



LEADER'S GUIDE

Week 3: Exodus 19-20

Sinai - Receiving our New Identity

October 2, 2016

Before you begin this study, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God is saying in these scriptures.

Day 1: Exodus 19: 1-8

- 1. As Exodus 19 opens, where were the Israelites located?** The Desert of Sinai
How long did the Israelites travel from Egypt to Mount Sinai? 3 months
Where did they camp? In the Desert of Sinai in front of the mountain
Where is the Desert of Sinai, and where is Mount Sinai? In the south of what is now the Arabian Peninsula (consult the map in the historical background materials)
Why is Mount Sinai called "God's holy mountain"? God came down on the mountain to meet with the Israelites, He brought Israel here and gave the Law there. In *Leaving Egypt*, DeGroat writes: "Sinai represents that moment in each of our lives when it begins to dawn on us that we are more than we seem to be, more than merely ordinary." He goes on: "...Sinai, the identity checkpoint where we're retold the true story about ourselves." (p. 79) **Do you recall a "Sinai-like" experience in your life?**
- 2. As the Israelites traveled to the Sinai Desert, how had God provided for their daily needs? (see Exodus 16-17) What does this tell us about God?** God provided manna – bread fresh every morning, and quail every evening, and water. He also defeated the Amalekites who came to attack the Israelites. When God calls you out of Egypt, He will meet your needs. Here in the wilderness, they were hungry, thirsty, and completely dependent on God; He provided.
- 3. Moses goes up the mountain to meet with God. What does God promise to Israel?** He promises Israel that they will be His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
What condition is given (vs 3-6)? The condition is "If you obey me fully and keep my commandments." **How is this similar to how God fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Genesis 15 and 17)?** Abraham is promised his offspring will be nations and kings, have the land of Canaan, be numerous as the stars. The condition is to keep God's covenant – for Abraham that was circumcision. Genesis 15:13-16 foretells the slavery in Egypt and the exodus.
- 4. How did the Israelites respond to what Moses said to them (vs 7-9)?** "We will do everything the Lord has said . . ."

Digging deeper

What is the significance of Mount Sinai? Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions believe that Mount Sinai is where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. It is referred to as Mt. Horeb in Deuteronomy 1:6. These are commonly understood to be the same place. Mountains are symbolic of eternity, strength, and stability. They also portray obstacles in life, but faith will overcome mountains (Matthew 21:21). The location of the actual mountain is uncertain; there are four mountains that at one time or another were believed to be Sinai. Hebrews 12 refers to Mount Sinai in a dark way (Hebrews 12: 18-21). It was a mountain of fear. The profound significance of Mount Sinai to the Jews is that at Sinai they became a nation. It was there that God called ALL of the Hebrews to assemble to hear Him (Exodus 19: 16-19). God gave His covenant to the people (Exodus 19: 5-6). Up until this point, the Jews knew of and worshipped God, but it was not a relational knowledge. At Sinai, they

were gathered to be His holy nation and given responsibilities to follow. Now they knew God and how to be His people.

The concept of God's Chosen People – Israel God makes it clear in Deuteronomy 7: 6-8 that He chose Israel as “His treasured possession”. He also explains that He did this out of love, not because of anything Israel did to earn the favor. Out of Israel, God would bless all the people on earth (Genesis 12: 2-3). In Christ, this occurred.

Many argue that since Israel did not follow all of God’s commandments that they have lost their designation as His chosen. However, many passages of scripture point to God’s ongoing relationship with Israel. He will bring them back to Himself, and they will recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Many of the promises of God to His people are still unfulfilled. If we as Christians believe the Word of God to be true, is it possible to believe that God will not fulfill His promises?

Look closely at Jeremiah 31:31-34. What is different about the covenant in vs 32 and the covenant spoken of in vs 33? *In Exodus 19:5, a covenant is made that will be in effect provided that Israel obeys and keeps God’s commands. In Jeremiah 31:33, the covenant is not dependent on Israel’s obedience.*

That Israel will one day accept Jesus as the Messiah is clear in Zechariah 12:10, Jeremiah 33:8 and Ezekial 11:17. Paul speaks directly to Israel’s position in Romans, chapters 9-11. In Chapter 11 he speaks directly to the church regarding Israel’s position.

