

Answer Guide—Volume 1



Geography of Salvation
Preaching the Map

By Stan Key



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To Be a Pilgrim

By John Bunyan

A Song from “*The Pilgrim’s Progress*”

“*Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*” (Hebrews 11:13).

*Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.
There’s no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent,
To be a pilgrim.*

*Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He’ll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin, nor foul fiend,
Can daunt his spirit:
He knows, he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He’ll fear not what men say,
He’ll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim*

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Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

DOING THE WALK

I Corinthians 10:1–13

I. Metaphors of Salvation.

The Bible uses multiple **images** (metaphors) to describe salvation. To grasp only one or two of these images is to have a **partial** or even **distorted** view of the purposes God for us in redemption. Four metaphors seem especially important:

	COURTROOM (Romans, Galatians)	FATHER & CHILDREN (Gospel of John)	MARRIAGE (Gn 1–2; Ex 19–24; Eph 5; Rv 21–22)	A JOURNEY (Gn 12; Exodus; “Follow me”)
Who Is God?	Judge	Father	Bridegroom Husband	Lord and King
Who Is Jesus?	Our advocate, lawyer	Our brother	Our Bridegroom Husband	Guide Fellow Traveler “The Way”
Who Am I?	Guilty sinner Condemned	Newborn child Adopted child	Fiancée Wife	<u>Pilgrim</u> <u>Dual citizenship</u>
What Is the Problem?	Sin, guilt I’ve broken God’s law	We are dead, unborn Children of devil	Other lovers Adultery	<u>I’m lost</u> <u>I’m headed in the</u> <u>wrong direction</u>
What Is the Solution?	Forgiveness Pardon Justification	New birth Adoption	Marriage Covenant Renew vows	<u>Repent (turn</u> <u>around)</u> <u>“Follow Me”</u>
How Do I Become a Christian?	Confess Repent Believe	You must be born again	Enter a covenant Turn from other lovers	Make a decision to follow Jesus
How Do I Know I’m a Christian?	<i>There is now no condemnation...</i> (Rom 8:1)	<i>...the Spirit of adoption...Abba!..</i> (Rom 8:15)	<i>My beloved is mine and I am his...</i> (Sg of Sol 2:16)	All who are led by the Spirit are sons (Rom 8:14)
How Should We then Live?	<i>If anyone sins, we have an advocate...</i> (I Jn 2:1–2)	<i>As obedient children...be holy</i> (I Pt 1:14–15)	Keep yourself pure (II Cor 11:2)	Walk worthy Walk humbly (Eph 4:1; Mi 6:8)

While many post-moderns and millennials, coming from **broken homes**, find it difficult to connect with metaphors relating to the family, preaching salvation as a **journey** tends to resonate with their life experience.

II. Life as a Journey.

A. Many writers, both ancient and contemporary, both secular and Christian, have built their stories around the central theme of a journey:

- *The Odyssey* by Homer.
- *The Wizard of Oz* by Frank Baum.
- *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien.
- *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift.
- *The Way of the Pilgrim* by an unknown Russian Orthodox monk.
- *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan.

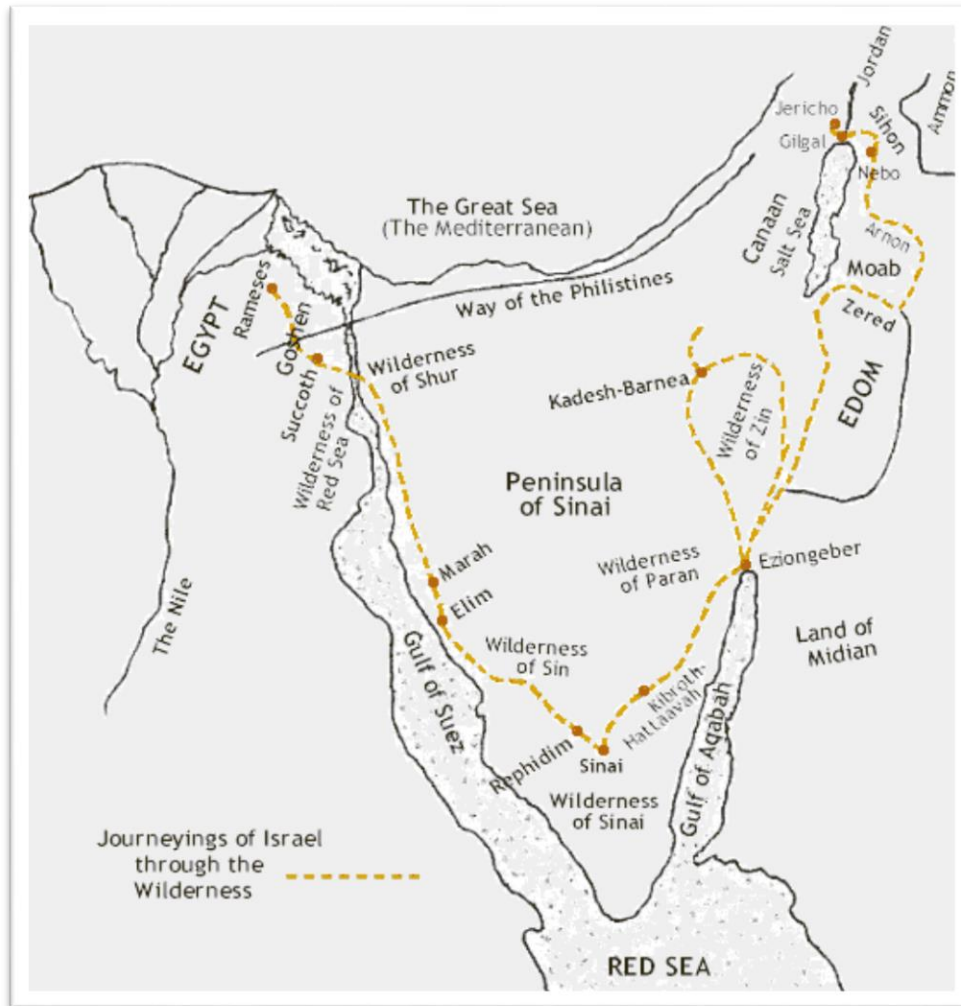
The opening lines of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* capture well the drama of life's journey:

*Midway along the journey of our life
I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
for I had wandered off the straight path....*

Few have spoken with more poetic elegance than Robert Frost in his famous poem, *The Road Not Taken*:

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth....
...Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

- B. In the Bible, this emphasis on the journey of life is underscored by the recurring theme of **walking** with God:
1. Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden (Gen 3:8).
 2. Enoch, Noah, and Abraham walked with God (Gen 5:22–24; 6:9; 17:1).
 3. “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked” (Ps 1:1).
 4. “And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” (Is 30:21).
 5. What does the Lord require of you? Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Mi 6:8).
 6. Jesus called his first disciples by simply saying, “Follow me” (Mt 4:19).
 7. Paul exhorted believers to walk in love, walk in the Spirit, walk in the light, walk worthy, walk carefully, don't walk as the Gentiles, etc. (Rom 13:13; 14:15; Gal 5:16; Eph 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15; Col 1:10; 2:6; I Thes 2:12).
 8. Even in heaven this walk with God will continue forever (Rev 3:4).
- C. The most prominent illustration of doing the walk in the Bible, however, is seen in the Old Testament in the journey of redemption, when God led his people from **Egypt** to **Canaan**. To understand the spiritual significance of this journey, one must know some basic **geography**. No journey makes sense without a **map**!



1. The map introduces us to the **geography of salvation**. Places on the map are not arbitrary or random. Each one has spiritual significance: Egypt, the Red Sea, Mara, Sinai, Kadesh, the Jordan River, etc.
 2. The journey of the Jewish people 3,400 years ago is not just interesting history. It is a picture of the Christian life. It is not just *their* story, it is **my story**. Their journey helps me to better understand mine.
 3. At least two writers in the New Testament used the map of the exodus to help Christians understand their own spiritual journey. In other words, they were **preaching the map**.
 - a. The writer of Hebrews warned Christians about the danger of spiritual **arteriosclerosis** by preaching the map (Heb 3:7–4:13).
 - b. Paul warned the Corinthians about the danger of **falling from grace** by preaching the map (I Cor 10:1–13).
- D. Some basic observations concerning the map and the geography of salvation:
1. Though the Hebrews had lived in Egypt 400 years, this was not their **home**!
 2. The moment of redemption came when the people crossed the **Red Sea**.

3. Mount Sinai, where the law was given, comes **after** redemption, not before. Sinai is *not* in Egypt! In other words, one does not obey God's law in order to be saved but because one already is!
4. Canaan is where Israel's inheritance lies: a place of fruitfulness and where battles are to be fought and won. The moment of entering Canaan came when the people crossed the **Jordan River**.
5. Egypt is not contiguous with Canaan. A **desert** lies between! Passing through this desert is inevitable. It is a good thing, willed by God himself.
6. Not everyone who had enough faith to **get out** of Egypt had enough faith to **get in** to Canaan. For 38 years they did laps in the desert. *This* desert is not inevitable. It is the result of sin and illustrates a wasted life.
7. Salvation is a **journey**.

III. The Map Sermon—I Corinthians 10:1–13

Of all the churches in the New Testament, Corinth was undoubtedly the most **immature** and **carnal**. The church had problems with divisions, sexual immorality, charismania, false doctrines, etc. Paul chose to address these issues by preaching the map and teaching these Greeks about the geography of salvation. The journey from Egypt to Canaan is no longer an ancient story about other people. It becomes my story, today. "Now these things happened to them as an **example** (Greek, *typos*), but they were written down for our instruction" (v 6, 10).

