

YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURES

Let My People Go

YE5G · Student Workbook

Seniors · Year 2: Creation

Christian Educational Ministries — a faithful digital edition of the printed program

Tying Up Loose Ends

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 17:10 - "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

SCRIPTURES

Genesis 49:1-33

Genesis 50:1-26

Matthew 25:26-30

Mark 11:22-25

Luke 17:1-3

Luke 17:6-10

Luke 17:10

Romans 12:14-21

WORDS TO KNOW

SCEPTER - a highly ornamental rod or staff held by rulers on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of sovereignty; royal or imperial authority

PATRIARCH - One of the scriptural fathers of the human race or of the Hebrew people; a man who is father or founder; the oldest member or representative of a group

EMBALM - to treat a dead body as to protect it from decay

SHIRK- to evade doing something

THE LESSON

The patriarch Jacob was getting very old and knew his days were numbered. He felt compelled to finish up his business before God took him. So he called all of his sons together around him and explained what would happen to them in the last days. Jacob started with Reuben, his oldest son. He continued with Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

Jacob made a very profound prophecy about Judah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Even though Judah did not have the birthright, he was chosen over the other sons to be the royal tribe. It would be the tribe from which David, Solomon, and the other kings of Israel would come, and even Jesus Christ.

Jacob continued explaining what would happen to Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali in the last days - the end time - that period of time that will just precede the return of Christ.

Jacob pronounced a blessing on Joseph. "May the God of your fathers, the Almighty, bless you with blessings of heaven above and of the earth beneath- blessings of the breasts and of the womb, blessings of the grain and flowers, blessings reaching to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. These shall be the blessings upon the head of Joseph who was exiled from his brothers." A blessing like this was not empty words. It had real significance. Then he mentions Benjamin, Joseph's only full brother.

Jacob asked his sons to bury him with his fathers in the land of Canaan, in the cave in the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre - the field Abraham bought from Ephron the Hethite for a burial ground. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah were all buried there.

Now that Jacob had finished Tying Up Loose Ends, he lay back in his bed and took his very last breath. The much-loved patriarch was dead. Joseph threw himself upon his father's body and wept and kissed him. Then he told the morticians to embalm Jacob's body. The embalming required 40 days, with a national mourning period of 70 days.

After the 70 days of mourning were over, Joseph asked Pharaoh's staff for permission to take his father's body back to the land of Canaan to bury it. Permission was granted. Joseph, his brothers and their families, Pharaoh's counselors and assistants, and the senior officers all went to bury Jacob. They held a great and solemn funeral service, with a seven-day period of lamentation for Jacob.

Joseph and his brothers returned to Egypt as they had promised. But now that their father was dead, they became very concerned that Joseph would want to pay them back for the evil they had done to him by selling him to be a slave in Egypt. So they sent Joseph this message: "Before he died, your father instructed us to tell you to forgive us for the great evil we did to you. We servants of the God of your father beg you to forgive us." When Joseph read the message, he broke down and cried. The brothers fell down before Joseph and said, "We are your slaves."

Joseph forgave them and held no grudges saying, "As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil, for he brought me to this high position I have today so that I could save the lives of many people." He reassured them with kind words, and told them not to be afraid. He gave them assurance that God would bring them out of the land of Egypt and take them back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Joseph died when he was 110 years old. He had made his brothers promise they would take his body back to Canaan when they returned. They embalmed him, and his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Think about it. Jacob and Joseph were truly men of great character. They were loving, forgiving, unselfish, responsible, and saw to it that all the loose ends were tied up before they died. They didn't leave a lot of unfinished business for someone to have to take care of. They were both buried with great honor. Tying Up Loose Ends was a way of life for these two men. They didn't shirk responsibility.

Do you have some loose ends that you should be tying up? Is there someone you haven't forgiven? Have you taken care of business like you should? Do you have a traffic fine that you haven't paid? What about your credit cards? Are you up to date on your payments, or have you accumulated far more debt than you should? Are you caught up on paying God your tithe? Making a habit of keeping all the loose ends tied up will pay great dividends as you get out on your own, go to college, and get married. Doing these things are your duty. It's doing only what is required of you. Luke 17:10 says, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Matthew 25:30 makes it clear that an unprofitable servant isn't going to make it into God's Kingdom. So, be a person of godly character like Jacob and Joseph. Take care of your business by Tying Up Loose Ends.

STUDENT PRAYER

Awesome God and Father,
Thank You for showing me the benefits of being responsible.
Help me to develop the kind of character in my life that Jacob and Joseph had. I realize that I have to do more than is required of me to be a profitable servant and make it into Your Kingdom. Please be with me all the way.
In Jesus' name I ask these things.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Luke 17:6-10

Monday - Matthew 25:26-30

Tuesday - Genesis 50:16-19

Wednesday - Genesis 50:20-22

Thursday - Mark 11:22-25

Friday - Luke 17:1-3

Saturday - Romans 12:14-21

Activity

1. Go back through your seminar and list on the lines below every loose end that Jacob and Joseph tied up before they died.

2. Now list on the following lines loose ends that you need to tie up in your life and not leave hanging. Remember such things as people you need to forgive and need to apologize to, debts you need to pay, bridges you need to build and friendships you need to restore, and habits you need to develop, such as regular Bible study and prayer, etc.

Saved From Infanticide

MEMORY VERSE

Acts 17:25b, 26 - "Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 1:9-22

Exodus 2:1-25

Exodus 3:1-22

Exodus 21:22-25

Psalm 127:3-5

Lamentations 4:1-6

Acts 17:25-26

WORDS TO KNOW

PERPLEXED - Unable to grasp clearly or to think logically and decisively

DRUDGERY - dull, irksome, and fatiguing work: uninspiring or menial

INFANTICIDE - killing of babies

THE LESSON

Now the Israelites had become slaves to Pharaoh, King of Egypt. This new king felt no obligation to Joseph's descendants. Pharaoh was a brutal taskmaster who forced them to work long, hard hours in the fields. They had to carry heavy loads of mortar and brick to build cities. The harder he forced them to work, the more babies they had. The Israelites experienced a real population explosion. This new king feared the Israelites would outnumber the Egyptians. He didn't want that to happen because the Israelites would be harder to control. He had a problem to solve. Unfortunately, Pharaoh did not make a wise choice.

