

Forming a People - Part 5
A People Learning to Trust - Part 2
Ex. 16:1-36
October 9, 2022

I. The CHALLENGES of day to day REALITY. (v.1-5)

- A. People: COMPLAINING and IDEALIZING the past. (v.2-3)**
- B. God: From PROTECTING to PROVIDING. (v.4,12-15)**
- C. The method of PROVISION also TEACHES. (v.4-5)**

So they are miraculously freed from Egypt. Then they are saved by crossing the Red Sea on dry ground while their pursuers die when the waters crash in upon them. There's a whole chapter of singing praise to God for His power, and then reality hits. There's nothing like a little hunger to help you forget all that God has been doing recently.

1. Kid's Question: What is the hardest thing that you have had to do lately? Why was it so difficult?
2. In what ways do we often idealize the past in a way to avoid dealing with the present?

II. The need for a SHIFT in MENTALITY. (v.6-20)

- A. Focus: From PEOPLE to GOD. (v.6-10)**
- B. Action: From CONTROLLING to KNOWING. (v.11-15)**
- C. Goal: From POSSESSING to trustfully RECEIVING. (v.16-20)**

The Jews are falling back into the mental patterns and ways of living that have been embedded in them over the 400 years of slavery in Egypt. They need a shift in thinking and being. We see God is a masterful teacher and here begins the work of helping His people to shift toward a whole different way of living.

3. How can you tell if your spiritual life and thinking are focused too much on people and not enough on God? How might you make a shift in that area?
4. Do you find yourself more focused on controlling and possessing than on knowing and receiving? How can you be sure? What can you do to change that?

III. Introducing SLAVES to SABBATH. (v.20-30)

- A. A COUNTER-INTUITIVE practice. (v.20-27)**
- B. A GIFT from God for HUMANITY. (v.29-30; Gen. 1-2)**
- C. Acknowledging our LIMITS and DEPENDENCY. (V.16-19, 29)**

Sabbath is a radical idea for people who have been slaves to Pharaoh for generations. It's a pretty radical idea even for us today in our modern world. We will drill down on this idea over the next several weeks, but this story helps to introduce this shaping practice that God seems to emphasize over and over again in His interactions with His people.

5. What new ideas about Sabbath did you find in this text today? Did anything surprise you?
6. How might the more formal practice of a weekly sabbath be a gift from God in your own life? What are the challenges to embracing that practice?

IV. Embracing PRACTICES that help us to SHIFT. (I Tim. 4:7; Eph. 4:22-24)

- A. Evening and morning: The POWER of RHYTHMS. (Lk. 4:16; Ps. 16:8; Is. 26:3)**
- B. Sabbath: A STOPPING in order to KNOW. (Ex. 31:13; Ps. 46:10)**
- C. Limits: From CONSUMER to CHILD of God. (Ps. 131:1-3)**

We have seen over and over that God calls the people to engage in actual physical acts as a way to embed a new mentality into their lives. They are actually learning who He is by the actions He is calling them to take. Much as the first year of a child's life are shaped by the touch and interactions of loving parents, God is revealing Himself to His people in ways that could set in motion a whole different way of being in the world.

7. What are the rhythms that currently give direction to and shape your life? Are you please with the results of those rhythms/practices?
8. Are you more prone to be a spiritual consumer than a child of God? What practices might help you to change in that area?

"I cannot transform myself, or anyone else for that matter. What I can do is create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place, by developing and maintaining a rhythm of spiritual practices that keep me open and available to God."

— Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*