Paul's sermon has four applications for the believers in Corinth and for us today; we could call them **mapplications**.

A. *Salvation is a journey... be **informed**.*

Salvation is not a ticket to heaven or a get-out-jail-free card. It is a walk... from one place to another. Jesus said, "Follow me." How can you call yourself a Christ-follower if you are not following Christ?

B. *Not all who start the journey finish.... be **wise** (vv 1–5).*

Spiritual blessings do not guarantee spiritual success or maturity. "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he who does the will of my Father...." (Mt 7:21–23).

C. *There are certain dangers that all pilgrims face... be **alert** (vv 6–12).*

Paul does not mention every temptation that the Hebrews faced during the exodus but he zeroes in on four because he knows how often followers of Christ trip up at these very points:

- Idolatry (v 7)—the golden calf (Ex 32).
- Sexual immorality (v 8)—the Moabite women (Num 25).
- Putting the Lord to the test (v 9)—many examples.
- Grumbling (v 10)—many examples.

"Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed **lest he fall**" (v 12).

Thinking we are immune from moral failure is perhaps the surest way to allow it to happen (cf. I Cor 9:24–27). "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it" (Edmund Burke).

D. God is faithful... be **encouraged** (v 13).

This wonderful verse tells me that if I am struggling with temptations and trials in my spiritual journey:

- I am **normal**. “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man....”
- God is **faithful**. “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability....”
- Victory is **promised**. “...but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” As God’s promise is stated in Deuteronomy 6:23: “He brought us out from there [Egypt] that he might bring us in [to Canaan]....”

TABLE TALK

1. What did you learn from our discussion of the metaphors of salvation? Which metaphor (courtroom, child, marriage, journey) best describes the Gospel of your salvation experience?
2. When you think of salvation as a journey (doing the walk), describe how this impacts the way you think about: the purpose of salvation... assurance... conversion... perseverance... sanctification....evangelism....
3. How does “preaching the map” address the issue of spiritual immaturity and carnality?
4. What has this lesson taught you about the place of “the desert” in our spiritual journey?
5. Do you know Christians who have enough faith to *get out* of Egypt but not enough faith to *get in* to Canaan? Explain. What happens to people like this when they die?
6. Where are you on the map?

We're Marching to Zion

By Isaac Watts

*Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord, (2x)
And thus surround the throne. (2x)*

*Refrain:
We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.*

*The sorrows of the mind
Be banished from the place;
Religion never was designed (2x)
To make our pleasures less. (2x)*

*Let those refuse to sing,
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heav'nly King (2x)
May speak their joys abroad. (2x)*

*The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground (2x)
From faith and hope may grow. (2x)*

*The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heav'nly fields, (2x)
Or walk the golden streets. (2x)*

*Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground (2x)
To fairer worlds on high. (2x)*



Geography of Salvation

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A Bible Study with Stan Key

EGYPT: TO LEAVE OR NOT TO LEAVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Exodus 1–3

Before anyone starts on a journey there must first be **a reason** to begin. If we are content where we are, why leave to go somewhere else? Unless the reasons for leaving are greater than the reasons for staying we will never even begin the journey.

I. Egypt: My Native Land?

- A. Story of the eagle that was raised on a **turkey farm**.
- B. A little history.

When the book of Exodus opens, Israel had been living in Egypt almost **400** years. For much of this time they were not slaves and life was pleasant. Goshen was a fertile area and Egypt was prosperous, stable and culturally advanced. Yet the Hebrews never **assimilated** into Egyptian culture. Why? We must look to their original calling to find the answer.

*Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to **the land** that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great **nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall **be blessed**." (Genesis 12:1–3)*

God's people are different! They are recognizable because of three fundamental realities:

1. Home: Ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, the people of God have been characterized by homesickness; they are wanderers trying to find their place, their land. **Where do I belong?**
 2. Identity: Though the Hebrews lived in Egypt and walked, talked, ate and smelled like Egyptians, they were not Egyptians. **Who am I?**
 3. Purpose: Israel was called for a purpose: to be a blessing to the nations. **Why am I here?**
- C. Spiritually speaking, Egypt is a picture of "**this world**."
- "When [the two witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." (Rv 11:7–8)
 - "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (I Jn 2:15–17)
 - "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (Jas 4:4)

If you are in love with “this world” then you have no reason to respond when Jesus says, “**Follow me.**” As the puritan pastor Thomas Brooks (1608–1680) said; “The world and you must part or Christ and you will never meet.”

II. Why leave?

God has a problem: How to **motivate** people to leave a place they don’t want to leave? The early chapters of Exodus describe how God orchestrated events so that the people actually *wanted* to leave where they had lived for 400 years. God used four ingredients to prompt his people to begin their journey toward Canaan.¹

A. **Pain** (Exodus 1:6–22).

1. God permits circumstances in Egypt to become worse and worse: a “new king,” cruel taskmasters, babies killed, bricks without straw, etc. No one begins this journey until the pain of **staying** where we are becomes greater than the pain of moving to where God wants us to be!
2. Dr. Paul Brand worked with leprosy patients in India. Leprosy destroys the body’s ability to sense pain. This is not a good thing! “Silencing pain without considering its message is like disconnecting a ringing fire alarm to avoid receiving bad news.” Brand calls pain “**the gift** nobody wants.”
3. “God whispers to us in our pleasures; speaks in our conscience; but shouts in our pain. It is God’s **megaphone** to rouse a deaf world.” (C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*).
4. The problem with the so-called Prosperity Gospel is that it has no theology of **suffering**.
5. “And the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God **heard** their groaning, and God **remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God **saw** the people of Israel—and God **knew**.” (Ex 2:23–25)
6. “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful **fruit** of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Heb 12:11)

B. A confused **identity** (Exodus 2:1–22).

1. For the people: they live in Egypt but they are not Egyptians. Who are we?
2. For Moses: He is the classic TCK (**third culture kid**). He has a birth mother who is Jewish and an adoptive mother who is Egyptian. When he is with the Hebrews he feels like a foreigner as he does when he is with the Egyptians. He names his son Gershom (the alien) (2:22); Who am I? (3:11).
3. Moses addresses his inner pain and search for identity by taking matters into his own hands. He murders an Egyptian (2:11–15). This only makes matters worse! We don’t find ourselves by looking for ourselves: we find ourselves when we **lose ourselves** and find God (3:1–12)!

¹ Notice that *guilt* is not one of the factors God uses to motivate the Hebrews to begin their journey. Though many evangelicals love to use the law (and the guilt that comes to those who know they have broken God’s law) in an attempt to get people to say yes to Jesus Christ, God has a better way. In Exodus, the law doesn’t even enter the picture until *after* redemption (ch 20).

4. In the musical *Les Miserables*, a stranger is arrested and put on trial because of mistaken identity: he looks like Jean Valjean. Valjean can't bear the thought of another being condemned falsely so he sings, "Who Am I?"

*If I speak, I am condemned.
If I stay silent, I am damned!*

*Who am I?
Can I condemn this man to slavery
Pretend I do not feel his agony
This innocent who bears my face
Who goes to judgement in my place
Who am I?
Can I conceal myself for evermore?
Pretend I'm not the man I was before?
And must my name until I die
Be no more than an alibi?
Must I lie?
How can I ever face my fellow men?
How can I ever face myself again?
My soul belongs to God, I know
I made that bargain long ago
He gave me hope when hope was gone
He gave me strength to journey on*

[He appears in front of the court]

*Who am I? Who am I?
I am Jean Valjean!*

[He unbuttons his shirt to reveal the number tattooed to his chest]

*And so Javert, you see it's true
That man bears no more guilt than you!
Who am I?
24601!*

C. Cultivating new **appetites / desires**. (Exodus 3:1–9)

1. God spoke of a land of "milk and honey" (3:8) to people who lived in a land of "leeks, onions and garlic" (Nm 11:4–6). Thus the question becomes which appetite will be stronger? God does not want to destroy our appetites and lusts, he wants to **purify** them! No one starts this journey who is not ravenously hungry for what only God can provide.
2. The Bible is a **food-driven** book. Sin entered the world by food (forbidden fruit) and so did salvation (I am the bread of life). It is all about appetite.
3. "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for **another world**." (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)
4. But how to cultivate right desires and holy appetites? What if I prefer eating a donut to eating an apple? Manna is a bland food intended to cleanse the palate! Thomas Chalmers preached about "the **expulsive power** of a new affection."

- D. There must be a **call** from God (Exodus 3:10–12).
1. First the call came to Moses at the burning bush (ch. 3–4) but then the call came to all the people through Moses and the other events of the exodus (Moses' teaching, ten plagues, Passover, pillar of fire, etc.).
 2. Understanding the call of God:
 - a. Initiated by **God** (Jn 15:16).
 - b. To a **journey** as much as to a destination.
 - c. To a **relationship** more than to a task.
 - d. To a team, **community** (Gn 2:18).
 - e. Will cost you **everything**. Salvation is free, but not cheap.

TABLE TALK

1. Have you ever felt like an eagle on a turkey farm? Explain.
2. In what way was pain a gift to the Hebrews in Egypt? Has pain ever been a gift to you? Explain.
3. How does one discover his true identity?
4. How does one get to the place where the appetite for “milk and honey” becomes stronger than the appetite for “leeks and onions”?
5. Describe Moses' call. How did this moment at the burning bush change his life?
6. Have you experienced a call? How did the call come to you? How has it changed your life?
7. Are you ready to start the Journey?

