

Moses 6

Trusting God's promises – Leaders version

For a one hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What do you remember from the last study we did?

God provided food and water for the Israelites in the desert, but they kept losing faith and grumbling. God provided the 10 commandments, to show the people how to live in a way that pleased God. The people made a golden calf while Moses was talking to God, and started to worship it, because they lost faith again.

Briefly explain about the book of Leviticus. Leviticus is a book that gives the laws for holiness and worship to the people of the Old Testament (i.e. before Jesus came). The main theme is holiness – God is holy and his people should be holy. If they had managed to keep the laws perfectly, they would have been holy, but they could not keep them (no-one can, as we are all sinners). Key verses in Leviticus are 'I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy because I am holy.' (11:45), 'Keep my commands and follow them. I am the LORD.' (22:31), and 'I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.' (26:12).

Introduce the book of Numbers – ch1-12 is a record of the people who crossed the Red Sea with Moses, and setting up the Tabernacle (a tent where God was worshipped).

What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

2. Why do you think God wanted the people of Israel to be holy?

The word 'holy' means 'set apart'. God wanted his people to be set apart for him. They were his people and he wanted what was best for them - if they really recognised God, they would live lives that honoured him.

*3. Read Numbers 13:1-2. What do we learn about the land that the Israelites are going to?

It's called Canaan. God is giving it to the Israelites.

Questions 4-6 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. You need to write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

*4. **SDL** Read 13:17-20. Moses sent 12 spies into Canaan. What did he tell the spies to find out and why?

What the land is like and what the people are like, whether the towns are well defended and to bring some fruit back. So that they can give a report on how they will invade / how battles need to be fought and to encourage the people with the fertility of the land.

*5. **SDL** The spies spent 40 days exploring. Now read 13:27-28. What did they find and what did this mean?

The land flowed with milk and honey. This showed that the land was fertile – the cows produced a lot of milk and the bees a lot of honey because of the abundance of grass and flowers. The people there were powerful and the cities were large and fortified – this showed that the Israelites would need to fight to invade the country, they wouldn't be able to walk in unchallenged.

*6. **SDL** If you were one of the Israelite people, how would you feel about this report?

Scared? Confident because God had told you that the land was already yours? Encourage honesty!

*7. **STICKERS** Based on what you learnt in the last study, what should the Israelites have remembered about how God looks after his people?

God provides for his people. He provided food and water for them. And he got them out of Egypt after a series of plagues (messages to Pharaoh). God's plan is always good – the Israelites should have learnt this from what they had already seen. They should have known that God keeps his promises. He had promised to give them the land of Canaan (Num 13:2).

*8. What did one of the spies, Caleb, say to the people in Numbers 13:30, and what do you think the other spies said?

We should go and take possession of the land, because we can do it. Brainstorm about the other spies.

*9. Read Numbers 13:31-32 to find out what the other spies said.

We can't attack the people in Canaan, they are too strong and too big for us. They spread a bad report about this among the Israelites to put them off going into the land.

***10. STICKERS** Who do you think was right, and why?

The 10 spies are right that (on a human level) the people are too big and strong to fight, but Caleb is right that they should go ahead, since God has already given them the land and will give them the strength to fight. The problem is not the facts – it's the people's response to the facts!

11. Now they know what they are facing, the Israelites respond – read Numbers 14:1-4 to see what they say.

They grumble (again) and say that they want to go back to Egypt with a new leader (they've conveniently forgotten how bad it was in Egypt). They think they will die in the battle over the land of Canaan.

12. Read Numbers 14:6-9 to find out how Caleb and Joshua (another one of the spies) respond to the people – what do they say?

The land is good and God will give it to us. Don't rebel against God and don't be afraid of the people in Canaan – God is not protecting them, but he is with us.

13. God was angry with the Israelites because they didn't trust him. What does God say, in judgement, in Numbers 14:30-33? What will happen now?

From the present generation, only Joshua and Caleb will enter the land of Canaan. The people of Israel will stay in the desert for 40 years, until the present generation have all died, and then their children will enter the land of Canaan.

14. What promises has God made to you in the Bible, and do you trust Him to keep them?

Try to keep focused on the promises in the Bible, not on personal ones (Bible promises are definite. Personal promises may be subjective. Young believers may feel inadequate if they don't have personal promises, and non-believers won't understand personal promises. Also, beware of the prevalence of mental illness which can affect people's perception of what 'God has said' to them). Bible promises include – forgiveness through trust in Jesus, being made right with God, being changed, promise of eternal life etc.

***15.** Christians often think about heaven when they remember the promised land of Canaan. Why do you think this is and do you look forward to heaven?

Canaan was the land that was 'flowing with milk and honey' – a gift from God, where everything was provided. Heaven is God's gift to us, he has promised it to believers in Jesus. Think about looking forward to heaven, and try to unravel the reason if a Christian says they are not looking forward to heaven.

16. **BRAINSTORM** What do you know about heaven?

Co-ordinate a brainstorm onto a flip-chart. At the end, highlight the answers that are true. Explain why the other answers are not true. Many people have uninformed or badly informed ideas about heaven, so it's

worth spending some time thinking about the Biblical facts about heaven. Important facts to cover –

- Heaven is a place, not a state of mind.
- There is only one way to heaven – believing in Jesus' death on our behalf.
- We don't know what heaven looks like, but we do know that it is where believers will be with Jesus for ever.
- There is no sin / death / mourning / crying / pain in heaven.

Some supplementary questions are below, if you have time.

16a. If you believe and trust in Jesus as your Saviour, how can you be sure that you will go to heaven? (see John 14:1-3)

The Bible tells us that all who believe and trust in Jesus 'have eternal life' – this means the same as 'go to heaven'. See also 1 Timothy 1:15-16.

16b. Read Matthew 6:19-21. What are treasures on earth? What are treasures in heaven and how do we 'store them up'?

'Treasures on earth' refers to things like financial security, pensions, savings, family relationships etc – none of which are inherently bad, but if we put our eternal security in them, they cannot save us. 'Treasures in heaven' means eternal life, which cannot be taken away from us.

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

20 minutes

*1. God had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites as a gift, but they didn't trust God. Do you trust Jesus' death on your behalf to be all that is needed for you to receive God's gift of forgiveness?

*2. Do you trust God with your future, even when you can see 'giants' ahead? What do you need to do in order to trust God more?

Get to know God better – spend time reading the Bible and praying about the situation. Remember that praying about a situation doesn't mean that it will all go your way – when we pray about a situation, we let God take control of it, and then have to trust him for his plan to be the best plan for us.

3. If someone on the wing asked you how to get to heaven, what would you say?

Make sure that the group understands the importance of explaining that our sin separates us from God, the penalty for sin is death, and that Jesus, who is God, died in the place of repentant sinners. Recognising that I am a sinner and trusting in Jesus' death in my place is the only way for me to get to heaven.

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