



# Managing GOD's Money

## Theme for September: Life Lessons

*Life is a journey that's not smooth, but lesson-filled. Our great challenge is to be open to learn as we go. Sadly, rarely do we learn from our experiences, especially if bad, because we don't accept them. We need to ask Jesus, our Messiah, to lead us through these bad experiences as He promised, and show us how to grow from them.*

*Because we don't use these events He presents to develop us, we repeat mistakes and act daily like each outing is our first. We are busy with our priorities that spotlight urgent matters without everlasting significance, so we side-step God's messages He chooses specially for us.*

*This month we look at some journeys with several life-lessons. We will highlight a few and look at how we might apply them daily as we stay alert to Messiah's teachings. Don't miss God's faithfulness that permeates these journeys:*



*September 1-7: Egypt to Canaan*

*September 8-14: Jerusalem to Moab*

*September 15-21: The Cistern to the Mansion*

*September 22-30: Shepherd to King*

## Topic for September 1:7: Egypt to Canaan



Deuteronomy 28: 2,9

<sup>2</sup> Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

<sup>9</sup> Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

**W**e could summarize these two verses as follows:

The Bible is God's Word; accept it as it is. Remember

what it says; especially the many practical blessings God promises. Most of all, tell these truths and blessings to your children and grandchildren.

### God's Faithfulness

As with all Scripture, we can learn a lot from Moses' account of the Israelites' journey to Canaan; especially God's commitment, lordship, and faithfulness to His people. They turned away from Him several times, but He was there always rescuing and providing for them. However, they bore consequences of their rebellion. Though He is faithful, God tells us we will bear the results of our

disobedience. Read and reflect on **Deuteronomy 28:1-2** and 15:

<sup>1</sup> If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, ... blessings will come upon you and accompany you ...:

<sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD your God ... curses will come upon you and overtake you:

The Israelites were as fickle as we are today. In **Exodus 4:29-31**, after Moses and Aaron told them God's plan, *they bowed down and worshipped.* Later in **Exodus 32:1-2**, because Moses returned *late* from his meeting with God, they

revolted and Aaron, a leader and future head of the Levitical priesthood, built an golden idol to worship.

Is this different from our behavior when we don't get answered prayers in our time and in our form? We are impatient; we expect everyone including God to work with our timetables. We don't realize that sometimes waiting is God's gift to us to learn and to grow. In **Psalm 40:1-2**, King David presents a striking picture of God's response as we wait:

I waited patiently for the LORD; ... He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Aaron abdicated his leadership, took his eyes off God, and joined the masses in Moses' absence. He did not understand this important leadership lesson: *the popular view is not always right*. God chooses leaders and equips them so they follow Him and not the masses. Still, Aaron followed the crowd and built an idol.

In time, Moses, *more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth* (**Numbers 12:3**), and *faithful* (**Numbers 12:7**) returned, Israel suffered the results of their idolatry, and God gave Moses laws to govern Israel.



### **Memory Verse**

#### **Colossians 2:8**

Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Am I different? Are you? I, too, forget Jesus' many promises to me, grumble, and act on my own. Like the Israelites, I forget my sin nature leads me away from God. However, it is reassuring to know despite our impatience and stubbornness, God remains faithful to His children.

Disobeying God is costly? Believers won't lose our salvation, but disobeying God will cost us? That's a promise.

### **Who is in Charge?**

Meanwhile, the obedience-rebellion-remorse-confession cycle continued throughout the journey. Still, God kept His pledge always; finally leading Israel to the land He promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants; however, not Moses who suffered the result of disobeying God. Israel's grumbling caused him to *strike* instead of *speak* to the rock as God instructed; so, he saw, but did not enter, the Promised Land (**Deuteronomy 32:51**).

How could the Israelites behave like this? God undertook to care for them. Why didn't they obey Him and be content with what they had? They saw God's faithfulness: He parted the Red Sea, led them safely, provided food, gave victory over their enemies (**Deuteronomy 15:6**); yet, they grumbled constantly.

Another lesson from this journey is understanding God is in charge, not only when events go our way but also when they don't. He isn't sitting in heaven biting His nails.

**Deuteronomy 5:7** states, *You shall have no other gods before me*. This means God must control our lives—not money, power, prestige, jobs, fame, or other societal crutch.

To be sure, we do not set out to build idols. But like Aaron, we follow the crowd and worship idols as we collect them on our life-journey.

Often Israel reacted to each event in isolation, ignoring God's demonstrated guidance. After scouts returned from exploring Canaan, their report about the power of the folks they saw scared the Israelites

who yearned for Egypt. Read **Numbers 14:1-4:**

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud... grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and ... said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt Or in this desert. Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?...Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

How could they think of returning to Egypt? How easily they forgot the quality of life in Egypt and God's promises. Their amnesia made them yearn for the gods they worshipped in Egypt (**Ezekiel 20:7-8**). Eventually, God granted that generation their wish to die in the desert (**Numbers 14:26-38**).