Genesis 12:3 states that “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse”. How do you personally feel about Israel? Do you believe that this passage can be applied to how we treat the current nation of Israel? Does the American government’s insistence on Israel relinquishing more and more territory concern you? The boundaries of the land given to Israel as a gift are more widespread than Israel’s current borders. (Genesis 15: 18-19). God declares the land to be from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates, and that it was a land of ten other peoples at that time. Do you believe that Israel will one day enjoy God’s bounty with the borders set in Genesis?

Day 2: Exodus 19: 9-15

1. ***In Exodus 3:2 God appeared to Moses in flames of fire. How does God appear to Moses now (vs. 9)?*** He appears to Moses in a dense cloud.
How is God going to appear to the Israelites (vs 11) God will come down on the mountain.
What words are used to describe God’s appearance? The words used: thunder, lightning, thick cloud, loud trumpet blast and smoke. God descended in a fire.
How does this compare with other passages describing God’s appearance to other people in scripture, such as Abraham (Genesis 18 and 22)? God appeared to Abraham as a man and as a voice from heaven.
2. ***How was Moses to prepare Israel for their meeting with God (vs 10, 14-15)?*** He was to consecrate them, have them wash their clothes, and abstain from sex.
How do we prepare for God’s appearance? How does or should our view of God shape the way we prepare to meet God, both individually and corporately? “Outward preparation to meet God symbolizes the inward consecration God requires of his people.” (from footnote in the NIV Study Bible)
3. ***Why were the Israelites not to touch the mountain?*** God commanded it.
What would happen if they did (vs 12-13)? Why was this warning so harsh? Whoever touches it – man or animal - is to be put to death.
4. ***Note the emphasis on the 3rd day and the 3rd month*** (Exodus 19: 1, 11, and 16; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 5:33; Exodus 8:27). Also note that Jesus public ministry on earth was 3 years long, he died at 33 years of age, and he was in the tomb for 3 days. Three is the number of wholeness and completeness.

Digging deeper

How God's dialogue with Moses was similar to or different from God's dialogue with others

Theophanies are appearances by God in physical form. For example, prior to the fall, God spent time with Adam and Eve in the Garden. Many appearances are referred to as "the angel of the Lord". He makes such an appearance to Abraham in Genesis 18. In Genesis 22:11-12, the angel of the Lord called out to Abraham from heaven to keep him from sacrificing Isaac. Other appearances are noted:

- He wrestles with Jacob in Genesis 32: 24-29
- He appears to Samson's mother in Judges 13: 3-6
- He appears in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3:25
- Isaiah saw the Lord high and exalted, seated on a throne in Isaiah 6:1

God speaks to many in the scriptures, and appears in forms other than as a person. He appears as a cloud, a consuming fire, a burning bush. Although God speaks to Moses out of the burning bush, he also simply talks to him. He does this with Noah, with Jacob in a dream, to Elijah as a gentle whisper (I Kings 19: 11-12). In I Samuel 3, God calls to Samuel. Has God ever spoken to you personally? What did you experience? Did it scare you?

At the transfiguration, Jesus had a radical change in appearance. Matthew 17:2 describes it "his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as the light". Then the voice of God spoke from a cloud as in Exodus. This radical change points to Jesus glorified.

Day 3: Exodus 19: 16-25

1. God's descent to the mountain was loud and dramatic. The people trembled and the mountain trembled. ***What words are used to describe God's appearance in verses 16-18, compared with God's appearance described in verse 9?*** In verses 16-18, God's appearing is described as thunder, lightning, loud trumpet blast and the mountain trembled, as well as a thick cloud and smoke. In verse 9 He is described as appearing in a dense cloud.
Can you recall a time when you had a dramatic encounter with God? How long did it last? What impact did it have on you?
2. ***What is the significance of thunder, lightning, fire, and smoke?*** "God's appearance is often accompanied by an impressive display of meteorological sights and sounds." (from footnote in NIV Study Bible)
Where else in the Bible do we see these words describing God's appearing? See 1 Samuel 7:10; 12:18; Job 38:1; 40:6 and Psalm 18:13-14
What do these words reveal about God's character? They reveal His power, strength, awesomeness
3. ***What did God warn Moses about how the Israelites should act (vs 20-24)?*** He was to warn the Israelites not the force their way through to see the Lord – not even the priests.
What would happen if they did not act this way? The Lord will break out against them.
What instructions do we have for how we should not act, and what consequences are described if we do not follow these instructions? We are told to put away falsehood, give up stealing, not talk evil, not grieve the Holy Spirit, not even mention immorality, impurity, no filthy and silly talk or coarse jesting, no greed, no anger, malice, slander, wrath or lying, no drunkenness, wild parties or idolatries. The consequences are that all will give account to God, God's wrath will come, and no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