In Pharaoh's time, they didn't have the wherewithal to perform partial birth abortions by killing the baby and sucking its brains out before it was completely out of the birth canal. But not having this technique didn't stop him from infanticide - killing of boy babies. He gave instructions to the Hebrew midwives to kill all Hebrew boys as soon as they were born, while allowing girl babies to live. The midwives feared God more than Pharaoh and refused to

participate in infanticide. Pharaoh wanted to know why they disobeyed his orders, so they explained that the Hebrew women had their babies so quickly they didn't arrive in time for the birth. God blessed the midwives and the Israelites continued to multiply and become a mighty nation.

Since Pharaoh's orders to the midwives didn't solve the population problem, he commanded his people to throw newborn Hebrew boys into the Nile River. A young Hebrew man and woman from the tribe of Levi married and had a beautiful baby boy. There was no way this new mother wanted her baby thrown into the Nile. So she hid him as long as she could - about three months. When she could no longer hide the baby, she made a little boat, waterproofed it with tar, and put her baby in it. She went to the river and laid the little boat with her son in it among the reeds. The baby's sister watched from a distance to see what would happen to the baby.

Pharaoh's daughter, a princess, came to the river. She spotted the boat floating with a crying baby boy in it. She was very touched by this and immediately thought this was a Hebrew boy. The baby's sister came out of hiding and offered to find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby. The princess agreed. So the girl rushed home to get the baby's mother. The princess told this woman to take the baby home and nurse it and she would pay her for doing it. The princess named this little boy Moses, which means "to draw out." Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's palace as a Prince of Egypt, but he knew he was a Hebrew.

After he became a man, Moses went one day to visit his fellow Hebrews. He certainly didn't like what he saw: the living and working conditions of the Hebrews were awful!

Several years later the King of Egypt died leaving the Israelites in deep trouble because of their slavery. They groaned and wept bitterly before the Lord. God heard their cries from heaven and remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bring their descendants back into the land of Canaan. God knew that time had come.

While Moses tended his father-in-law's flock, an angel of God appeared to him as a flame of fire in a bush. Moses noticed the bush was on fire, but it didn't burn up. He went to investigate this unusual situation. God called out to him, "Moses!, Moses!" Moses was a bit perplexed and asked, "Who is it?"

"Don't come any closer," God told him. "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses covered his face with his hands, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord told him, "I have seen the deep sorrows of my people in Egypt, and have heard their pleas for freedom from their harsh taskmasters. I have come to deliver them from the Egyptians and to take them out of Egypt into a good land, a large land, a land flowing with milk and honey - the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the

Jebusites live. Yes, the wail of the people of Israel has risen to me in heaven, and I have seen the heavy tasks the Egyptians have oppressed them with. Now I am going to send you to Pharaoh, to demand that he let you lead my people out of Egypt" (Exodus 3: 4-10 TLB).

Put yourself in Moses' shoes. You are Hebrew and should have been thrown in the Nile to drown, but Pharaoh's own daughter rescued you. You were brought up in the King's palace and now God tells you to go to Pharaoh and demand that he release the people who are keeping his economy going. What would you have said? Moses had the same concerns and human nature that you would have. So he told God that He had the wrong man for this job. But Moses was the man God had Saved From Infanticide and chosen to do this big task. And God wasn't going to leave Moses without His help. God told him, "When you have led the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God here upon this mountain!"

Moses' next thought was that the Israelites wouldn't even know which god was sending him. Their 400 plus years in slavery caused them to lose sight of the true God and to be confused with the false gods of Egypt. God gave Moses several of His names to help the Israelites understand who He was: The Sovereign God, I Am, Jehovah, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses' instructions were to call the elders of Israel and tell them that God spoke to him through a burning bush, had seen their suffering, and would rescue them from humiliation and drudgery. He assured Moses that his job wouldn't be easy because of Pharaoh. But God promised to bring pressure on Pharaoh to break his will. This is the calling of a man named Moses and the beginning of the story of the Exodus.

STUDENT PRAYER

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
You are an awesome and merciful God. Thank you for seeing the suffering of the Israelites and delivering them. This gives me faith that you are a God who sees man's suffering and you hear us when we cry out to you.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Psalm 127:3-5

Monday - Acts 17:25-26

Tuesday - Exodus 3:4-10

Wednesday - Exodus 21:22-25

Thursday - Lamentations 4:1-6

Friday - Exodus 1:9-17

Saturday - Exodus 1:18-22

Activity

On the lines below, write a short paragraph for each of the questions.

1. How do you think God felt about Pharaoh demanding that all the boy babies be thrown into the Nile River to die?

2. What kinds of consequences do you think this would bring to Pharaoh and his people?

3. What kinds of economic consequences do you think the nation of Egypt would suffer from limiting their future workforce in this way?

4. List ways that you think the United States' economy will suffer because of killing off millions of babies since Roe vs Wade.

5. Speculate on what kinds of consequences God might bring on our nation because of killing off millions of our babies through abortion – infanticide.

From Bad to Worse

MEMORY VERSE

1 Peter 1:7 - "These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it - and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold; so if your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of his return."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 4:1-31

Exodus 5:1-23

1 Peter 1:7

1 Peter 1:7-9

1 Peter 2:21-22

1 Peter 3:18-22

WORDS TO KNOW

PURIFY - clear from material defilement or imperfections.

THE LESSON

Moses' encounter with God continued. God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that Pharaoh let Moses lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses told God that the Israelites would never believe that God had appeared to him.

