would remain only a few days (v. 20) or even just one day (v. 21).
- H** "Abode" (KJV); "Encamp" (NIV). When and where they would camp was determined entirely by God.
- I** Having learned important lessons regarding disobedience at Sinai, the people were willing to trust God's directions.
- J** God gave His word to Moses, who relayed it to the Israelites.



NOTES

God's Presence (Num. 9:15-16)

- God was with the Israelites as they journeyed from Mount Sinai to the Plains of Moab. He dwelt among His people by covering the tabernacle in the center of the Israelite camp.
- The Lord directed His people with fire at night and through a cloud during the day. These provided a continuous and visible manifestation of God's presence and glory, along with being a reminder of His consistent guidance.

Faithful Direction (Num. 9:17-21)

- The Israelites watched the cloud and the fire. When God's presence in the cloud lifted from its place above the tabernacle and moved, the Israelites moved with it. They followed the cloud as He directed.
- Likewise, when the cloud remained over the tabernacle and did not move, they stopped traveling and remained in that location.

Active Obedience (Num. 9:22-23)

- The Israelites were faithful to follow God's direction regardless of the amount of time spent traveling or camping. Whether it was a single day or an extended period of time, the Israelites journeyed or camped at the Lord's command.

Summary Statements

God gives daily guidance to His people.

- Believers can be assured that God is with them and can provide trustworthy guidance.
- Following God's guidance will require believers to act on His instruction.
- Following God in faith means that we act on His timeframe and not our own.

Memory Verse

Numbers 9:23

Key Doctrine

God

To God we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.
(See Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 1 John 5:3.)



For additional commentary,
see the Leader Guide
or Adult Commentary,
available for purchase at
goExploreTheBible.com.

ENGAGE

Think of a time when bad directions led you somewhere unexpected. How can getting just one detail wrong disrupt our travels? (PSG, p. 10)

- Many of us rely on GPS navigation when going someplace new. Not only will it tell us to turn left in 1.2 miles, but it will also tell us what time we can expect to arrive.
- GPS systems weren't as reliable when they first came out. They were programmed at the factory and didn't automatically update with the most up-to-date information. They didn't know about new roads or routes. Thus, sometimes they gave wrong information, and people got lost.

Bonus: Who or what serves as your "GPS" for life? Why do you trust that person or thing to help you navigate life?

EXPLORE

1. GOD'S PRESENCE (NUM. 9:15-16)

Bonus: What is your process for making decisions? How did you develop that process?

- The tabernacle was a portable, tent-like structure with two primary parts: the outer courtyard and a smaller structure covered with skins and cloth. Inside the structure were two rooms: the holy place and the holy of holies.
- The Hebrew word translated "tabernacle" means "dwelling place." Thus, the tabernacle was a visual reminder of God's presence with His people.
- The tabernacle was "covered" by a cloud by day and fire by night. The term "continuously" means without interruption. The fire and cloud revealed God's presence as He guided His people on their journey toward Canaan.

How can you be assured of God's presence in your life? What are some ways you benefit from His presence? (PSG, p. 13)

2. FAITHFUL DIRECTION (NUM. 9:17-21)

Bonus: On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "can't stand it" and 5 being "comfortable with it," how would you rate your attitude toward waiting? Why?

- Numbers 9 does not describe how "the cloud was lifted up above the tent." It also doesn't explain how long it took for the cloud to reposition itself. Instead, the focus was on God's leading and His people's following.
- Two verbs in verse 18 describe what the Israelites did: "set out" and "camped." It is important to remember that more than 600,000 men left Egypt. The number of people swells when you add women and children. Yet, God's instructions and leadership ensured that setting out and camping did not deteriorate into a mob of confusion.

- At times, God's presence stayed in place for "many days." Other times, the wait lasted "only a few days"—or maybe even overnight (v. 21). Regardless of the duration, these verses serve as a reminder that the Lord sometimes compels His people to wait.