4. **How do we seek to demonstrate reverence when we interact with God?** We need to know who we are worshipping – the living God, the judge of all people and Jesus our mediator.
What does the Lord require of us in meeting with God (Hebrews 12)? In Hebrews 12:14-28 we are told to live in peace with all men, to be holy, have not bitterness or sexual immorality or godless attitude, but be thankful and reverent. John 4:23-24 says we are to worship God in spirit and truth.
5. **What did it mean that Israel could become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and God’s treasured possession? Why did God choose Israel?** They are a chosen people a people belonging to God. God chose Israel because of His promise to Abraham (see Deuteronomy 7:7-8). God gives Israel a new identity. Egypt had redefined Israel as slaves, unworthy and powerless. God comes down and says “Let me tell you who you are.” He retells their story with Himself as central. What defines you? Who gets to narrate your life? God wants to redefine our lives and re-narrate our stories. Any other way of defining our lives will disappoint.
How does this relate to the concept of a “royal priesthood” mentioned in I Peter 2:9? Peter says we are also chosen and royal priests – like a kingdom of priests – and a holy nation, God’s possession because of Christ.
Do you have trouble seeing yourself as a treasured possession of God? As holy? As part of God’s priesthood?
6. **Just as Moses served as an intermediary between God and the Israelites, who serves as the intermediary between God and us (Romans 8: 26-27; Hebrews 9:15)?** Jesus Christ

Digging deeper

The development of the priesthood in Israel. Aaron is described as “the Levite” in Exodus 4:14. He and his sons are appointed as priests in Exodus 28: 29. Exodus 32 led to the special appointment of the tribe of Levi to officiate before the Lord (instead of the firstborn of all tribes – Numbers 8:16). Therefore, among the nation, there was a “priestly people.” The priests were given very detailed instructions about how they were to prepare themselves in order to appear before the Lord. How do you prepare yourself to meet God? Do you think there is a difference in how you meet God in private or in a sanctuary for worship? Why or why not?

The priests were given the responsibility to care for the sanctuary and the altar, to deal with offenses connected with the sanctuary or priesthood. They were to do the work at the tent of meeting.

Christians recognize that we are all a priesthood of believers. Peter recalls the words of the Lord in I Peter 2:9, when he speaks of the fledgling Christian church as a “royal priesthood.” We have the privilege to approach the throne of God at all times, and the responsibility to bring others to Him. Christ is the High Priest, for all time, whose blood covers us with His righteousness which allows us to go before God without fear. Did you really ever think of yourself as a priest? Merriam-Webster’s simple definition of a priest is a person who has the authority to lead or perform ceremonies in some religions and especially in some Christian religions. How does this definition compare to your understanding of priesthood?

A praise song from the 70’s by Lucien Deiss entitled “Priestly People”

Chorus: Priestly people, kingly people, holy people.

God’s chosen people, sing praise to the Lord.

We sing to you, O Christ, beloved son of the Father.

We give you praise, O wisdom everlasting and Word of God.

We sing to you, Messiah, the hope of the people.

We give you praise, O Christ our Lord and King, humble, meek of heart.

Day 4: Exodus 20: 1-17

1. Exodus 20: 1-7 deal with the first 3 commandments. Verse 1 provides the foundation of the commandments, which is Israel's relationship with God. ***What three specific statements about their relationship with God are listed?*** The three statements are: You shall have no other gods before me; You shall not make for yourself an idol. . . you shall not bow down to them; and you shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
As we apply these commandments to our own lives, how do we have our own idols? How do we misuse God's name?
2. ***Verse 8 says to keep the Sabbath holy. What is involved in this, according to verses 9-10?*** It involves no work on the 7th day and to keep the day holy.
What is the basis for this commandment (vs 11)? The basis is that God made the heavens and earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th day.
As we apply this commandment to our own lives, how do we keep the Sabbath holy? (see also Deuteronomy 5:12, Luke 4:14, Matthew 12:8, and Mark 2:27)
As a society, we have grown lax on this commandment. How can we keep the Sabbath holy while living in our current society?
3. The last 6 commandments deal with our relationships with other people. ***In Matthew 5: 17-48, Jesus gives his commentary on the law. What does he say about the importance of the law (Matthew 5: 17-20)?*** Jesus states that he came to fulfill the law, not to get rid of it. He said the law remains until heaven and earth are gone. He warns not to break the law or teach others to break it.
How does he give further detail to the meaning of the last 6 commandments in Exodus 20? Jesus points out that it is not just the act, but the attitude of the heart that matters – not just don't murder but don't carry anger, or call someone a fool; not just don't commit adultery, but don't think the lustful thoughts about someone; keep your oaths to God and not bear false witness, don't just covet what your neighbors have but love your neighbor, and love your enemies.
4. ***Read aloud Exodus 20: 1-17. How does the idea of God's law as an invitation to a "flourishing life" impact your reading of these verses? What kind of people was God designing Israel to be?***
5. ***How did the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day misuse the law?*** The scribes and Pharisees rigidly kept the law, made themselves superior to others, and added multiple details and additional laws that were impossible to keep; they focused on external behavior rather than heart attitude.
How do Christians today misuse the law?