This World Is Not My Home

Jim Reeves

This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through;
My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

*Oh lord you know I have no friend like you,
If heaven's not my home then lord what will I do.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

Oh lord you know I have no friend like you,
If heaven's not my home then Lord what will I do;
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.



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THE RED SEA

Exodus 5–14

When Moses returns to Egypt from the burning bush and announces that God is ready to deliver his people out of bondage and lead them to the Promised Land, the response is encouraging:

*Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ And the people **believed**; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and **worshiped**. (Exodus 4:29–31)*

OK, let's go! If we *believe* and if we *worship*, isn't that the point? If we are saved by grace through faith, then aren't we almost home? Not so fast. Things are going to **get worse** before they get better... a lot worse.

I. This is harder than I thought (Exodus 5:1–7:13).

A. Was this a mistake? (Ex 5:1–23).

1. Moses confronts Pharaoh (5:1–2). Thus says the LORD (*Yahweh*), “Let my people go.” Pharaoh replies: “Who is *Yahweh* that I should obey his voice? **I do not know** *Yahweh* and I will not let Israel go.”
2. The stage is now set! Pharaoh (chief priest over all the gods of Egypt and himself a god) doesn't know *Yahweh*. The rest of the book is *Yahweh's* reply: “You want to know me? Let me introduce myself!” (7:17; 8:8–10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4).
3. In anger, Pharaoh makes life **more miserable** for the Hebrews (vv 4–21):
*O LORD, **why** have you done evil to this people? **Why** did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all (5:22–23).*

B. No, this is no mistake: everything is under *Yahweh's* control (Ex 6:1–7:13).

1. “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh...” (Ex 6:1).
2. “I am the *Yahweh*” (Ex 6:2–8). Abraham knew God as *El Shaddai*, which is a title, not a personal name. But you know my name, *Yahweh* (v 7). Salvation is not just about getting out of Egypt. It is about **knowing God**. (Jer 9:23–24; Jn 17:3).
3. The people would not listen to Moses “because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery” (Ex 6:9).
4. Moses is ready **to quit** (Ex 6:10–13, 30). *The people of Israel won't listen to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?*
5. The greatest battle we will ever face on the journey of salvation is this: do we know God well enough to believe his promises even when all hell is breaking loose? “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even **our faith**.” (I Jn 5:4).

II. The battle of the gods (Exodus 7:14–12:51).

- A. The **ten plagues** are not a divine temper tantrum! They are, rather, a systematic dismantling of the entire Egyptian pantheon (12:12; 15:11; 18:11). “For this purpose I have raised you up (Pharaoh), to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (9:16).
- B. The battle of the gods (aka “the ten plagues”):
1. Water turned to **blood** (7:14–25). The Nile was source of life in Egypt (Hopi).
 2. Frogs (8:1–15). “You like frogs? I’ll give you frogs....” (Heqt).
 3. Gnats (8:16–19). The magicians can’t duplicate. “This is the **finger** of God.”
 4. Flies (8:20–32). Everywhere except Goshen.
 5. Livestock die (9:1–7). Apis, the **bull** god of Egypt.
 6. Boils (9:8–12). The magicians have them, too!
 7. Hail (9:13–35). Not in Goshen. Moses urges Egyptians to find **shelter**.
 8. Locusts (10:1–20). Osiris is the vegetation god.
 9. Darkness (10:21–29). Ra was the sun god. It is light in Goshen.
 10. Death of the first born (chapters 11–12). The heir to the throne is a deity.
- C. Pharaoh’s hard heart.
1. At times, his heart is just said to be hard (7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35).
 2. At times, he hardens his own heart (8:15, 32; 9:34).
 3. At times, **God** hardens his heart (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).

III. Redemption through **blood** (Exodus 12–13).

The real hero of redemption is not Moses... but **a lamb!** The Passover is a perpetual reminder to all those on the journey of salvation that we will never arrive at our destination without the help of the lamb.

- A. The lamb **shows me my need**. Neither Israelites nor Egyptians had a clue that a sentence of death was hanging over every house. The lamb teaches us our need for protection from **wrath**, deliverance from **slavery**, and spiritual nourishment for the **journey** ahead.
- B. The lamb **dies in my place**. The choice in every household is simple: either find a suitable substitute or death will come to this family. The Good News is that God will accept a substitute (Is 53:4–6). He himself will provide a lamb (Gn 22; Jn 1:29).
- C. The lamb **bids me follow**. The whole point of the Passover meal was to receive sustenance for the journey ahead (12:11).

IV. Redemption through **water** (Exodus 13:17–14:31).

- A. Divine guidance (13:17–22). It’s time to leave. The journey is about to begin. But **which way do I go?** God does not give them a map. He gives them a Guide. “The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire” (13:21). “Follow me.” Notice: God does not lead them the easy way. He leads them **into the desert** (13:18).
- B. Between the devil and the deep blue sea (14:1–12). The pillar of cloud leads them to where the sea is before them, steep mountains are on both sides, and the Egyptian

army is behind them. It appears that God has led them into **a trap!** “It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (14:12). Is life more valuable than **freedom?**

C. What does it take to break us out of our bondage and get us started on the journey of salvation? This is what redemption looks like:

1. The **promise of God** is where it begins. He gives a solemn oath: I will bring you out and I will bring you in. “I promise...” (3:15–17).
2. The **blood of the Lamb**. Redemption is simply impossible without a lamb who dies in our place and who nourishes our soul.
3. **Faith**. The promise and the blood are meaningless without faith. True faith is not just an intellectual acknowledgment of the reality of God (4:31). In the Bible, faith and **obedience** are virtually synonyms. Faith without works is dead (Jas 2:14–26). Only when we are confronted with an impossible situation do we really discover whether we are believers or not. In such situations God often gives three commands:

- a. **Fear not** (14:13). This doesn’t mean don’t tremble. Rather, don’t be controlled by your fears.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you... For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom... (Isaiah 43:1–3).

- b. **Be still** (14:14). Don’t just do something; stand there!

*They who **wait** for the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31).*

- c. **March forward** (14:15). The call to “be still” is not a call to passivity. But how can I wait and march forward at the same time? The key is timing. It was only as they moved forward in faith that the waters began to part.

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it”.... (Isaiah 30:20–21).

The way out is the way **through** (14:13–31). The miracle at the Red Sea teaches us that often God does not deliver us **from** our difficulties but through them!

TABLE TALK

1. Is it possible to really believe in the true God if your false gods haven't yet been exposed as frauds?
2. How does the miracle at the Red Sea help you to understand how faith and works go together? Is it possible to say you believe if you don't obey?
3. Has God ever led you into a situation that felt impossible? What was God teaching you? Did you learn the lesson?
4. Think of a time in your life when God told you to wait; *Don't just do something; stand there!* What did you learn?
5. Make it personal: Think of a challenge you are currently facing. Does God want to deliver you from it...or through it?

Lead On, O King Eternal

By Ernest W. Shurtleff (1862–1917)

*Lead on, O King eternal,
the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest
your tents will be our home.
Through days of preparation
your grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal,
we lift our battle song.*

*Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper
the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords' loud clashing
or roll of stirring drums
with deeds of love and mercy
the heavenly kingdom comes.*

*Lead on, O King eternal;
we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning
where'er your face appears.
Your cross is lifted o'er us,
we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest;
lead on, O God of might.*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE DESERT

Exodus 15:22–18:27

I. Why the desert?

A. The eastern shore.

Redemption is now an accomplished **fact!** The blood of the Lamb and the waters of baptism have defeated Pharaoh, liberated the slaves, and accomplished salvation. Isn't that the point? Miriam leads the redeemed in a joyful song of deliverance: The Song of Moses is **Worship 101** (15:1–21). Few spiritual disciplines are better at getting us through the desert than learning to sing.

1. *What* are they doing? **Singing.**
2. *Who* is doing it? The **redeemed.**
3. *To whom* are they singing? To **the Lord.**
4. *How* are they doing it? With **joy** (tambourines, dancing, etc.).
5. *What* are they singing? They are singing about what the Lord:
 - Has done in **the past** (vv 1–12). He has triumphed gloriously.
 - Is doing in **the present** (vv 13–16). He is guiding our steps.
 - Will do in **the future** (vv 17–18). He will bring us home and reign forever!

B. Not home yet.

Although the people are genuinely saved, they are not home yet. In fact, their journey has only begun. It will take about **two years** to arrive at the border of Canaan. However, first they must cross the desert (Sinai Peninsula).

C. Led out of the frying pan and into the fire.

God was guiding them each step of the way by the pillar of fire (Ex. 13:17–22). He does not lead them by the **easy** road or the **quick** path. No. He leads them into a desolate waste land! Describe some characteristics of this desert:

- **No water, food.**
- **No shelter from the extremes of temperature (hot and cold).**
- **Barren; nothing grows.**
- **Snakes, scorpions and Amalekites.**
- **Silence.**
- **The land of in-between; the gap that exists between God's promise and its fulfillment, between what I am and what God wants me to be.**

D. Why, O why would God lead his people into a desert?

*And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might **humble** you, **testing** you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your*

*foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God **disciplines** you.*

1. God led his people into the desert because they needed an **education**. There are some lessons that can't be learned in Egypt or Canaan but only in the desert. To be ready to face the giants that are currently camping on their inheritance, they need to take a few courses at University of the Desert.
2. The desert is not a geographical anomaly but a spiritual **necessity**. All God's saints have degrees from Desert U. Most of the contemporary evangelical church has no **theology of the desert**.

