

Scripture and Background Information for September 15-21

The 40 Day Lab

When you look throughout the Bible, there is a pattern where God uses time periods of 40 days to invite people to encounter Him in a new way or for the very first time. Those 40 days were not just about learning facts about God, but they were *real-life experience* with God.

A special BONUS for this series: We are providing daily prompts by text message which will give you practical ways to experience God beyond the lectures. We encourage you to sign up by texting **40DAYLAB** to 33222.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page.

Remember we are using the updated **Discussion Guide** (available from your leader or from the Next Steps Center). Because we are using longer narrative passages, we have adapted the prompts to keep the time commitment between 20 & 30 minutes. In the **GOD'S WORDS** section, rather than copying the scripture "word for word", you'll write down a few of the details that you might need to retell the story to a friend or a neighbor. In the **MY WORDS** section, take a few minutes to retell the story in your own words.

Background for Exodus 24:12-18; 32:1-8

Exodus tells the story of God rescuing His people, the Israelites, from their captors, the Egyptians. After being freed, God continues to support, equip, and guide his people throughout the wilderness. He provides for them with food, water, shelter, and direction, but God also provides them with a law. This law was meant to bring them their best life—a life characterized by likeness with God and purity in following Him. In the wilderness, the rest of Exodus tells the story of how God delivered this law to His people and how the people failed*.

In Exodus 24, Moses goes up the mountain to receive part of the law from God. Moses' encounter with God lasts 40 days. During these 40 days, God details the construction of the ark of the covenant. In His details recorded in chapter 25-31, God reflects the purity, precision, and perfection required of His instructions. Meanwhile, in chapter 32, God's people waiting in the shadow of the mountain forget God. God's entire law given to Moses in chapters 25-31 was concerned with the proper worship of God. However, the Israelites show just how quickly improper worship can set in.

*Christians at times have a difficulty understanding the purpose of the law after Jesus. However, Paul addresses beautifully presents this idea in Galatians 3. Before Christ, the law brought a recognition of its inability to be followed. Thus, we needed someone who could follow every part of the law perfectly on our behalf. That's what Jesus has done. Now the law serves as a reminder of what Christ has done for us and provides a reminder and guide to live like Him in our pursuit of Christ-likeness.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

September 22

September 29

Joshua

Elijah

Number 13:1, 17-33

1 Kings 19:1-18