God asked Moses, "What do you have there in your hand?" Moses replied that he had a shepherd's rod. "Throw it down on the ground," the Lord told him. So he threw it down - and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it! God said, "Grab it by the tail!" Moses did as God said, and the serpent became a rod in his hand again! God told Moses to do that before the Israelites and they would believe him and realize that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob really had appeared to him.

God continued showing Moses miracles that would surely help the Israelites to believe him. This time he was to put his hand in his robe next to his chest. When he pulled it out it was white with leprosy! God said, "Do it again!" When he pulled his hand out again, it came out normal.

God gave Moses yet a third miracle just in case the Israelites still didn't believe that God had appeared to him. He was to take water from the Nile River and pour it upon the dry land. It

would turn to blood! After all this, would you have been willing to follow God's instructions to go before the Israelites and tell them that God had appeared to you?

Moses became a great man of God. But at this point, he really didn't want the job and said, "Lord, please! Send someone else." He gave the excuse that he was not a good speaker. God was equipping Moses with all the tools he would need, yet this was taking Moses out of his comfort zone. The very miracles God was doing through Moses should have convinced Moses he could do this! God became angry. But He agreed to have Aaron, Moses' brother, be the spokesman. "And you will be as God to him, telling him what to say." God reminded Moses to take his rod so he could perform miracles.

Moses went home to talk over his godly assignment with Jethro, his father-in-law. He asked permission to visit his relatives in Egypt. So Moses took his wife and sons on a donkey and returned to Egypt. He kept a firm grip on the "rod of God." God gave Moses further instructions to go to Pharaoh, do the miracles He had shown him and say, "Israel is my eldest son, and I have commanded you to let him go away and worship me, but you have refused: and now see, I will slay your eldest son."

Moses and his family stopped for the night and Jehovah appeared to him and threatened to kill him. Zipporah, Moses' wife, took a flint knife and circumcised their son and accused Moses of being a bloody husband. After that, God left Moses alone and didn't kill him.

While Moses was on his way to Egypt, God spoke to Aaron, Moses' brother, and told him to go to Mount Horeb and meet Moses. They greeted each other warmly. Then Moses explained the assignment God had given them and told him about the miracles they must do before Pharaoh. The two of them went to Egypt and called all the elders of Israel together, told them what Jehovah had said to Moses, and performed miracles as the elders watched. That made believers out of the Israelites. They must have been thrilled to hear that God was going to rescue them from Egyptian slavery. They bowed their heads and worshiped.

Now it was time to go see Pharaoh. They told him, "We bring you a message from Jehovah, the God of Israel. . . 'Let my people go, for they must make a holy pilgrimage out into the wilderness, for a religious feast, to worship me there.'" Pharaoh wasn't thrilled with this demand. He arrogantly retorted, "Is that so? . . . And who is Jehovah, that I should listen to Him, and let Israel go? I don't know Jehovah and I will not let Israel go." Doubtless, Pharaoh didn't know Jehovah, or he would have been more careful with his attitude. They pressed further, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. We must take a three-days' trip into the wilderness and sacrifice there to Jehovah our God; if we don't obey Him, we face death by plague or sword."

"Who do you think you are?" Pharaoh shouted. He gave orders to not give straw to the Israelites to make bricks and insisted their production quotas remain the same. The taskmasters whipped

the Israelite work-crew bosses asking why they hadn't met their quotas. They complained to Pharaoh about their unjust treatment. Pharaoh said, "You don't have enough work, or else you wouldn't be saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah.' Get back to work. No straw will be given you, and you must deliver the regular quota of brick."

Discouraged, Moses went to God asking, "How can you mistreat your own people like this? Why did you ever send me, if you were going to do this to them? Ever since I gave Pharaoh your message, he has only been more and more brutal to them, and you have not delivered them at all!"

How would you have felt if it had been you going to Pharaoh? If you had been one of the unjustly beaten Israelites, would you have continued to have faith in God? God always knew exactly what was happening with the Israelites, but His timetable is not always ours. He has things He wants to accomplish, things He wants us to learn, character He wants us to build. 1 Peter 1:7 tells us, "These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it - and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold; so if your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of His return."

STUDENT PRAYER

Gracious and Loving God,
Sometimes we don't understand why things go From Bad to Worse. The Israelites must have wondered why You didn't deliver them immediately rather than having them suffer even more. But You are God. You're in charge and I trust You to know what You're doing.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - 1 Peter 1:7-9

Monday - 1 Peter 2:21-22

Tuesday - 1 Peter 3:18-22

Wednesday - Exodus 4:1-4

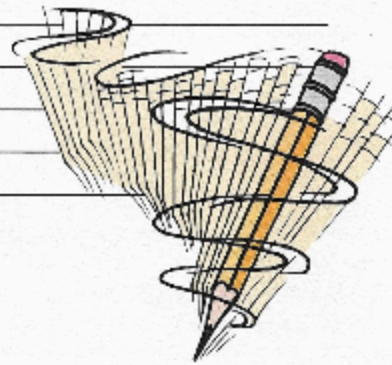
Thursday - Exodus 4:5-9

Friday - Exodus 4:10-13

Saturday - Exodus 4:14-17

Activity

On the lines below, write a short essay about a time when you felt unjustly treated, how you handled it, and what you learned from it.



The Big Picture

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 55:8 - “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 7:1-25

Numbers 23:15-24

Psalm 139:23-24

Isaiah 55:8

WORDS TO KNOW

ARROGANT - exaggerating one's worth in an overbearing manner

STUBBORN - unreasonably or perversely unyielding

THE LESSON

Have you ever felt that someone really let you down, and that nothing works out for you any more? Moses must have felt that way when he went to Pharaoh and got very disappointing results. Things went from bad to worse. What do you do at a time like that? Do you look for someone to blame? Do you turn to God? Well, Moses did both - he blamed God and he talked with God about the enormous problem he had on his hands.

You will recall from last week's seminar that Moses went to Pharaoh to ask that he let God's people go. After that, Pharaoh made things much more difficult for the Israelites and treated them brutally. So Moses went to God. "Lord," he protested, "how can you mistreat your own people like this? Why did you ever send me, if you were going to do this to them? Since I gave Pharaoh your message, he has only been more and more brutal to them (the Israelites) and you have not delivered them at all!?"