II. Five tests in the wilderness (Ex. 15:22–18:27).

Reference	Place	Problem	Solution	Lesson
15:22–27	Marah	No water (bitter)	The Lord showed Moses a tree ...	I am the Lord who heals you (Jehovah Rapha)
16:1–36	Desert of Sin	No food	Manna... bread from heaven	Give us this day our daily bread: trust
17:1–7	Rephidim	No water (this is a retest)	Strike the rock	Don't put the Lord to the test
17:8–16	Rephidim	Enemy attack	Prayer	Spiritual warfare —the Lord is my banner (Jehovah Nissi)
18:1–27	Near Mt. Sinai	Administrative overload and stress	Jethro's advice: select capable men	Spiritual gifts in the body

- A. God never **tempts** his children (Jam. 1:13) but he definitely **tests** them (Ex. 15:25; 16:4; 20:20; Deut. 8:2, 16; 13:3). But why? Why does a teacher give “tests” to her students? Not because she is cruel but rather to **reveal what they know and don't know**.
- B. Though these desert experiences may be **frightening** and even painful, we are precisely where God wants us to be. We didn't take a wrong turn. We are not being punished. The pillar of fire is leading each step of the way. Though at first it doesn't seem so, the desert is actually a **good** place to be!
- C. At U of D, God is teaching us that salvation involves more than getting us out of Egypt. It also involves getting **Egypt out of us!**

III. The Bitter Water Test (Ex. 15:22–27).

A. The context.

On the eastern shore of the Red Sea the people erupt in praise and worship because of the mighty deliverance they have just experienced (Ex. 15:1–21). We're free! OK, so where's the milk and honey? For **three days** they are led deeper and deeper into the desert. Each day their thirst grows greater.

B. The problem.

At last, they come to an oasis! But the water is undrinkable! God has led them to **a bitter place**. This is only a test! But rather than trusting God the people grumble (v. 24). The bitterness on the outside is now matched by the bitterness on the inside.

C. The solution.

God shows Moses a “**tree**” (v.25) that turns the bitter water into sweet water. In the New Testament, the cross is sometimes called a tree (Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 2:24;

etc.). After showing the cure for bitterness, God leads the people to lovely Elim, where they make camp.

D. The lesson.

1. This is stop #1 on the journey of salvation! Apparently learning this lesson is **crucial** for the rest of the journey.
2. **Grumbling** is a serious sin! The real battles in life are not what happens to us but how we respond to what happens to us.
3. A bitter experience doesn't mean that we've taken a wrong turn or are being punished. No. God **leads us** to such places so we can learn how the cross can heal the bitterness in our life; even make it **sweet**. Paul wrote from prison: "I have learned the secret of **being content** in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:12-13).

IV. The Creed of Mara.

I have written what I call the *Creed of Mara* to help fellow pilgrims when they find themselves in a bitter place in their spiritual journey.

*I believe God **led me** here. This is only a test.*

*I believe God will **provide for me** here.*

*I believe God will **lead me away** from here.*

*I believe God wants to **use this experience** in my life to be a blessing and encouragement to others.*

TABLE TALK

1. Would your friends describe you as a singing Christian? Are you known for your joyful praise? Discuss this.
2. This lesson states: "Most of the contemporary church has no theology of the desert." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. When the Hebrews came to the bitter place they "grumbled against Moses" and Moses "cried to the Lord." When you are in a bitter place, do you grumble or do you pray?
4. Make it personal: Talk about a time when God led you to a bitter place. What lessons was God teaching you there? Did you pass the test?
5. Think of a bitter reality that you are facing now. What is God saying to you through this passage of Scripture?

Horse and Rider

*I will sing unto the LORD,
for he has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and rider thrown into the sea. (2x)
The LORD, my God, my strength and song,
has now become my victory. (2x)
The LORD is God, and (clap) I will praise him,
our covenant God, and I will exalt him. (2x)*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

WONDER BREAD

Exodus 16:1–36

I. Introduction

POWs in Hanoi Hilton returned after the Vietnam war with few suffering from PTSD. In fact, the group produced 16 generals, 6 admirals, 2 college presidents, 2 U.S. ambassadors, 2 U.S. senators, 2 U.S. representatives, a state governor, a presidential candidate, and much more. Why? Primarily because of the culture developed in the prison by Jim Stockdale.¹ Lesson: you can't choose what happens to you, but you can choose how you **respond!**

II. You are what you eat.

A. The Bible is a **food-driven** book.

1. Our original sin was the desire to eat **forbidden** fruit. “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate...” (Gn 3:6).
2. Our salvation comes in **eating** the body of Christ. “I am the bread of life... and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh... For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink” (Jn 6:48, 51, 55).
3. Salvation hinges on one simple question: Is my appetite stronger for the meat pots, leaks, onions, garlic, and melons of Egypt (Ex 16:3; Num 11:4–5) or for the **milk and honey** of Canaan (Ex 3:8, 17). Am I hungry for God?
 - “O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul **thirsts** for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” (Ps 63:1)
 - “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... Come, buy wine and milk without **money** and without price... Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.” (Is 55:1–2)
 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be **satisfied**” (Mt 5:6)

B. Though the Hebrews have gotten out of Egypt, they still have Egyptian **appetites**. Until this hunger for the food of this world is replaced by the hunger for the food of Canaan, the Hebrews will do laps in the wilderness.

C. But how does one acquire an appetite for the nourishment of God? This may be harder than you think and may take more time than you imagine. God gave manna to help **cleanse the palate** and develop a hunger for the milk and honey of Canaan.

¹ Peter Fretwell and Taylor Baldwin Kiland, *Lessons from the Hanoi Hilton: Six Characteristics of High-Performance Teams* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2013).

III. Bread from Heaven

The Problem	God's Response	Solution Implemented	Instructions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface problem: no food • Deeper problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grumbling ○ Hunger for Egypt <p style="text-align: center;">vv 1–3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will give bread from heaven • In this way I will test them • Then they will know that I am the LORD <p style="text-align: center;">vv 4–12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quail • Manna (whatzit) <p style="text-align: center;">vv 13–15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 quarts each • Don't try to keep it for tomorrow • Sabbath observance • Put a jar in the ark <p style="text-align: center;">vv 16–36</p>

Notes on the text:

1. They have been traveling **one month** since they crossed Red Sea.
2. The “wilderness of Sin” (v 1). There is a linguistic connection to “Sinai” though this is not the same location.
3. This was the second “test” at University of the Desert (15:25; 16:4). Marah had taught the redeemed how to deal with bitterness. This test would teach them how to **trust** the Lord for their **daily bread**. (cf. Mt 6:11).
4. The word manna means “What is it?” (v 15). In English we might suggest: **Whatzit**.
5. Manna was “like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” (v 31). See Numbers 11:7–8.
6. It is doubtful that as slaves the Hebrews would have been able to observe the **Sabbath** in Egypt. Now, God teaches them how to practice a seven-day week. Sabbath observance was all about **rest** and **worship**.

IV. The Grumpies.

- A. The word “grumble” occurs 8 times in this chapter and is a major theme during the entire journey.² Grumbling is a **deadly** sin. It poisons health, destroys relationships, quenches the Spirit, extinguishes faith, and keeps one doing laps in the desert forever!
- B. I become grumpy when I am **hungry**. Churches become grumpy places when the sheep hungry. To deal with “the grumpies” one must learn to **eat properly**.
- C. Grumbling (murmuring, complaining, griping, belly-aching) is a condition that:
 1. Is based in the (false) assumption that my inner happiness is determined by my **outward circumstances**.
 2. Believes I **deserve better** than this.
 3. May be aimed against leaders, spouses, neighbors, adversaries, etc.. But in reality, all grumbling is against **the LORD** (v 8).
 4. Is **contagious**. “See to it that...no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.” (Heb 12:15)

² Ex 15:24; 17:3; Nm 11:1; 14:2, 27, 29, 36; 16:11, 41; 17:5, 10; Dt 1:27

D. Grumbling Is **curable**... but this may take some time!

1. Paul wrote from prison: “I have **learned** in whatever situation I am to be content...” (Phil 4:11).
2. *Pilgrim’s Progress. Part 2. The Pilgrimage of Christiana.*

Matthew, a pilgrim on the road to the Celestial City, fell ill because he ate some green plums from Beelzebub’s orchard. He was “much pained in his bowels, so that he was with it at times pulled as ‘twere both ends together.” Mr. Skill, a godly physician, examined him and diagnosed the problem: he has **the gripes**. Mr. Skill took the body and blood of Christ and made him a laxative (a purge): making it into pills, adding a promise or two, some salt, and a dose of the tears of repentance. Though Matthew feared the medicine would be bitter, he took it and was immediately cured of the gripes.

V. This is Only a Test: There are six important questions on this exam.

God leads us to Desert U to teach us some very important lessons. Though the test may be painful, it has a very good and **loving purpose**. God leads us to a place of scarcity and hunger to prepare us for the battles we will face when it comes times to possess our inheritance in Canaan.

*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord... For the Lord disciplines the one he loves... God is treating you as **sons**. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline... then you are illegitimate children and not sons... He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his **holiness**. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but **later** it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5–11)*

- A. Do you suffer from the grumpies? Yes No

If you answered “yes”, please describe your symptoms. Example: pouting, shouting, bellyaching about your leaders, infecting others with your gripes, etc. Exodus 16 teaches that the cause of the grumpies is some form of **eating disorder**.