Have there been times when God made you wait for an answer or solution from Him? How did that experience affect your faith? (PSG, p. 15)

3. ACTIVE OBEDIENCE (NUM. 9:22-23)

Bonus: When has someone asked you for advice only to ignore your suggestions? How did that make you feel?

- The succinct phrase "when it was lifted, they set out" conveys two ideas. The first is an abrupt action. The people followed the Lord's directive promptly. Second, they followed His lead decisively and consistently. Thanks to the Lord's guidance, they knew each day where they were supposed to be.
- Three times verse 23 refers to the "LORD's command." The literal translation of the Hebrew is, "at the mouth of the LORD." The dual emphasis of the verse is on God's directions and the people's obedience. Israel was dependent on God's guidance. When He led, they obeyed.

Why does it matter that we follow the Lord's lead? Why do we sometimes delay doing what He wants us to do? (PSG, p. 17)

CHALLENGE

As a group, consider some ways you can identify and obey God's direction as individuals, a Bible study, and a church.

How might the Lord be leading your Bible study group or church into a new ministry? What can the group or church do to follow His lead? (PSG, p. 18)

Encourage adults to evaluate their personal level of obedience to what God is calling them to do.

How are you doing at following the Lord's lead? How can you become more attentive to His guidance? (PSG, p. 18)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

BIBLE SKILL (P. 17, PSG)

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about a biblical concept.

Numbers 9:15-23 describes how God led His people through the wilderness. Read the article “Pillar of Fire and Cloud” in a Bible dictionary and record any new insights. Reflect on these questions: ***How does God primarily guide His people today? What is the relationship between Bible reading and prayer and God’s guidance? How can you be sure you are following God’s will for your life?***

Encourage adults to list signs they encounter each day and the guidance those signs provide. List their responses on the board. Direct them to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 17 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share how God chose to guide His people in the wilderness. Lead a brief discussion on how believers can discern His guidance and leadership today.

OBJECT LESSON: DIARY

Show adults a diary. Allow volunteers to share their experiences keeping a diary through the years. Talk about why people might keep a diary.

Give each adult a sheet of paper and pencil. Direct them to read Numbers 9:15-16 and to write a diary entry in the voice of an Israelite experiencing these events. After a few minutes, allow a few volunteers to share their entries.

Emphasize the power of God’s presence among His people. Remind adults that God still reveals His presence to those who will trust Him. Suggest adults consider beginning the practice of keeping a journal or diary as a way to remember how God has worked in their lives and to express gratitude to Him for that work.

DIG DEEPER

GOD’S CONTINUED GUIDANCE

“Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but Thou art mighty; Hold me with Thy powerful hand.” (Baptist Hymnal, 2008, No. 82)

The hymn writer described the life of a believer by using the image of God leading His people through the wilderness, saved from bondage but not yet in the promised land. He emphasized the truth that we need God’s guidance and protection each step of the way.

In Numbers 9, we see that God used the fire and the cloud to guide His people through the wilderness. He determined the direction they were to travel, and He determined the duration of their stay at any one place. In His grace, God would not send the Israelites out to survive on their own wisdom and resources. He would guide them daily and meet their needs.

As believers, we are saved by God’s grace, but we also live daily by His grace. This should raise questions in our minds about how we can seek His direction. It should challenge us to listen for vital words of guidance and wisdom He has for us each day.

God can speak in a variety of ways. In the wilderness God used a visual symbol of His presence, His

cloud during the day and His fire at night. If the people wanted to live in God’s presence, they would need to follow His direction faithfully.

We follow the same God today. He gives guidance for our daily lives through various means. With our brains we evaluate situations and make decisions. Through our past experiences, we can acknowledge His presence and work. We can lean into His wisdom through fellow believers.

Primarily, however, our guidance is found in His Word. He has a plan and purpose for each of us, and His Spirit reveals truth as we read and hear His Word. No one wants us to know God’s will more than He does. We must tune our hearts to listen to Him. As we follow His lead, think His thoughts, and obey His teachings, we can learn to walk faithfully in His presence.

BONUS CONTENT

**Tabernacle**

Scan here to discover more about this place of worship built by the Israelites.