Your memory verse explains a lot. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." God was looking at The Big Picture, not the immediate. He had a plan to deliver Israel in His time and His way and it would be bigger and better than anyone thought.

God reassured Moses that he would see what He was about to do to Pharaoh. Moses knew the man he was dealing with. He was arrogant and stubborn and would have to be forced to let

God's people leave. After all, the Israelites made his economy work. If more than a million people left that country, his work-force would be greatly diminished and his economy would go into the tank. But God reminded Moses that He is God and He kept His solemn covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Part of that covenant included giving their descendants the land of Canaan. "And now I have heard the groanings of the people of Israel, in slavery now to the Egyptians, and I remember my promise." God has a timetable He's working, and He's not forgetful of His promises.

God told Moses to go back and tell the Israelites that He was going to use His mighty power to perform great miracles to deliver them from Egyptian slavery and set them free. Then they would know that He is Jehovah, and He is the One who would rescue them and bring them to the Promised Land.

Moses told the children of Israel what God had told him. By this time they were so down and discouraged that they wouldn't listen. So God sent Moses back again to tell Pharaoh that "he must let the people of Israel go." Moses was as human as any of us and he didn't like this assignment. Furthermore, he didn't like it that Pharaoh rebuffed him and that things got even worse for the Israelites. So Moses protested to God, "My own people won't even listen to me any more; how can I expect Pharaoh to? I'm no orator!"

God didn't appreciate the foot-dragging He was getting from Moses so He commanded that Moses and Aaron go back to Pharaoh and demand that he release God's people. Moses would be God's ambassador to Pharaoh, and Aaron, his brother would be his spokesman. But. .. God said that He would cause Pharaoh to stubbornly refuse again. At this point Moses must have wondered whose side God was on. God had a plan and He was going to show His power through a series of miracles. But God warned them that Pharaoh still wouldn't listen. Why? Well, God wanted the Egyptians to learn that He is God. So God's plan was larger than just the Israelites. Doubtless, God's special people are the Israelites, but He also loves Gentiles and wants them to know about Him and be in His Kingdom as well.

Eighty-year-old Moses and 83-year-old Aaron made the trek back to Pharaoh and had another confrontation with him. God had prepared Moses to perform a miracle before Pharaoh to prove that God had sent him. Aaron threw down the rod in front of Pharaoh and it became a serpent. Pharaoh wasn't impressed. He called in his magicians and they did the same thing with magic. But, God hadn't forgotten His servants. Moses' serpent swallowed the magicians' serpent. The saga continued and God was right again. Pharaoh's heart was hard and stubborn and he wouldn't listen to Moses.

When God has a plan, He sees it through to completion. He sent Moses and Aaron back the next morning to meet Pharaoh at the river when he arrived. "Tell him to let my people go into the desert to worship me." Again, Pharaoh didn't listen. So, Moses hit the water of the Nile River

with his rod, as God had told him. All the water in the Nile turned to blood and all the fish died. The Nile was their source of drinking water. But now they couldn't drink it.

Think about it. Why did God select the Nile River for His first plague on the Egyptians? Do you remember that Pharaoh commanded all the Israelites to throw their little boy babies into the Nile River? Do you think God had forgotten about this? God is a God of love and of justice. But this still didn't convince Pharaoh to let God's people go. His heart just became harder.

How do you react when God doesn't answer your prayers as you've asked? Do you get discouraged, begin doubting God, or have a bad attitude? Or do you go to God and ask Him to show you why this is happening so you can mend your ways? Try the prayer below.

STUDENT PRAYER

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Isaiah 55:8

Monday - Psalm 139:23

Tuesday - Exodus 7:1-7

Wednesday - Exodus 7:8-14

Thursday - Exodus 7:15-18

Friday - Exodus 7:19-23

Saturday - Numbers 23:15-24

Activity

Use your concordance to find a scripture to answer or explain the following statements.
Write the scripture on the lines following each statement.

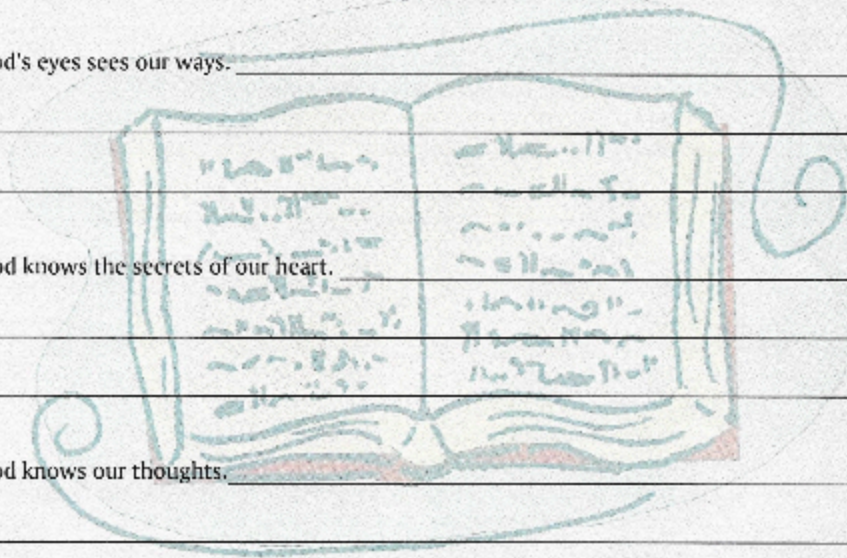
1. Man believes his ways are right. _____

2. God's eyes sees our ways. _____

3. God knows the secrets of our heart. _____

4. God knows our thoughts. _____

5. Give a warning about hardening our hearts. _____



More Plagues

MEMORY VERSE

Revelation 14:7 - "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 8:1-16

Exodus 20:1-6

Zechariah 14:9-21

Matthew 15:7-9

John 4:21-24

2 Corinthians 13:5

1 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Revelation 13:8-15

Revelation 14:7

WORDS TO KNOW

RENEGED - go back on a promise or commitment

ANNOYANCE - a source of vexation or irritation

KILOMETER - metric system - a kilometer is 1.6 longer than a mile.