- B. What are you hungry for? Leaks, onions, garlic Milk and honey

*Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good and delight yourselves in **rich food**. (Isaiah 55:2)*

The real problem is not hunger but that we are hungry for the wrong things! Leaks and onions may keep our bodies alive but send our souls to hell. “The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison, but **apple pie**” (John Piper, *A Hunger for God*, 14). The problem with junk food is not just that it is junk; it **ruins** our appetite for healthy food! Describe the spiritual junk food that you have been consuming. Example: worldly entertainment, mindless entertainment, meaningless conversations, etc.

Imagine manna every day (manna casserole, manna burgers, manna soufflé, manna with cheese, manna-coti, etc.). When you are on a journey the point is not culinary delicacies or gastronomical pleasure: but **nutrition** and sustenance for the rigors of travel. He gives us bread so that we will discover that “man does not live by bread alone” (Dt 8:3). Manna leaves us hungry again. This prepares us for realizing that our real need is for:

- The **Bible**—“...every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (Dt 8:3).

- **Jesus**—“I am the true and living bread” (see Jn 6).

C. Have I learned to feed myself? Yes No

In the desert, God provides the bread from heaven but the people have to go out and **gather it** for themselves. Babies need to be fed. Adulthood is when we learn to feed ourselves. Churches that complain about not being fed usually are bearing witness to their own perpetual **immaturity!**

*Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the **basic principles** of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:12–14)*

D. When do I eat? Daily Weekly Monthly I am already dead

Manna was given **daily**; to give strength and nourishment so that travelers could make a days journey. Perhaps one can go a week or even a month without food. But unless one learns to eat good food on a regular basis, at some point the journey ends and the traveler dies. We need time in **God’s Word** every day for the same reason we need to eat a good meal every day.

E. Do I have an eating disorder?
 Anorexia (I don’t eat at all, but I keep this a secret)
 Bulimia (I binge and purge)
 Obesity (I overeat and don’t exercise)
 Other

Commons signs of eating disorders include:

- Skipping meals
- Obsessing on how one looks
- Nausea
- Overeating to the point of sickness
- Excessive exercising
- Dieting by day and bingeing by night
- Obsessing over the nutritional value of foods
- Chewing on non-food items

F. In whom is my trust? Myself Moses (the government) God

The primary purpose of the manna test is to teach travelers to have **faith** in God... and God **alone**. Each morning, when I open the flap of my tent, I look out my door and begin my day trusting that there will be enough provision from God to allow me and my family to make it until **sundown**. Like a muscle, God strengthens faith by stretching it. A faith that has not been tested is no faith at all.

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is **genuine**. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (I Peter 1:6–7 NLT)*

TABLE TALK

1. Talk about a time when you found yourself in a desert place of great scarcity and want. How did you respond?
2. What does the author mean when he says the Bible is “food-driven” book? Do you agree or disagree?
3. What did you learn from this lesson about “the grumpies”? Do you ever suffer from this malady? Will this Bible study affect the way you handle the grumpies?
4. Do you struggle with any spiritual eating disorders? Which ones?
5. Have you learned to feed yourself? Why is this so important?
6. Homework: Read John 6 and meditate on how Jesus drew for Exodus 16 in his miracle of feeding the 5,000 and then claiming, “I am the true bread.”.

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly

Text by Sylvia B. Dunstan, 1990

*All who hunger, gather gladly;
holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering.
Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.*

*All who hunger, never strangers;
seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.*

*All who hunger, sing together;
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

TESTING GOD

Exodus 17:1-7

- I. The tests at University of the Desert (Exodus 15:22-18:27).
- A. God redeemed his people and then led them into the desert because they needed an **education** (Dt 8:2). There, at Desert U, he “**tested**” (Hebrew, *nacah*) them with five different exams:
1. The lack of **water** (Ex 15:22-27. See v 25). Thirst Quenching 101.
 2. The lack of **food** (Ex 16:1-36. See v 4). Nutrition 101.
 3. The lack of **water** (Ex 17:1-7). Thirst Quenching 102.
 4. An **enemy attack** (Amalekites) (Ex 17:8-16). Spiritual Warfare 101.
 5. Administrative overload and **burnout** (Ex 18:1-27). Gifts of the Spirit 101.
- B. Although God does not **tempt** his people (see Jas 1:13) he certainly tests them (see Gn 22:1; II Chr 32:31; Ps 105:19; Jn 6:6; etc.). These tests are usually **painful**. But *why* would a loving God lead his people to be tested?
1. To **reveal** what is in their hearts (Dt 8:2).
 2. To **humble** them (Dt 8:2,16).
 3. To **equip** them for the battles ahead (Jgs 3:1-2).
 4. To produce **endurance** (Jas 1:2-4; Rom 5:3).
 5. To bring about **holiness** of character (Heb 12:7-11).
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
- C. At Rephidim (Ex 17:1) God has planned another test for his people but this produces a negative reaction and the students push back. When God tests his people it is a good thing but when the people **test God**... not good! The education program at Desert U is becoming filled with conflict and **bad attitudes**.
- II. Nothing to Drink... Again!
- A. This is not the first time they've had no water (see Ex 15:22-27)! In other words, God is giving them a **retest**. When a teacher gives a retest you can be sure that the material is of **vital importance**. This lesson *must* be mastered! Unless we pass this course on Thirst Quenching, we will never reach our inheritance in Canaan. We will die in the desert.
1. The test at Rephidim (Massah) is similar enough to the test at Marah that the people should have easily passed this test. Alas, they **failed** again. Question: How *should* the people have responded?

2. How did the people respond?
 - a. They **quarreled** with Moses and wanted to stone him.
 - b. They **grumbled**. “Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us with thirst?”
 - c. They **tested the Lord**. “Is the Lord with us or not?”
- B. Almost 40 years later there will be yet a **third** no-water test (Nm 20:2–13). A new generation has arisen and God wants to teach them the Thirst Quenching lesson. But like their parents, they too fail the test. But Moses fails the test too... big time! God tells Moses to take his staff but rather than striking the rock, he tells him to **speak** to the rock.

*Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels: shall **we** bring water for you out of this rock?” And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff **twice**, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not **believe in me**, to uphold me as **holy** in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.” These are the waters of Meribah.... (Numbers 20:10–13)*

	Marah The Bitter Place Exodus 15:22–27	Massah The Testing Place Exodus 17:1–7	Meribah The Quarreling Place Numbers 20:2–13
The Sin	Grumbling	Grumbling, quarreling and testing God: “Is God with us or not?”	Quarreling: “Why have you made us leave Egypt to come to this evil place?”
The Solution	A tree to throw in the bitter water	Take your staff and strike the rock (see I Cor. 10:4)	Take your staff and speak to the rock
The Conclusion	If you listen to God and obey his voice, he will not put on you the diseases he put on the Egyptians.	Do not put the Lord to the test	Trust in the Lord and uphold his holiness

III. Testing the Tester

- A. Think back to when you were a student in school. What are some of the ways students tested their teachers?

How do you think this made the teacher feel?

- B. Most teaching Exodus 17:1–7 emphasizes how God can provide **water** in a desert place and how Jesus is the fulfillment of that glorious reality (Jn 4:10–14; 7:37–39; I Cor 10:4). This is true, of course, but the **primary focus** of the text and the context is on how the people are **testing God** (vv 2, 7). These people have seen God do amazing things (10 plagues, part the Red Sea, send manna, etc.) and yet they continue to doubt his ability to take care of them.
- “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.” (Dt 6:16)
 - “At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you **provoked** the Lord to wrath.” (Dt 9:22)
 - “Today, if you hear his voice, do not **harden your hearts** as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.” (Ps 95:7–9)
 - “The devil took Jesus... and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you; on their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus said to him, ‘Again, it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test”’” (Mt 4:5–7; Jesus is quoting Dt 6:16, which is referring to Ex 17:1–7).
- C. Thus we begin to see what it means to test God.
- To **whine** and complain how he is providing for us.
 - To demand that God prove himself to us and perform on command.
 - To push God and test his **patience**.
 - To keep failing over and over again the same test that he gives us.
 - To become bitter, cynical and full of **unbelief** in spite of all the evidence of his goodness and faithfulness.
 - To forget God’s track record and become controlled by our doubts and fears.
 - To not uphold the **holiness** of God.

IV. Four Tragic Ways We Can Test God

A. Massah. (Exodus 17:1–7)

There is no water. But rather than trust once again in the One who had provided water only a few weeks earlier, the One who had parted the Red Sea, provided manna, and sent the 10 plagues, they grumble and ask “Is the Lord among us or not?”.

Testing God means: doubting his **presence**.

B. Kadesh-Barnea. (Numbers 13–14)

After about two years of travel, the people arrive at the border of Canaan. “Go up and possess your inheritance,” God tells them. “No,” say the people, “there are giants over there!” God is upset and decides to let the whole generation die in the desert. “None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these **ten** times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give them” (Nm 14:22–23; see Heb 3:9).

Testing God means: willful **disobedience** to a clear command.

C. Snakes! (Numbers 21:4–9)

Toward the end of the desert journey, the people become impatient and complain once again. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this **worthless** food (manna).” (Nm 21:5). In response to their attitude, God sends poisonous snakes among them and many die. Referring to this incident, Paul says, “We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents” (I Cor 10:9).