Digging deeper

Different views of the law: What role should the Ten Commandments play in our lives? What is the relationship between the law and our salvation? How should the law be incorporated into our worship?

Within the Christian community, there are different perspectives on the law. Some of these perspectives are complementary, while others are contradictory. In some churches, for example, the Ten Commandments are read prior to the prayer of confession, indicating that the law is used as a mirror to help us recognize our sins. In other churches, the Ten Commandments are read after the assurance of forgiveness, indicating that the law is used as a guide for our living in gratitude for what God has done. These are complementary perspectives, as the law indeed can and does fulfill multiple purposes in our lives and in our liturgies.

On a societal level, the law also plays a role in identifying how to achieve justice in our relationships with others; this is particularly true for the last six commandments which shape how we act and how we think about others. Legal scholars point to the Ten Commandments as a critical foundation for the laws we have in the United States. An interesting question in this regard is how much of the Old Testament legal structure, including the detailed regulations outlined in Exodus, Leviticus, and

Deuteronomy should be reflected in our twenty first century laws. Some Christians have argued that our nation's laws should include all or most of what God commanded from the Israelites.

In some Christian communities, there is a perspective that the law should provide very detailed rules and regulations for every part of our lives. Historically, for example, John Calvin's social order in Geneva was marked by an extraordinary level of regulation. This led some people to judge others by their obedience to all of these detailed regulations. Ultimately, this could end up in an extreme kind of legalism, in which a person's salvation seems to be determined by outward compliance with these rules and regulations, rather than being determined by God's grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

In other Christian communities, the balance swings to the other extreme of saying that the law is no longer important at all because of Christ's work of salvation. People claim that the new covenant of God's grace has completely replaced the old covenant (made on Mount Sinai) based on obedience to law. It is true that our compliance with God's law does not earn us salvation, but it is also true that we still need the law to remind us of our sin and to show us how to live lives of gratitude for what God has done.

An interesting paradox in thinking about the law is to consider the relationship between the law and our liberty. In one sense, any kind of law seems to put limits on our liberty; we cannot act in certain ways if we seek to obey the law. But consider this perspective from Psalm 119 (the lengthy psalm that mentions the law in nearly every verse). Psalm 119: 44-45 says:

I will always obey your law,
For ever and ever.
I will walk about in freedom,
For I have sought out your precepts.

This passage seems to suggest that following the law is the foundation of human freedom. Obedience enhances our freedom, rather than restricting it.

Sabbath

The concept of observing a Sabbath is presented to us in the creation account in Genesis 2:2, when, after six days of creation, God took an equal measure of a day to 'rest' and reflect on what was good, the completion of his well-ordered creation. The word Shabbat, (subsequently Sabbath) in Hebrew means to cease, desist, stop, pause, rest.

God's Sabbath theme is continued in the commandments given to Moses in Exodus 20: 8-11 to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The word '*Remember*' was used in the Exodus text, to the people of Israel, and very important, yet, in Jewish tradition, to '*remember*' **God's** creation and deliverance from slavery to freedom in the exodus from Egypt.

The term '*Observe*' was given in Deuteronomy 5:12 with more instruction about how to '*observe*' the Sabbath. Jewish Shabbat was the Seventh day or Saturday. Jewish tradition emphasizes both terms as they practice a rhythm of Sabbath keeping through the entire week. Rabbi's teach that Sunday (1st day after their Sabbath), Monday and Tuesday are to '*Remember*' the previous Sabbath; reflect on its joy, rest and lessons. Wednesday through Friday is to prepare to '*Observe*' the next Sabbath, looking forward with expectation.

