



Provision

Session 2 • Numbers 11:4-17



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outlines of Numbers, Deuteronomy*). Make copies of **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Numbers, Deuteronomy Time Line*) and **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Complaints in the Wilderness*).

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 21.

ASK: When has some difficulty kept you from being able to do what you needed to do? How did you feel when someone came through with a solution? (p. 21)

DISCUSS: Encourage the group to talk about a recent project they completed and the obstacles they had to overcome to get the job done. Emphasize the importance of perseverance in life.

IDENTIFY: Share that this session continues the study of the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. Direct attention to **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outlines of Numbers, Deuteronomy*) and show where today's passage can be found on the outline. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Numbers, Deuteronomy Time Line*). Allow adults to scan the handout to gain more insight into Israel's travels in the wilderness and the context of this session.

TRANSITION: As we look into today's session, don't forget that God has a purpose for your life. He has called you to take the lead in some way, and He has given you the tools you need to get the job done. Consider how you can lean into Him to fulfill His plans, even when you face opposition or challenges.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Numbers 11:4-9** as the group listens for Israel's complaints in the verses.

ASK: What comes to mind when you hear the word "riffraff"? What did Moses mean when he talked about "riffraff" in verse 4?

SHARE: Share the following explanation of the word "riffraff."

- **(11:4)** The term *riffraff* is used only here in the Bible, but it is related to the word "gather." It describes a group that gathered to complain. Some interpreters suggest that they were part of the "mixed multitude" of non-Israelites who left Egypt with God's people (Ex. 12:38). Their disgruntled attitudes and words were contagious and quickly spread.

REVIEW: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Complaints in the Wilderness*). Point out Numbers 11 and note this was not the first or last time Israel would complain about something.

EXAMINE: Direct adults to scan verses 4-6 and identify the dangers in their attitudes. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their thoughts. Emphasize that redefining “the good old days” led the Israelites to question God’s goodness and to take His provision for granted. Point out that God had been gracious to provide manna in abundance, but the Israelites were starting to despise His generous gift of grace.

- **(11:5-6)** The Israelites were guilty of “selective memory.” They remembered the food in Egypt, but they had forgotten the difficult working conditions, oppressive taskmasters, the death of Hebrew baby boys, and more. The challenges they faced in the wilderness already had caused them to remember Egypt as a better place than it really was for them.

ASK: What does God’s providing manna to His people reveal about Him? What blessings from God might we tend to overlook? (p. 23)

READ: Direct the group to read silently Numbers 11:10-15, noting evidence of Moses’s frustration.

EXAMINE: Write *God’s response* on the board. Direct adults to read verse 10 again and determine how God reacted to the people.

ASK: Why do you think God was so angry at His people? We often applaud Moses for his great faith and obedience. What does verse 15 say about Moses? (p. 23)

- **(11:10)** While God was “very angry,” Moses was provoked. The expression literally reads, “In the eyes of Moses it was evil/bad.” We may understand the words in one of two ways. First, they could mean Moses shared God’s anger at the people’s complaints. Perhaps he also believed the people deserved God’s wrath for their rebellion! As a second option, the expression could communicate Moses’s aggravation at the situation, not just at the people. Their grumbling exhausted him and fed his feelings of inadequacy. Consequently, he took his concern to God.

COMPARE: Encourage adults to compare and contrast God’s anger and Moses’s frustration. Highlight Moses’s imagery about giving birth and talk about how that demonstrated his exasperation. Point out that it’s easy for us to get frustrated, but such frustrations often lead us in the wrong direction. Share that during those times it’s best to follow Moses’s example and bring our feelings to God, no matter how confused or irrational they might seem in the moment.

ASK: How do you handle frustrations? What can you change based on these verses? (p. 23)

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Numbers 11:16-17 as the group reflects on how God was ready to respond to Moses’s dilemma.

SHARE: Point out that God had a plan for Moses to delegate responsibility to seventy leaders. These leaders may have included some of the men who had joined Moses and Aaron on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24.

DISCUSS: Highlight that God placed some of His Spirit on each man, giving him the kind of wisdom and discernment the Lord had shared with Moses. Lead a brief discussion on why the Spirit's guidance would be important for this assignment.

- **(11:17)** God said that He would instill some of the Spirit who guided Moses on the elders. Most interpreters believe God was referring to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. God told Moses that He would take from the Spirit He had given Moses and place the Spirit on the seventy leaders so they could assist him in God's power. This did not imply Moses lost anything or that each leader would have only a portion of the Spirit's power. Rather, each leader assisted Moses as the Spirit empowered him. The leaders would need discernment to make good choices, and the Spirit would be the One who directed them and provided solid counsel.

ASK: What did God reveal about His character by supplying Moses's specific and stated needs? (p. 23)

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- Believers should be careful not to take God's provisions for granted.

- We can always take our concerns to God, telling Him what we need.
- We can trust God to provide what we need to carry out the tasks He gives us.

DISCUSS: Direct the group to read the **Apply the Text** questions on page 23. Allow adults to suggest ways the group can work together to share burdens and concerns.

CHALLENGE: Encourage adults to use the **Daily Exploration** on pages 25-27 to dig deeper into God's Word during the week.

PRAY: Close in prayer, asking God to help adults avoid complaints, avoid frustration, and embrace help when He provides it.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by texting or emailing the group. Remind the group that God is at work in their lives and challenge them to remain grateful for the way He provides each day. Suggest that they consider journaling what God shares with them about His work and to use those journal entries as prayer prompts in their lives. Encourage them to share any needs they might have so you can pray for them more effectively as individuals and as a group.