Testing God means: Complaining about his care and provision and feeling **I deserve better than this!**

D. Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1–11)

When many were giving generous offerings in the early church, Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give *all* the proceeds from the sale of a piece of land to the apostles. But they had secretly kept back some for themselves. For them it was more important to **appear** holy than to *be* holy. They were both struck dead as Peter explained: “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?” (Acts 5:9).

Testing God means: **pretending** to be what I’m not; image is everything.

V. One Good Way to Test God

Though a different Hebrew word is used, the prophet Malachi reminds us that it is possible to test God in a good way... a very good way.

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me** (Hebrew, *bachan*) in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. (Malachi 3:10 NIV)*

God is inviting Israel (and us) to take the risk of faith and to give him **the opportunity** to prove how faithful and righteous he really is. If only the rich young ruler had tested Jesus in this way!

TABLE TALK

1. Can you remember a situation when you were in school when the students tested a teacher? Describe this.
2. What is the difference between testing God in a good way (Mal 3:10) and testing God in a bad way?
3. In Numbers 20:2–13, why do you think Moses struck the rock rather than speak to it? Why was God’s punishment so severe?
4. Is there an area in your life where you continually fail, a besetting sin, perhaps? Is this an example of God giving you a retest? Will this study change the way you respond in the future?
5. The lesson mentioned four ways that we can be guilty of testing God: doubting his presence, willful disobedience, complaining about his care and provision, and pretending to be what I’m not. With which of these do you struggle most?
6. Is there some specific area where God is inviting you to test him (in a good way), to give him the opportunity to show how faithful he really is?

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

By William Williams (1745)

*Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.*

*Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.*

*Lord, I trust Thy mighty power,
Wondrous are Thy works of old;
Thou deliver'st Thine from thralldom,
Who for naught themselves had sold:
Thou didst conquer, Thou didst conquer,
Sin, and Satan and the grave,
Sin, and Satan and the grave.*

*When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee;
I will ever give to Thee.*

*Musing on my habitation,
Musing on my heav'nly home,
Fills my soul with holy longings:
Come, my Jesus, quickly come;
Vanity is all I see;
Lord, I long to be with Thee!
Lord, I long to be with Thee!*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Exodus 17:8–16

I. This is war!

A. University of the Desert

1. The first three “tests” at Desert U (Ex 15:25; 16:4) involved basic human needs for survival: water and food. God was teaching his redeemed people to trust him for **provision**. Although the word “test” isn’t used in Exodus 17:8–16, the Amalekite attack is clearly yet another test. God is teaching his people to trust him for **protection**.
2. The first experience of warfare for Israel was at the Red Sea when they were attacked by the Egyptian army (Ex 14). In that battle, God’s people were told; “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to **be still**” (Ex 14:14 NIV). But at Rephidim when the Amalekites attack, God instructs his people to **fight**—and **pray**!
3. This fourth course at U of D could be called **Spiritual Warfare 101**. When they reach Canaan, the people will discover that enemies of God live there! Unless they learn how to fight while enrolled at Desert U, they will never be able to possess their inheritance.

*Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to **test** Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach **war** to those who had not known it before. (Judges 3:1–2)*

B. Spiritual formation... but for what?

1. Some people envision the Christian life as a kind of **amusement park** filled with joy and excitement. Others envision a cloistered **monastery** filled with prayer, meditation and worship. Still others envision a center for **social services** where we are equipped to meet the needs of others. But one of the dominant metaphors in the Bible to define the Christian life is that of a **battlefield**. The goal of spiritual formation, therefore, is to teach us to be **soldiers**, ready for battle.
 - “Put on the whole **armor** of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...” (Eph 6:10–20)
 - “Share in suffering as a good **soldier** of Christ Jesus...” (II Tm 2: 3–4)
 - “I have fought the good **fight**, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (II Tm 4:7)
2. Describe how it impacts our understanding of spirituality when we envision the Christian life as a battlefield and our role as that of a soldier:
 - It’s **dangerous** to follow Christ.
 - The Christian life can be chaotic and **messy**.
 - I must understand my **weapons** (both offensive and defensive).
 - The need for military **intelligence** (enemy tactics and strategy).
 - Who are my fellow soldiers? Can I **trust** them?

- What's the **objective** of this battle?
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.

C. For a classic illustration of spiritual warfare, see the account of Christian and the dragon Apollyon as told by John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* (see addendum).

II. The Battle with Amalek (Exodus 17:8–16).

A. The enemy.

1. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gn 36:12) and thus distant cousins of the Hebrews. They lived in the Negeb (Nm 13:29) and saw the arrival of Israel as a threat. They employed an early form of **terrorism** against the Hebrews, attacking when the people were “faint and weary” and killing those who were “lagging behind.” Amalek “did not fear God” (see Dt 25:18).
2. In spiritual warfare it is crucial that we recognize who the enemy is. This story teaches us that the enemy is anyone or anything that seeks to cause us to **turn back** in our journey; that **hinders** us from doing the will of God. When Peter tried to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross, he became an enemy: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me.” (Mt 16:23). Ultimately, our enemy is not “flesh and blood” but “**spiritual forces** of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

B. Battle strategy and weapons.

Joshua was to go down into the valley and fight with the **sword**. Moses was to go up on the mountain and pray with the **staff**.¹ To fight God's battles we must use the right weapons! “For the weapons of our warfare are not **of the flesh** but have divine power to destroy strongholds.” (II Cor 10:4). We must fight and pray; better, we must fight **by** prayer. The real battle is not in the valley with Amalek, but on the mountain with **God**.

1. The battle of **motives**. *Why* do I want to win this battle? For selfish gain? Because I hate the enemy? If my motives are impure the battle is lost before it begins.
2. The battle of **faith**. Can I trust that God? Is he really good? Why is this happening? Can I say with Job, “Though he (God) slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Jb 13:15 KJV)?
3. The battle of the **will**. I know what I want in this conflict but do I know what God wants? The hardest prayer we will ever pray is this: “Not my will but your will be done.” (Mk 14:36).

Our battles are first won or lost in the secret places of our will in God's presence, never in full view of the world. The Spirit of God seizes me and I am compelled to get alone with God and fight the battle before him. Until I do this, I will lose every time. The battle may take one minute or one year, but that will depend on me, not God... Nothing has any power over someone who has fought the battle before God and won there.... The reason the battle is not won is because I try to win it in the external world first. Get alone with God, fight it out before him, settle the matter

¹ The “rod of God” plays a crucial role in the journey of salvation. See for example, Ex 4:2–4, 17, 20; 7:9–20; 8:5, 16–17; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5, 9; Nm 17:1–10; 20:8–11).

there once and for all. (Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, December 27).

- C. The results of the battle.
1. Amalek is defeated and his future destiny is announced when God says, “I will utterly **blot out** the memory of Amalek from under heaven” (v 14).
 2. Moses builds an altar and names it “The Lord is my **banner**” (*Yahweh Nissi*). A “banner” is a battle standard, a flag, or a signal. Moses explains the name by saying: “A hand upon the **throne** of the Lord”² (v 16 ESV). This could perhaps be a reference to Amalek (those who touch God’s throne in defiance will be destroyed) or it could be a reference to the effective prayer of a righteous man (Moses changes history because he touches God’s throne in prayer).

III. Four great principles of intercession.

Though many will find it easier to identify with Joshua in the valley with his sword, let’s focus where the text puts the emphasis: on the mountain where Moses is standing **in the gap** for the people. Do not conceive of intercession as only when our head is bowed and eyes closed. The ministry of intercession is a **lifestyle** that involves the following principles.

A. **Identification.**

We cannot pray with **emotional detachment** and intercede effectively. On the mountain, Moses identifies with what is happening in the battle below, he is personally affected. He is no detached spectator. His fate is **intertwined** with those who are fighting. See an even greater example when he prayed after the sin with the golden calf, “Lord, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Ex 32:32). Jesus was the ultimate intercessor. He became one of us; he became sin, for our salvation (II Cor 5:21). “Intercessory prayer is only another name for **love**” (Fenelon).

B. **Unity.**

Moses is not alone: Aaron and Hur are with him to help, to encourage, to say “Amen” and **agree** with his prayers. Jesus said, “If two of you agree (Greek, *sumphoneo*) on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where **two or three** are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Mt 18:19–20).

C. **Agony.**

Holding his arms up in prayer (with the staff) was painful! To intercede is to enter in to the heart of God and experience the ache that God experiences when he sees what is happening in our world. Paul said; “I fill up in my flesh what is still **lacking** in regard to Christ’s afflictions” (Col 1:24). He also wrote:

*For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with **groanings** too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26–27)*

There is a sense in which true intercessory prayer is God, through his Spirit groaning in us, talking **to himself!**

² Some manuscripts indicate “a hand upon the banner of the Lord.”

D. **Authority.**

Though we don't know the words Moses, Aaron and Hur used when they prayed, we can be certain it *wasn't* something like this: "Sovereign Lord, give us grace to **accept** these trying circumstances and submit to the control of these Amalakites that you have permitted to stand in our path." No! Moses prayed with authority because he knew **God's will** was for the people to arrive at their inheritance in Canaan. To intercede effectively we must learn to pray with authority; to pray in the Name of Jesus; like Jacob, to wrestle with God until we "win."