Jesus and the Sabbath Jesus regularly observed Sabbath in the Temple. (Luke 4:14) It was a time for people to come together for teaching and learning God's word. He also refined the definition of Sabbath laws from the strict Jewish rules and cruel punishments for violators. In Matthew 12:8 he declared His authority as Lord of the Sabbath. He knew God's intentions better than the men who

created the laws. It was to be a day not only of study and rest, praise and prayers, but even whatever tasks needed to be done to bring healing and comfort. Refer to Mark 2:27. The Sabbath was to be a gift to us to enjoy and refresh, as well as to honor and praise God.

Following Jesus resurrection on the First Day of the Week, Christians observed that day in celebration of His resurrection, that also was a celebration of **freedom from the slavery** of sin and death. Paul encouraged Sabbath observation and meeting together for study and edification, calling it the Lord's day. The later Christian reformers continued to highly encourage a day for Christians to come together, for worship, praise and study, not only on the Sabbath, but to continue every day, during the week.

Following varying degrees of strict Sunday observances, over the years, our current culture is often obsessed with the concept of the more you can accomplish the better. For some, time spent in leisure or resting is time wasted. Tight economies and busy schedules make people feel that there is not enough time to do necessary work and family activities. Taking a whole day 'off ' or even for some, an hour or two for church on one day, seems more of a burden than a refreshment.

Many people who do continue to observe a Sabbath find they actually reap benefits, as with financial tithing. The time they spend with and in service to God, is returned in a greater measure of physical and spiritual refreshment. God meant the Sabbath as a day to share in the expression and celebration of His love for us and ours in response to His goodness and provision to us.

Questions for reflection on the Sabbath

1. What changes in Sabbath observance have you experienced in your life time?
2. What differences in Sabbath practices have you observed or experienced in countries or communities you have visited?
3. What do you do to prepare for your Sabbath observance?
4. Are there ways you can make your own Sabbath more meaningful?

Day 5: Exodus 20: 18-26

1. **How did the Israelites react to God's dramatic presence (vs 18-19)?** The Israelites trembled with fear, they stayed at a distance. The word "fear" is also seen in Genesis 3:10, Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 5:5, and I Samuel 12:18. Describe a time in your life when you were afraid of God.
2. **How did Moses explain the Israelites' fear (vs 20)?** Moses said that God has come to test them so the fear of God will keep them from sinning.

Why was their fear a good thing? Moses calls them to not be afraid but to fear God. (See Genesis 20:11 and Exodus 14:31, where fearing God included a reverential trust and a commitment to God's revealed will.) The Fear of God Verses Afraid of God – there are different words used – one to be afraid and the other to fear God. "Do not be afraid" means to not have abject fear. The Israelites were afraid of the thunder and lightning, but they were not meant to consume or destroy them (from Matthew Henry). A cross reference study shows that often God was telling someone or group not to be afraid. At other times, a prophet, like Moses here, was telling someone or some group not to be afraid. In Exodus 20:20 Moses says "the fear of God will be with you..." This type of fear is a sense of reverential trust in God that includes commitment to His revealed will in His word. It is a reverence for His majesty, a dread of His displeasure, and an obedience to His sovereign authority. This reverence is "manifested in keeping God's commandments, walking in His ways, doing His will, avoiding sin..." (International Study Bible Encyclopedia)

3. **What other instructions does God give to the Israelites through Moses concerning idols (vs 22-23)?**

Do not make any gods to be along side me, not of silver or gold.

When does something become an idol in your life? What should be done about it?

4. **In verses 24-26, what instructions are given to the Israelites about building an altar to God?** Build the altar of earth or undressed (natural) stones.

Why were they not to use dressed stones? Dressed stones were stones that tools had been used on; God said this would defile the stones.

Why were they not to have steps to the altar? The priest's nakedness would be seen. Note that there were some altars with steps later in Israel's history (Exodus 28: 42-43; Leviticus 6: 10; Leviticus 16: 3-4; Ezekiel 44: 17-18.) The priests were to wear specific under garments at these altars. "The altar played a leading role in all Old Testament worship of the true God, as well as a prominent part in most pagan religions." (The New International Dictionary of the Bible) Early altars were built of stones by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Exodus 20 the Israelites were to build an altar of natural stones, unadorned by craftsman. Elaborately adorned altars with elevated platforms were common in the worship of false deities. Israel's altar would stand out as different – their God is not like those of other religions. Later in Exodus 27, specific instructions are given to build an altar of burnt offering. It was the place of sacrifice – to meet God's requirement and to find pardon and be sanctified. It pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of the Son of God whose shed blood provides access to God and forgiveness of sin.