THE LESSON

Put yourself in Moses shoes and ask, "Am I really ready to go to Pharaoh one more time and tell him that "Jehovah says, 'Let my people go and worship me?'" That's exactly the order Moses received from God. Seven days passed since the Nile had turned to blood. Pharaoh probably sighed with relief thinking his visitors wouldn't return with a message from God. But no such luck.

To motivate Pharaoh, or at least try to get his attention, God added a penalty to the message if he hardened his heart and refused to let the Israelites go into the wilderness to worship Him. He said, "If you refuse, I will send vast hordes of frogs across your land from one border to the other." Now that's a lot of frogs!

Egypt's land area is basically the same today as it was when Moses was meeting with Pharaoh. Today it's 1,001,449 square kilometers. In other words, Egypt is about the size of Texas and New Mexico. You know that it would take a gaggle of frogs to cover Texas and New Mexico! The frog was one of Egypt's gods. Well, if the Egyptians loved their gods, they were going to see a lot of them. Then the Lord said to Moses. "Instruct Aaron to point the rod toward all the rivers, streams, and pools of Egypt, so that there will be frogs in every corner of the land." Aaron did, and frogs covered the nation.

Think about it. Frogs invaded the homes, bedrooms, ovens, bread-kneading troughs, and even Pharaoh's palace. Pharaoh could see his hopping gods right up close - frequently. Imagine sitting down to eat with frogs hopping on your table, plate, glass, and silverware. A frog isn't really the type of garnish you want on your ice cream, is it? Pharaoh and all the Egyptians had these croaking, crawling, creeping intruders - everywhere! The magicians again imitated this miracle and somehow produced frogs. But who needed more frogs at a time like this? Pharaoh had enough of his frog gods. He summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile." "Tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

Moses replied, "It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God. The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile." Moses prayed to God about the frogs and God answered Moses' prayer. Frogs died in the houses, courtyards, and in the fields. What an absolute stench! Frogs were piled up everywhere. The land reeked of them. Compared to what was to come, frogs were just a trivial annoyance. But, in spite of the smell, Pharaoh regained his confidence and reneged on his word.

God had a plan and was working His plan. Was Pharaoh going to outsmart God? His plan was that Pharaoh, the Israelites, and the Egyptians would know well that He was the one true God of Heaven by the time He delivered the Israelites. Seminar One in the first book of the Great Bible Heroes series (to follow the Creation series) starts with, "Then God issued this edict: "I am Jehovah your God who liberated you from your slavery in Egypt. You may worship no other god than me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them: For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:1-6). This is absolute bedrock to your

Christian faith. The Egyptians had many gods, of which frogs were just one. But the God of Heaven is Supreme. He's worthy of our complete trust and worship.

What does all of this have to do with this seminar? The very first plague God sent on Egypt was turning the Nile into blood - that's where Pharaoh threw all the little boy babies to die. The next plague gave them their fill of one of their gods - croaking, crawling, creeping frog gods. The Egyptians were in total violation of the first commandment.

Then what does all of this have to do with you? Can we point a finger at Pharaoh without examining ourselves? What things do we put before the true God of Heaven? The way we know is by what we do. Do we give in to peer pressure and drink or break the Sabbath? Do we put other relationships above our relationship with God? What about physical things such as a car, stuff, clothes, the way we look, sports, etc.? Are these things more important than pleasing God? Do these things take the place of reading your daily devotionals and praying? What happens when you do this? "For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me."

But the flip side is all good. God says He will show "love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." God didn't want Pharaoh or the Egyptians to get hurt, but they disobeyed and suffered the consequences. He doesn't want you to get hurt either. Will you put Him first in your life and keep His commandments daily?

STUDENT PRAYER

Awesome God and Supreme Ruler,

Thank you for showing me the way to happiness and peace. Help me to look at Pharaoh's example and learn from history so I will never have to learn it firsthand. Forgive me for putting other gods before you.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Revelation 14:7

Monday - Revelation 13:8-15

Tuesday - John 4:21-24

Wednesday - Matthew 15:7-9

Thursday - Zechariah 14:9-21

Friday - 2 Corinthians 13:5

Saturday - 1 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Activity

In the world we live in today, it's all too easy to let other things replace God as being first in our lives. Our entire world is geared to that end. Think about it. What are you putting first in your life? Or another thing to ask is, "What am I putting before the God of Heaven?" It may be one thing, or it may be many things, such as a relationship, the adulation and acceptance of your peers, a car, stuff, a job, clothes, your own image of how you want to look, etc. How will you know if you're putting something before God? Look at the way you spend your time, and the things you do and don't do. If you're not studying your Bible every day and praying, are you really putting God first in your life? If you're going to the prom, a movie, or doing things that don't honor God on the Sabbath, are you really putting God first in your life? Are you obsessed with getting or having a car? What about the way you dress? Is it more important what others you run with think about you than what God thinks about you? Take a moment and think about this, then list things on the lines below that you need to change in your life to put God first. Next, make a commitment to change those things you've let slip and write out your commitment. Things written down are much more likely to get done.

THINGS I NEED TO CHANGE IN MY LIFE:

I MAKE A COMMITMENT TO:

Scratch, Scratch, Scratch

MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 6:7 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 8:16-32

Psalm 15:1-5

Proverbs 29:1-3

Ecclesiastes 8:9-13

Isaiah 66:1-2

Galatians 6:7

Galatians 6:7-9

WORDS TO KNOW

DISTINCTION - to perceive a difference

CHARACTER - moral excellence and firmness; a person marked by notable or conspicuous behavior

THE LESSON

You've known people who never learn their lesson. They just repeat the same mistake over and over again. Pharaoh was the worst in doing this. In spite of inconvenient and uncomfortable plagues, he hardened his heart and refused to let God's people go. So God said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to strike the dust with his rod, and it will become lice, throughout all the land of Egypt." Moses and Aaron did as God commanded, and lice infested the entire nation, covering the Egyptians and their animals. The magicians tried to do the same with their secret arts. but this time they failed. (Exodus 8:16-18 TLB).

