

Chapter 6 – Wandering

We will be voting on the Ministry Action Plan (budget) during the 10-11 a.m. hour on October 14, so this study guide is for the individual use of adults who are reading THE STORY.

What failure on the part of the Israelites led to their repeating the same error over and over: anxiety, leading to complaining and blaming Moses and Aaron?

Why do you think the Biblical writers/compiler put so much emphasis on God's punishment of the Israelites when they rebelled against God?

Everyone knows that a leader, even when he/she has been given great responsibilities, is still a human being like everyone else.

Why do you think God reacted so strongly to Aaron and Miriam's claim that they were no less worthy of leadership and recognition than Moses?

Many people have observed that although Aaron and Miriam were equally rebellious against Moses, only Miriam was punished with leprosy and temporary expulsion. However, by the end of this chapter we see that neither Aaron nor Miriam was allowed to enter the land toward which they had been trudging for so many years.

After all that Moses had to put up with to get the people from the bondage of slavery to the brink of success, did you think it was strange that God punished him for losing his temper one time? Any ideas about why God might have done that?

Thoughts on Christian maturity

Baptists have often been suspicious of strong leaders. Those non-fundamentalists who witnessed and suffered through the power struggles of the 1980s in Baptist life in the American South are especially wary of leaders who call for significant change, because the strong fundamentalist leaders demanded radical change. A leader is especially targeted when resources become scarce. (For the Israelites it was the absence of meat that made even slavery look good to them – page 58). There are no flawless pastors. Sometimes pastors are poor leaders; sometimes their leadership is good, and the direction they are calling for is difficult.

How could a congregation of Christians reach consensus on the question of when difficulties mean they should resist their leader and when circumstances call for their following the leader they thought God gave them?

In his farewell speech Moses emphasized:

- 1) Keep on reminding each other and every generation of God's goodness.
- 2) You won't succeed on your own. Depend on God.
- 3) Never assume that you deserve what God has given you.
- 4) "The LORD is your life" and knows better than you do what is best for you.
- 5) "The LORD goes before you and will be with you; the LORD will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

How can you live out the reality of these claims in your own life?

How can our congregation weave these truths into the fabric of our life together?