TABLE TALK

1. Which metaphor of the Christian life best describes your own perspective: amusement park, monastery, social service center or battlefield?
2. When it comes to spiritual warfare, are you more "comfortable" with fighting or praying? Discuss this.
3. Do you think of prayer as a battle? Why or why not? When prayer is viewed as a battle, where does the conflict lie? In the motive? In faith? In the will?
4. What is the most important thing you learned in this lesson about the ministry of intercession?
5. The author mentioned four principles of intercession: identification, unity, agony and authority. Which one of these is most missing in your own effort to pray for others? Discuss this.

Christian vs Apollyon

While visiting House Beautiful, Christian was given armor to prepare him for what lay ahead when he would pass through the valley of Humiliation. Upon entering the valley a disgusting fiend named Apollyon³ approached, blocking the path forward. He was a hideous monster having scales like a fish, wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and a mouth like a lion. Fire and smoke came out of his belly. Christian was terrified and would have turned around to run but he realized he had not been given armor to cover his back! Apollyon first employed lies, bribes, threats and accusations but when none of these caused Christian to budge, he attacked.

Then Apollyon broke out into a rage, saying, "I'm an enemy of this prince! I hate his person, his laws, and his people. I've come here to oppose you!" "Beware of what you do, Apollyon," said Christian, "for I'm in the King's Highway, the Way of Holiness. Therefore, take heed to yourself."

Then Apollyon straddled over the whole breadth of the path, and said, "I'm void of fear in this matter. Prepare yourself to die, for I swear by my infernal abode that you will go no farther." And with that, he shot a flaming arrow at Christian's chest! But Christian had the shield in his hand, and with it he intercepted the arrow and averted its danger. Then Christian drew his sword. And just as quickly, Apollyon charged him, shooting arrows as thick as hail.

Despite all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him with arrows in his head, his hand, and his foot. This caused Christian to fall back a little. Apollyon, therefore, followed with another sudden and forceful attack. Christian took courage again and resisted as bravely as he could. This severe combat lasted for over half a day, even until Christian was almost worn out; for you must realize that Christian had to have grown weaker and weaker because of his wounds.

Then, seeing his opportunity, Apollyon began to draw close to Christian and, wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall. With that, Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then Apollyon exclaimed, "I have you beaten now!" With that, he almost crushed him to death, and Christian began to despair of life.

But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was preparing for his last blow, which he would use to bring an end to this good man, Christian skillfully reached out his hand for his sword and grasped it, saying, "Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise." Then Christian gave him a deadly thrust, which made Apollyon back away as if he had received a mortal wound. Recognizing it, Christian attacked him again, saying, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." With that, Apollyon spread out his dragon's wings and quickly sped away, so that Christian saw him no more.

During this fight, no one can imagine (unless he had seen and heard as I did) what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight; for he spoke as a dragon. And on the other side, what sighing and groaning burst from Christian's heart. All the while, I never saw him give as much as one pleasant look until he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his double-edged sword. Then, yes, he did smile and look upward. But it was the most dreadful fight I ever saw. (The Pilgrim's Progress in Modern English, Bridge-Logos, 81–82)

³ Greek, meaning destroyer. Apollyon is the name given to the dragon from the bottomless pit (Rv 9:11).

Soldiers of Christ, Arise

Charles Wesley

*Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.*

*Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God,
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand complete at last.*

*Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
To keep your armor bright
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your Captain's sight
And watching unto prayer.*

*Pray, without ceasing pray,
Your Captain gives the word;
His summons cheerfully obey,
And call upon the Lord:
To God your every want
In instant prayer display;
Pray always; pray, and never faint;
Pray, without ceasing pray.*

*From strength to strength go on;
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day:
Still let the Spirit cry
In all His soldiers, "Come!"
Till Christ the Lord descend from high,
And take the conquerors home.*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

THE STRESS TEST

Exodus 18:1–27

I. The Burden of Leadership

A. Things aren't always what they seem

From the *outside*, the life of a leader may appear enviable (big salary, big office, in the spotlight, perks and privileges, etc.). But from the *inside*, leadership is a **heavy** burden and responsibility. This is especially true for leadership in ministry. Describe some of the things that make ministry leadership so heavy:

1. Caring for peoples' **souls**.
2. Giving an account to **God**.
3. Few **resources**.
4. You have to be so **nice** all the time.
5. Long **hours**.
6. Your work is **never done**.
7. So many **interruptions**.
8. _____ .
9. _____ .
10. _____ .

B. Window into the soul of a leader.

The Bible gives a surprising amount of detail into the inner world of Moses, one of the greatest leaders who ever lived. Those he led **grumbled** constantly about his leadership and blamed him for their hardships (Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Nm 11:1, 14:2; 16:41; 17:5; 20:3; etc.). Little wonder that Moses was often discouraged, frustrated, depressed and angry.

- When Moses “saw the calf and the dancing, his **anger** burned hot and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain” (Ex 32:19).
- “Where am I to get meat?... I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, **kill me** at once...” (Nm 11:13–15).
- On numerous occasions Moses falls **face down** before the Lord in desperation (Nm 14:5; 16:4; 20:6).
- “Hear now, you rebels; shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff **twice...**” (Nm 20:10–13).

C. Warning to all ministry leaders.

Moses' level of frustration in leadership eventually led him to sin in such a way that he was denied entrance into the Promised Land (Nm 20: 1–13). Warning: leaders who fail to find grace to handle the burden of ministry risk undermining their ministry effectiveness and **finishing the race** poorly.

D. Symptoms of burnout.

“Burnout” is a secular term (dating to the 1970s) used to describe a state of emotional **exhaustion** from mental **stress**. The classic symptoms include the following:

1. Anger, irritability, quick **temper**.
2. Feelings of loneliness.
3. Depression, mood swings.
4. Fatigue, exhaustion, lack of enthusiasm, little **motivation**.
5. Difficulty in making decisions, inability to concentrate.
6. Health issues (headaches, blood pressure, over-eating, insomnia, etc.).
7. Cynicism and **doubt**.
8. Wasting time in mindless pursuits (video games, solitaire, etc.).

E. Finding a cure.

Secular approaches to dealing with burnout tend to rely on secular solutions: exercise, diet, sleep, laughter, vacation, time management, etc. While such responses certainly have their value, the Bible sees “burnout” in **spiritual** terms and therefore proposes a solution that goes much deeper:

1. Knowing **God** face to face and experiencing the rest he alone can give. “My presence [face] will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Ex 33:14).
2. Entering Canaan (your inheritance). Though there are battles to fight, cities to build and crops to plant, it is described as a place of **rest** (Jos 1:13; Heb 4:1, 9–11).
3. Ultimately, Jesus is the only one who can give us rest. But this is no passive inactivity. There is work to do! But his yoke is **easy** and his burden is **light** (Mt 11:28–30).
4. In other words, the cure for burnout is **entire sanctification!**

Finding the cure for burnout is just as essential to completing our journey as is learning the other lessons God has for us at Desert U (bitterness, hunger, thirst, enemy attacks). Until we learn how to deal with **overwork**, **fatigue**, and **stress**, we will continue doing laps in the desert.

II. Exodus 18:13–23.

- A. After being reunited with his wife (Zipporah) and two sons (Gershom and Eliezer), Moses describes to his father-in-law everything the Lord had done in redeeming his people (see Ex 18:1–12). Jethro responds: “Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods” (Ex 18:11). John Oswalt points out that “Jethro is the first person in the history of the world who got converted because of somebody else’s **testimony**.”¹
- B. After reading Exodus 18:13–23, answer the following questions:

1. What is the problem? (Read Ex 18:13–16).

One pastor for two million people is simply unworkable. To say that the “church” was **understaffed** is a gross understatement. The organizational **structure** was simply making it impossible to move forward effectively.

¹ *Exodus: The Way Out* (Wilmore, KY: Francis Asbury Press, 2013), 140.

2. What are the results of the problem? (Read Ex 18:14–18).

a. Describe the results for Moses:

- Tired, fatigued.
- Frustrated.
- Feeling crushed by the load.

- _____ .
- _____ .
- _____ .

b. Describe the results for the people:

- Frustrated because their needs are unmet.
- Weary, tired.

- _____ .
- _____ .
- _____ .

c. What is the solution? (Read Ex 18:19–23).

1) **Delegate** authority to qualified persons.

Notice that competency relates primarily to **character** (fear God, trustworthy, hate a bribe) and not to gifts and talents. This process involves selection, organization, training, holding accountable, etc. Break the congregation down into manageable groups: thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

2) Moses should concentrate on doing what he **does best**.

For Moses to spend time on trivial disputes is a “waste” of time for the greatest lawgiver in the human history! Now he can concentrate on teaching God’s law.

d. What are the results of the solution?

1) For Moses:

- He won’t burn out; he will be able to **endure** and go the distance.
- He will be able to do what he is called and gifted to do.

- _____ .
- _____ .
- _____ .

2) For the people:

- They will have their **needs met** and thus be satisfied.
- Other leaders will be able to exercise their gifts and callings.

- _____ .
- _____ .
- _____ .

III. Lessons Learned

This is the fifth “test” at Desert U. Though this test is quite different than the previous four, it is just as important. Failure of the stress test could potentially keep God’s redeemed people doing laps in the wilderness forever.

A. Overwork and burnout are **serious** issues.

Just as deadly as lack of water and food or of being killed by the enemy, failing to **manage** time and resources can render us ineffective and unfruitful.

B. It takes more than **miracles** to get us out of the desert.

The previous four tests required divine intervention. A miracle was needed to make bitter water sweet and to provide bread and water. And it took intercessory prayer to enable Joshua to defeat the Amalakite army. But here in Exodus 18, wise human counsel encourages structural reorganization and revision of job descriptions.