Imagine what it must have been like to watch everyone scratching their heads, bodies, and all sorts of embarrassing places. There are at least three kinds of lice but the Bible doesn't tell us what kinds God sent. Female lice lay nits in the hair when a person has head lice. You don't have to be a dirty person to get them. Lice can cause diseases but, generally, they are mostly embarrassing, and make you more uncomfortable than ill. Body lice are usually caused from not

bathing or changing your clothes often enough. Either of these would be embarrassing and drive you nutty with the constant itching.

The magicians told Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and stubborn, and he wouldn't listen to them. I doubt seriously that God exempted him from lice. He was scratching along with everyone else.

But God had yet to get Pharaoh's attention. The next morning God told Moses to get up early to meet Pharaoh at the river where he bathed, and tell him, "Jehovah says, 'Let my people go and worship me.'" No, three times was not the charm, and this was the third plague. Moses laid out Pharaoh's options. If he didn't let the Israelites go, God would send swarms of flies throughout Egypt. Houses would be filled and the ground would be covered with flies. This time, God spared the Israelites of this plague. They lived in Goshen and no flies were there. This was to make Pharaoh know that God was the God of all the earth by making a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Pharaoh's palace was buzzing with flies, as was every other Egyptian home. How unappetizing it must have been to have flies all over their food! Pharaoh didn't tolerate this for long before summoning Moses and Aaron. "All right, go ahead and sacrifice to your God, but do it here in the land. Don't go out into the wilderness." Pharaoh said. Being a controlling person, he wasn't about to let the Israelites leave the country - at least until things got considerably worse. Pharaoh may have had other motives as well. Moses refused to sacrifice to God in Egypt. The Egyptians hated the Israelites sacrificing to God so much, Moses feared they would be killed. He insisted they take a three-day trip into the wilderness to sacrifice to Jehovah. Pharaoh agreed and asked Moses to plead to God for all the pesky flies to go away.

Moses agreed with this warning, "Never again lie to us by promising to let the people go and then changing your mind." Moses left and asked the Lord to get rid of the flies. God caused the swarms to disappear. As soon as they were gone, Pharaoh was up to his old tricks. He hardened his heart again and didn't let the people go.

Pharaoh was a born gambler. He was willing to push, even with God, as far as he could and hoped he didn't get caught. He would say one thing and do another. It wasn't enough to see the Nile turn to blood and Egypt's water supply ruined. Frogs were certainly not pleasant, but he quickly forgot about them as soon as God removed them. He had now endured the discomfort from having lice. Filthy swarms of flies were a terrible irritation, but all of these things were quickly forgotten as soon as God removed them. Pharaoh was a man of no character. Not even his word was good.

Are you a gambler like Pharaoh? Do you push God, maybe as far as you dare, and even your parents, and the law? The Living Bible adds understanding to your memory verse. "Don't be

misled; remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it: a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows! If he sows to please his own wrong desires, he will be planting seeds of evil and he will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death; but if he plants the good things of the Spirit, he will reap the everlasting life which the Holy Spirit gives him. And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up." (Galatians 6:7-9 TLB).

It's too easy to promise God we'll do what He says and then renege on our word, as Pharaoh did. King David asked, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" His answer includes, "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not" (Psalm 15: 4). If your word is not good, neither God nor man can depend on what you say. It's a requirement for dwelling in God's holy hill.

Why do people like Pharaoh push and renege on their word? God is so gracious and merciful that He gives us time to turn around and repent. We often misinterpret what God is doing by His wrath not immediately descending upon us. We find in Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Will you be like Pharaoh and take the chance that God won't follow through with a punishment, or will you obey God immediately?

STUDENT PRAYER

Gracious and merciful God,
Thank You for Your patience. Help me never to misinterpret it as You being lax with consequences. Help me learn to love and fear You from these seminars about the plagues You brought on Pharaoh's Egypt because he pushed the envelope too far and constantly gambled with Your patience. Forgive me of my sins.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Galatians 6:7-9

Monday - Psalm 15:1-5

Tuesday - Ecclesiastes 8:9-13

Wednesday - Exodus 8:16-18

Thursday - Proverbs 29:1-3

Friday - Isaiah 66:1-2

Saturday - Exodus 8:19-32

Activity

Write the following scriptures that are in today's seminar on the lines below and on a separate paper. When you are finished, tape or tack the scriptures you wrote on the piece of paper to your bedroom wall. Read them every day for the next week. This will help them to become a part of your character.



Galatians 6:7-9

Psalms 15:4

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Strike Five, Six, Seven

MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 15:22b-23a - "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 9:1-35

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Proverbs 12:4-10

2 Timothy 3:8-9

WORDS TO KNOW

KILN - an oven or an enclosed furnace used to process a substance by burning or drying

TENACIOUS - persistent or adhering to something valued or habitual

THE LESSON

In baseball, if a batter gets three strikes, he's out. In California, a person convicted of three felonies is in the clinker for life. We've followed Pharaoh to the fifth strike and he's still as stubborn as a mule in spite of a lot of discomfort and annoyances.

God said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'GOD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Release my people so they can worship me. If you refuse to release them and continue to hold on to them. I'm giving you fair warning: GOD will come down hard on your livestock out in the fields - horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep - striking them with a severe disease. GOD will draw a sharp line between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. Not one animal that belongs to the Israelites will die.'

"Then GOD set the time: 'Tomorrow GOD will do this thing.'

"And the next day GOD did it. All the livestock of Egypt died, but not one animal of the Israelites died. Pharaoh sent men to find out what had happened and there it was; none of the livestock of the Israelites had died - not one death. . . (The Message).