5. **How do these instructions reveal how we are to worship God?** We are to revere God, show respect, be natural, and be careful how we dress when we worship God.

Does the way we worship God matter? How do we show reverence and respect to God in our worship? Should a formal worship setting be handled differently than a casual worship setting?

Digging deeper: Idols

All the nations around the Israelites worshipped idols. What was idolatry like in Egypt, which they just left, and in Caanan, where they would live? (You may want to use a Bible dictionary, Bible encyclopedia, Bible handbook or Bible commentary).

Two forms of idolatry are mentioned in the Old Testament – worship of false gods with images or in other ways, and worship of the Lord with images. The nations surrounding Israel were idol worshipping. Some worshipped nature, some worshipped made images. The Egyptians had many gods. Every community had a local deity. Their religion evolved from the worship of nature and animals to also include gods in human form or part human, part animal. The sun was the first to become a nationwide god. As a city became prominent so did its local deity. There was a temple in each city to its own god. If the god became national, then there were sanctuaries throughout Egypt.

Eventually Pharaoh was known as the god Horus, ruling the earth, while he was alive. When the Pharaoh died then he became Osiris, ruler of the underworld. As other gods became more prominent, they were understood as incarnate in Pharaoh. Worship in the temples was uniform throughout Egypt with cleansing rituals offerings of food and drink and parading of the idol during festivals. There were 3 tiers of priests – a few full time, part-time specialists who rotated serving (they were astrology scholars, readers, scribes, singers and musicians) and the low-clergy who were the bearers of the sacred objects, interpreters of dreams, overseers of artisans and magicians. Women served as part-time priestesses performing a number of the same duties but mostly were singers and musicians.

The Canaanites religions were also polytheistic. It included not only idolatry and divination but also religious prostitution and child sacrifice.

A number of Hebrew words are translated “idol”. They all give expression to loathing, contempt and dread of idolatry. Theologically, idolaters thought of their gods as spiritual beings or forces, and the idol the focal point of worship. The Old Testament (Psalm 115:2-8, Isaiah 44:6-20) states that the heathen worship idols and nothing more, thus contradicting the pagan theology. The Israelites struggled with involvement with idolatry until the time of the Maccabees.

In the New Testament Jesus warned about making possessions central in life as also being idolatry. The New Testament expanded the concept of idolatry to “include anything that leads to the dethronement of God from the heart, as, for example, covetousness (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5).” (from The New International Dictionary of the Bible.)

Day 6: Chapters 5 and 6 of Leaving Egypt

(If you have the book Leaving Egypt, read chapters 5 and 6. If you do not have the book, consider how you might respond to these questions based on your own experiences and understanding.)

1. In Chapters 5-6, DeGroat describes the journey from Egypt through the Sinai desert: “people left the only homes they’d ever know to enter a wilderness...Their relief to be free of Pharaoh’s grasp turned very quickly to profound dissatisfaction. God had ignited their longing and intensified their hunger for a better life, but the Exodus did not bring the immediate gratification they longed for. Their joy in liberation was tempered by the reality of a long journey through a dry and weary land” (pp. 72-73). ***As you escaped from your own “Egypt,” did you go through a time like this—a dry and weary land? What were you hungry for in your wilderness, and how did God meet your needs?***
2. At Mount Sinai, Israel was given some boundaries for behavior in the Ten Commandments. DeGroat describes these laws as “a set of boundaries to point little children to the way in which they could live and thrive,” as an invitation to “live and thrive as God’s people” (p. 79) and as an “invitation to a flourishing life” (p. 81). He also writes, “Fresh out of Egypt, we all need some patience along with some clear direction” (p. 76). ***How do we see the Ten Commandments—as a set of restrictions, as a set of prescriptions, or as an opportunity to thrive and flourish? What role does obedience to the law play in your life? In your salvation?***
3. Consider the people DeGroat describes in Chapters 5 and 6 (Janie, Bill Zeller, DeGroat himself). For example, consider Janie, about whom DeGroat writes, “But the patterns of her past life kept intruding on her new path to freedom” (p. 77). Israel also had this problem after leaving Egypt. ***How have you seen this in your own journey? Do you see anyone you can identify with? Do you see anyone you know in these descriptions?***