You might be a follower of Jesus for thirty years, seen wonderful miracles, *led* many to the Lord, but each human setback devastates you, and each time you ask, *Where is God? Why has He allowed this to happen?* You forget He is in charge always.

Like me, you trust Him to a certain point. Beyond that your *behavior* shows you do not have confidence in His control of the world and of your life. To us, He is asleep in the boat in the middle of the storm,

until we hear, *you of little faith*. Then we *wake up* and realize He is in charge. Look at Jesus' response in **Matthew 8:24-27** as His disciples panicked:

Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us We're going to drown" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ...



Without a doubt it is natural to react in the flesh and panic in the storm. But when Jesus controls our lives, this is the question we must ask in the storm: *What are you teaching us from this event, Lord?* He controls storms so He will calm them in His way, in His time. We need to be patient and know He never sleeps.

When God tested Job, Job's first response was not, *why me?* *What did I do to deserve this?* He recognized God's sovereignty and realized God could take

away all he had because God gave him everything. In **Job 1:20-22**, Job said:

... "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job left no doubt that God was in charge of his life. In the same way, Jesus wants us to love Him with all our hearts and give Him the throne of our lives so He can free us to be the individuals He created. Reflect on Apostle Paul's words to believers in **Galatians 5:1:**

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Stand firm and do not subject yourself to slavery's burden; don't let slavery to idols hook you. Stay focused on Messiah. Heed this saying: *The grass is always appears greener on the other side, but it needs mowing.*

Frequent grumbling is a major issue among believers. We don't realize that complaining and rebelling against our circumstances show a lack of faith. Let's give our burdens to the Lord. Allow Him to change us so we may see as He sees.

Learn from the Israelites' journey. When events go your way, rejoice. When they don't; don't panic and hoard today's *bread*; it might spoil (**Exodus 16: 6-20**). Don't run to idols, become angry, frustrated, and *forget the things your eyes have seen*. Jesus is not asleep, but in charge.

Rest assured, even Apostle Paul wrestled with staying focused on the Spirit. That's a natural human response because of Adam's sin. In **Romans 7:14-20**, Paul describes our dilemma: He said he had the desire to do good but couldn't carry it out on his own.

**Deuteronomy 20:1-4** reminds us of another lesson in our journey from Egypt to Canaan: *The battle is His not ours.*

When you go to war against your enemies ... do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. ... For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

To be sure, the Lord gives us victories despite our interferences. Will we give Him full access and control of our lives? In good times and bad? It's in the *storms* our behavior shows how much we trust Him.

## Application



### Exodus 3:10-12

Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

**L**ife changing lessons wrapped up in God's truths fill the journey from Egypt to Canaan. Focus on these four this week:

1. Jesus is *Lord* even if you don't accept His Lordship. Believers, stay in your circumstances; He will lead you through them, and you won't miss His lessons.
2. Jesus is *Love* and will never leave or abandon you.
3. Jesus is *Truth*; He knows you live in a world of compromise and you must fight daily to defend *truth*. Give Him your daily battles.

4. Jesus is *Light*; stay in the Word so He can shine through you daily.

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you constantly about these lessons because the obedience-rebellion-remorse-confession cycle applies to all followers of Jesus. Adam's sin in the Garden guarantees it.

However, Jesus' death and resurrection gave us victory, sealed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers to lead us to all truth (**John 14:15-21**).

If you do not believe in and know Jesus as Lord and Savior, ask Him to take charge of your life. If you know Him but you have one foot in the world, ask Him to remove gods and crutches that hook you.

God knows the past, present and future. He is faithful, unchanging, *awake*, always in control, but He allows events in our lives to strengthen us. The tree in the desert grows stronger when the wind buffets it. So do we, as we move from one challenge to another. Jesus knows what's best for us; let's trust Him as we cede control of our lives.

Reflect on these words from King David in **Psalms 139:1-4**: *O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. ...when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.*



# Daily Reflections



**September 1:**  
Exodus 3:1-12  
Deuteronomy  
4:1-9; 28:1,15

**September 2:**  
Exodus 4:29-31;  
16:6-20; 32:1-2

**September 3:**  
Psalm 40:1-2;  
Numbers 12:1-9;  
14:26-38

**September 4:**  
Numbers 14:1-4;  
26-28;  
Job 1:20-22

**September 5:**  
Galatians 5:1;  
Matthew  
8:24-27;  
John 14:15-21

**September 6:**  
Romans 7:14-20;  
Deuteronomy  
20:1-4

**September 7:**  
Psalm 139:1-4;  
146:1-2

**C**onsidering the month's *theme*, and the period's *topic*, daily reflect on verses on the left. These questions might help your reflections:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start today?

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