Do you hate to see an animal suffer as much as I do? My cat jumped onto a hot charcoal grill one night and burned himself. Even though this poor animal smelled like burned hair, I stayed up

most of the night doing everything I could to make Spook comfortable. I sought the best veterinarian I could find to treat and give me advice on how to keep Maggie, my English Springer Spaniel, healthy and alive for 16½ years. We've all seen the pitiful sight of cows with mad cow disease falling over as they tried to walk or stand. The normal person wants to help a suffering animal. Proverbs 12:10 says, "A righteous man regards the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Even though Pharaoh knew what would happen to all the animals in Egypt, his stubbornness persisted. He wouldn't release God's people.

God was not impressed with Pharaoh's hard heart and stubbornness. This time He didn't have Moses and Aaron tell Pharaoh to let His people go or there would be boils. What He did say was, "Take ashes from the kiln. Moses, toss it into the sky as Pharaoh watches. It will spread like fine dust over all the land of Egypt and cause boils to break out upon people and animals alike, throughout the land." Pharaoh's magicians couldn't attempt to duplicate this plague because they were suffering from boils. God hardened Pharaoh's heart and he still tenaciously refused to let the Israelites go worship God. How did God harden Pharaoh's heart? All He had to do was remove the plague and Pharaoh was as stubborn as a mule.

God was growing weary of Pharaoh's stubbornness and beginning to tighten the screws. For the seventh time, God sent Moses to Pharaoh to say: "Let my people go to worship me." God said that He could have killed Pharaoh by now, but He didn't because He wanted to demonstrate His power to all the earth. Arrogant Pharaoh still thought he was great and could defy God's power by refusing to let God's people go.

God told Moses, "Tomorrow about this time I will send a hailstorm across the nation such as there has never been since Egypt was founded! Quick! Bring in your cattle from the fields, for every man and animal left out in the fields will die beneath the hail!" (Exodus 9:19, TLB). That must have been some storm. Even some Egyptians realized that when God said He was going to do something that He was not kidding, and they had better take cover. They brought their cattle and slaves in from the fields. But those who had no regard for God left them out in the storm. Moses held out his hand, and God sent thunder, hail, and lightning. It was awesome! All Egypt lay in ruins. The land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was the only spot in Egypt without hail that day.

This got Pharaoh's attention and he sent for Moses and Aaron. "I finally see my fault." Pharaoh told them. He said He would let the Israelites go at once if God would only put an end to the terrifying thunder and hail. Moses agreed even though he knew that Pharaoh wouldn't obey God. When Moses lifted his hands to heaven to the Lord, the thunder, hail, and rain stopped. But... for the seventh time, Pharaoh refused to let God's people go.

The one lesson that should ring in your ears is that God is not impressed with your self-importance, arrogance, self-will, stubbornness, and hard-heartedness. These things do not reap

good things. Quite the contrary! These characteristics in Egypt's leader brought much pain and suffering, both to man and beast, and destroyed Pharaoh's nation. Samuel told King Saul, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" 1(Samuel 15:22b-23a).

Being tenacious can be a good or bad character trait. If you're tenaciously stubborn in rejecting God's will in your life, this is iniquity or sin and idolatry. You're putting your own person, your own self-interest and self-preservation before what God wants you to do. On the other hand, if you tenaciously obey and follow God, blessings will follow you all the days of your life and you'll make it into God's Kingdom. This is serious business and young adults can't learn this lesson too soon. Will you tenaciously obey and follow God?

STUDENT PRAYER

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

Thank You that You saved Your people and even protected them from many of the plagues that came on Egypt. Give me a responsive mind to grasp every lesson I can learn from this.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - 1 Samuel 15:22-23

Monday - Proverbs 12:4-10

Tuesday - 2 Timothy 3:8-9

Wednesday - Exodus 9:1-7

Thursday - Exodus 9:8-12

Friday - Exodus 9:13-21

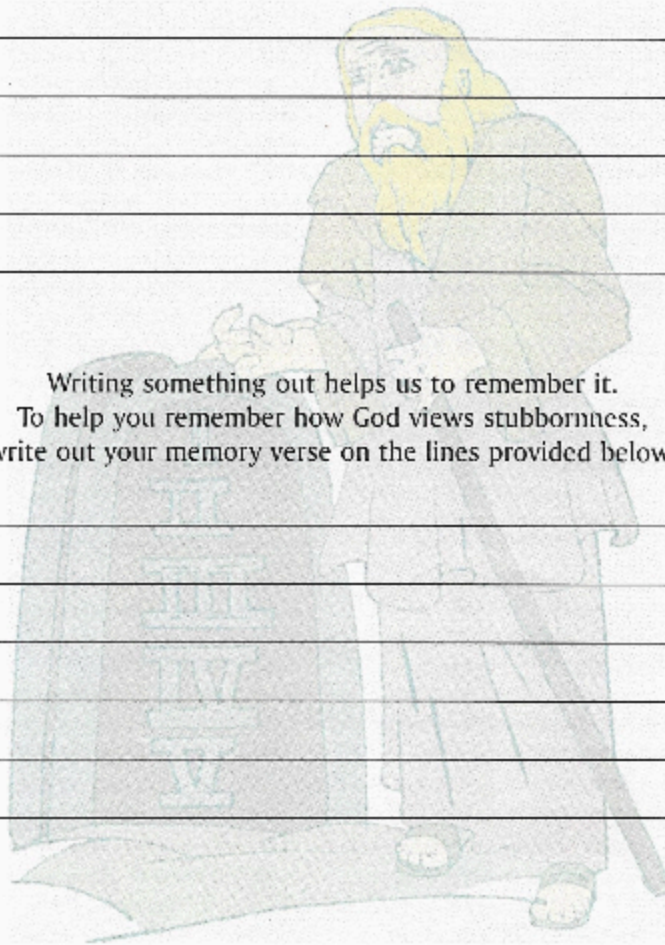
Saturday - Exodus 9:22-26

Activity

Being tenacious can be a good or bad character trait.
List five things that God wants you to do tenaciously
and support each with a Scripture:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Writing something out helps us to remember it.
To help you remember how God views stubbornness,
write out your memory verse on the lines provided below:



Humility vs. Conceit

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 12:3 - “For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith!” (NASB).