Administration is more important than you think. Remember that “leadership” is a gift of the Spirit (Rom 12:8).

C. Beware the **“messiah”** complex.

Many people in ministry begin to assume that they are indispensable and that they alone know how to do the work. Perhaps they are over-conscientious. Perhaps they are over-anxious. Perhaps they are ambitious. Regardless of the motivation, when one person tries to **do it all**... the results are not good.

D. Sometimes “pagans” have **wise counsel** for those who follow Jesus Christ.

Moses had learned how to **plunder** the Egyptians” (Ex 3:21–22; 11:2–3; 12:35–36). Egyptian gold is still gold! Moses was humble enough to listen and learn even from a pagan priest.

E. In leadership, Godly **character** is more important than competence.

In I Timothy 3:1–7, Paul sets forth 15 qualifications for those who serve as an elder. Thirteen relate to character; two relate to talents and abilities. Talents and skills can often be learned but character is a gift of God! (See Acts 6:1–3).

F. **Equip** the saints for ministry.

We will never make it through the desert and into the Promised Land unless everyone discovers and uses his/her spiritual gift(s). Everyone is needed. The **primary job** of leadership in the church is to ensure that the members are equipped for service. “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **mature manhood**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11–13).

TABLE TALK

1. Think of a time when you were (or are presently) under stress and overloaded with work. How did you handle the situation? What did you learn?
2. Think of a time in your church when you saw someone on the point of burnout from too much ministry responsibilities. How did they handle it?
3. What is the main lesson you learned today?
4. Does your church equip the saints for service? If yes, how do they do it? If no, why not?
5. Have you learned how to “plunder the Egyptians”?
6. Name an area in your life where you need organization and administration. How is this hindering your journey? What is God asking you to do?

I'm Pressing on the Upward Way

By Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1898 (1856–1922)

*I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

Refrain:

Lord, lift me up, and let me stand
By faith on Canaan's tableland;
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

*My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.*

*I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.*

*I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till rest I've found,
“Lord, lead me on to higher ground.”*



Geography of Salvation

Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

ANSWERS

Doing the Walk

- I. images; partial; distorted; [column: a Journey] Pilgrim, dual citizenship; I'm lost, headed in the wrong direction; Repent (turn around), "Follow Me"; broken homes; journey
- II. (B) walking; (C) Egypt; Canaan; geography; map; (C1) geography of salvation; (C2) my story; (C3) preaching the map; (C3a) arteriosclerosis; (C3b) falling from grace; (D1) home; (D2) Red Sea; (D3) after; (D4) Jordan River; (D5) desert; (D6) get out; get in; (D7) journey
- III. immature; carnal; example; mapplications; (A) informed; (B) wise; (C) alert; lest he fall; (D) encouraged; normal; faithful; promised

Egypt: To Leave or Not to Leave, That Is the Question

- I. a reason; (A) turkey farm; (B) 400; assimilated; the land; nation; be blessed; (B1) Where do I belong?; (B2) Who am I?; (B3) Why am I here?; (C) this world; Follow me
- II. motivate; (A) Pain; (A1) staying; (A2) the gift; (A3) megaphone; (A4) suffering; (A5) heard; remembered; saw; knew; (A6) fruit; (B) identity; (B2) third culture kid; (B3) lose ourselves; (C) appetites/desires; (C1) purify; (C2) food-driven; (C3) another world; (C4) expulsive power; (D) call; (D2a) God; (D2b) journey; (D2c) relationship; (D2d) community; (D2e) everything

The Red Sea

Believed; worshiped; get worse

- I. (A1) do not know; (A3) more miserable; why; Why; (B2) knowing God; (B4) to quit; (B5) our faith
- II. (A) ten plagues; (B1) blood; (B3) finger; (B5) bull; (B7) shelter; (C3) God
- III. blood; a lamb; (A) shows me my need; wrath; slavery; journey; (B) dies in my place; (C) bids me follow
- IV. water; (A) which way do I go?; into the desert; (B) a trap; freedom; (C1) promise of God; (C2) blood of the Lamb; (C3) Faith; obedience; (C3a) Fear not; (C3b) Be still; wait; (C3c) March forward; through; from

The University of the Desert

- I. (A) fact; Worship 101; (A1) Singing; (A2) redeemed; (A3) the Lord; (A4) joy (A5) the past; the present; the future; (B) two years; (C) easy; quick; No water, food; No shelter from the extremes of temperature (hot and cold); Barren; nothing grows; Snakes, scorpions and Amalekites; Silence; The land of in-between; the gap that exists between God's promise

and its fulfillment, between what I am and what God wants me to be; (D) humble; testing; disciplines; (D1) education; (D2) necessity; theology of the desert

- II. [column: Problem] retest; overload; [column: Solution] a tree; [column: Lesson] trust; warfare; (A) tempts; tests; reveal what they know and don't know; (B) frightening; good; (C) Egypt out of us
- III. (A) three days; (B) a bitter place; (C) tree; (D1) crucial; (D2) Grumbling; (D3) leads us; sweet; being content
- IV. led me; provide for me; lead me away; use this experience

Wonder Bread

- I. respond
- II. (A) food-driven; (A1) forbidden; (A2) eating; (A3) milk and honey; thirsts; money; satisfied; (B) appetites; (C) cleanse the palate
- III. (1) one month; (3) trust; daily bread; (4) Whatzit; (6) Sabbath; rest; worship
- IV. (A) deadly; (B) hungry; eat properly; (C1) outward circumstances; (C2) deserve better; (C3) the LORD; (C4) contagious; (D) curable; (D1) learned; (D2) the gripes
- V. loving purpose; sons; holiness; later; (A) eating disorder; (B) rich food; apple pie; ruins; nutrition; Bible; Jesus; (C) gather it; immaturity; basic principles; (D) daily; God's Word; (F) faith; alone; sundown; genuine

Testing God

- I. (A) education; tested; (A1) water; (A2) food; (A3) water; (A4) enemy attack; (A5) burnout; (B) tempt; painful; (B1) reveal; (B2) humble; (B3) equip; (B4) endurance; (B5) holiness; (C) test God; bad attitudes
- II. (A) retest; vital importance; (A1) failed; (A2a) quarreled; (A2b) grumbled; (A2c) tested the Lord; (B) third; speak; we; twice; believe in me; holy
- III. (B) water; primary focus; testing God; provoked; harden your hearts; (C) whine; patience; unbelief; holiness
- IV. (A) presence; (B) ten; disobedience; (C) worthless; I deserve better than this; (D) appear; pretending
- V. Test me; the opportunity

Spiritual Warfare

- I. (A1) provision; protection; (A2) be still; fight; pray; (A3) Spiritual Warfare 101; test; war; (B1) amusement park; monastery; social services; battlefield; soldiers; armor; soldier; fight; (B2) dangerous; messy; weapons; intelligence; trust; objective
- II. (A1) terrorism; (A2) turn back; hinders; spiritual forces; (B) sword; staff; of the flesh; by; God; (B1) motives; (B2) faith; (B3) will; (C1) blot out; (C2) banner; throne
- III. in the gap; lifestyle; (A) Identification; emotional detachment; intertwined; love; (B) Unity; agree; two or three; (C) Agony; lacking; groanings; to himself; (D) Authority; accept; God's will

The Stress Test

- I. (A) heavy; (A1) soulds; (A2) God; (A3) resources; (A4) nice; (A5) hours; (A6) never done; (A7) interruptions; (B) grumbled; anger; kill me; facedown; twice; (C) finishing the race; (D) exhaustion; stress; (D1) temper; (D4) motivation; (D7) doubt; (E) spiritual; (E1) God; (E2) rest; (E3) easy; light; (E4) entire sanctification; overwork; fatigue; stress
- II. (A) testimony; (B1) understaffed; structure; (B2c1) Delegate; character; (B2c2) does best; (B2d1) endure; (B2d2) needs met
- III. (A) serious; manage; (B) miracles; Administration; (C) messiah; do it all; (D) wise counsel; plunder; (E) character; (F) Equip; primary job; mature manhood

The Gap

By Stan Key

*I'd almost given up all hope
Of finding ways to help me cope
With this great chasm, broad and deep,
That breaks my heart and makes me weep;
This gap that's there for all to see
Between what is... and ought to be.*

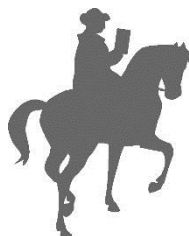
*On one side, Lord, I see Your power,
That gives me grace for every hour:
Your blood that cleanses from all sin,
Your Spirit giving strength within,
Your Word that guides me in the way,
And feeds my soul for each new day.*

*But here on this side, Lord, I see
An opposite reality.
For when I try to do what's right
I find the will... but not the might.
This inner turmoil makes me sore,
I am a walking civil war!*

*Is this gap forever there?
Mocking me with empty air?
If Your Gospel, Lord, is true,
Is this all that grace can do?
Humbly now, I must confess;
Though I'm Yours, I'm still a mess!*

*Then You turned to me and said,
"Victory comes when you are dead.
You will never be set free
Till you're crucified with Me.
Then My power you'll understand,
And this cursed gap be spanned."*

*The gap today is still a part
Of truths that often break my heart;
But now its breadth is not so wide,
And crossing to the other side,
Is simpler; for I've found the key:
"More of Him and less of me."*



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