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 10:1-29

Psalm 39:10-11

Psalm 62:7-9

Psalm 103:8-16

Isaiah 66:1-3

Jeremiah 4:5-9

Romans 12:1-5

Romans 12:3

Philippians 2:1-4

James 4:4-6

WORDS TO KNOW

INTRANSIGENT - refusing to compromise or to abandon an extreme position or attitude.

IMMINENT - ready to take place

CONTRITE - grieving and penitent

SELF-ESTEEM - simply the way you esteem yourself; the trick is accurately appraising your abilities, then remaining humble before God

THE LESSON

God sent Moses back to Pharaoh once again. He was up front with Moses, telling him that He would harden Pharaoh's heart, and the hearts of his officials. This is the first time we've been told that Egyptian officials were also as obstinate as Pharaoh. What was God's purpose in doing even more miracles? He wanted to show His power. This would be a story that parents would tell their children and grandchildren, a story about what fools the Egyptians were and how God proved He was Jehovah.

Moses and Aaron trekked to the palace to see Pharaoh again. The message was, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before the Lord?" Demands for Israel's release were laid down. They allowed enough time for Pharaoh to reflect on what had been happening to him and his nation, and to repent. Couldn't Pharaoh see that Egypt was just about finished? How long could this go on? Someone had to give in. But Pharaoh didn't!

Pharaoh's refusal to let God's people go into the desert to worship would bring a plague of locusts so thick that no one could see the ground. Locusts would finish off every sprig of greenery that wasn't destroyed by the plague of hail. This would be the worst plague of locusts in Egyptian history.

Moses stalked out to talk with the court officials. They complained Moses was destroying them completely. Out of loyalty to their king and country, they blamed Moses. But surely they were beginning to become impatient with Pharaoh's intransigence.

This was the first time that Moses and Aaron returned to the palace for more negotiations. This had to do with the imminent locust plague. Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go worship their God with the stipulation that they couldn't take their children with them. This was not acceptable to Moses. The children had to go. Then he and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

God told Moses to hold out his hands over the land of Egypt to bring locusts. Moses lifted his rod and God caused the east wind to blow. By morning, locusts covered the land from border to border - the worst locust plague in Egyptian history. They were so thick the land was dark. They ate every bit of vegetation. Not a tree or plant could be found in Egypt.

Guess what? Pharaoh did his usual about face and pled with Moses to ask God to get rid of the locusts. Moses honored Pharaoh's request and God blew the locusts to the Red Sea. But God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did a one-eighty yet again.

Now Pharaoh was willing to let the Israelites go worship God and take their children, but not their flocks and herds. Moses refused because they needed animals to offer sacrifices. Not one hoof would be left behind. Again God hardened Pharaoh's heart and he wouldn't let the Israelites go.

Yet another disaster was lurking. God instructed Moses to stretch out his hands and a thick darkness covered all the land for three days. This came without Pharaoh receiving a warning. The Egyptians couldn't see each other and they couldn't go out. The sun was totally darkened. Not so in the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. They had lights in their houses.

You know the story well by now, it's been repeated so many times. Pharaoh called Moses and agreed for the Israelites to leave. He quickly did a flip-flop and refused to let the Israelites go. He shouted at Moses to get out, that he didn't want to see him the rest of his life.

Now this is the kind of God Pharaoh was fighting. "He is merciful and tender toward those who don't deserve it; he is slow to get angry and full of kindness and love. He never bears a grudge, nor remains angry forever. He has not punished us as we deserve for all our sins, for his mercy toward those who fear and honor him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth" (Psalm 103:8-9). In spite of God's mercy, His patience was running thin with Pharaoh. He had taken about as much as He was going to. Soon He would make it clear to Pharaoh, the Israelites, and the Egyptians that He is Jehovah God.

Have you ever pushed your parents, only to have their wrath suddenly descend on you? God is our Heavenly Father. He is God. He is the One who created us and our universe and He's given us everything we have. He has every right to expect us to do what He says without any foot-dragging. "Heaven is MY throne and the earth is my footstool. What Temple can you build for me as good as that? My hand has made both earth and skies, and they are mine. Yet I will look with pity on the man who has a humble and a contrite heart, who trembles at my word. But those who choose their own ways, delighting in their sins, are cursed. God will not accept their offerings. When such men sacrifice an ox on the altar of God, it is no more acceptable to him than human sacrifice" (Isaiah 66:1-3, TLB).

Humility is one of the greatest virtues. Oh, it may not be very cool with your peers. But God is not interested in you being cool. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, paraphrase). But we're all just a little bit like God. We resist a proud person as well. Paul had this to say about humility, "Don't think more highly of yourself than you should" (Roman 12:3, paraphrase). In Philippians 2:3 he said, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Always remember to humble yourself and submit to God's will before He has to deal with you as He did with Pharaoh. God's not looking for pride and conceit. He's looking for humility in you.

STUDENT PRAYER

Almighty God,

Thank You for being God and for revealing Yourself to me. Help me to have a proper estimate of myself and of You. Grant me Godly humility so that I will esteem others better than myself. And above all, help me to humbly bow before You as my King and my God.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - James 4:4-6

Monday - Romans 12:1-5

Tuesday - Jeremiah 4:5-9

Wednesday - Philippians 2:1-4

Thursday - Psalm 103:8-16

Friday - Psalm 39:10-11

Saturday - Psalm 62:7-9

Activity

Do you struggle with staying humble? Does pride sometimes rear its ugly head?

1. Jesus "emptied Himself" by taking on the form of a servant. When was the last time you "emptied yourself" and took on the form of a servant?

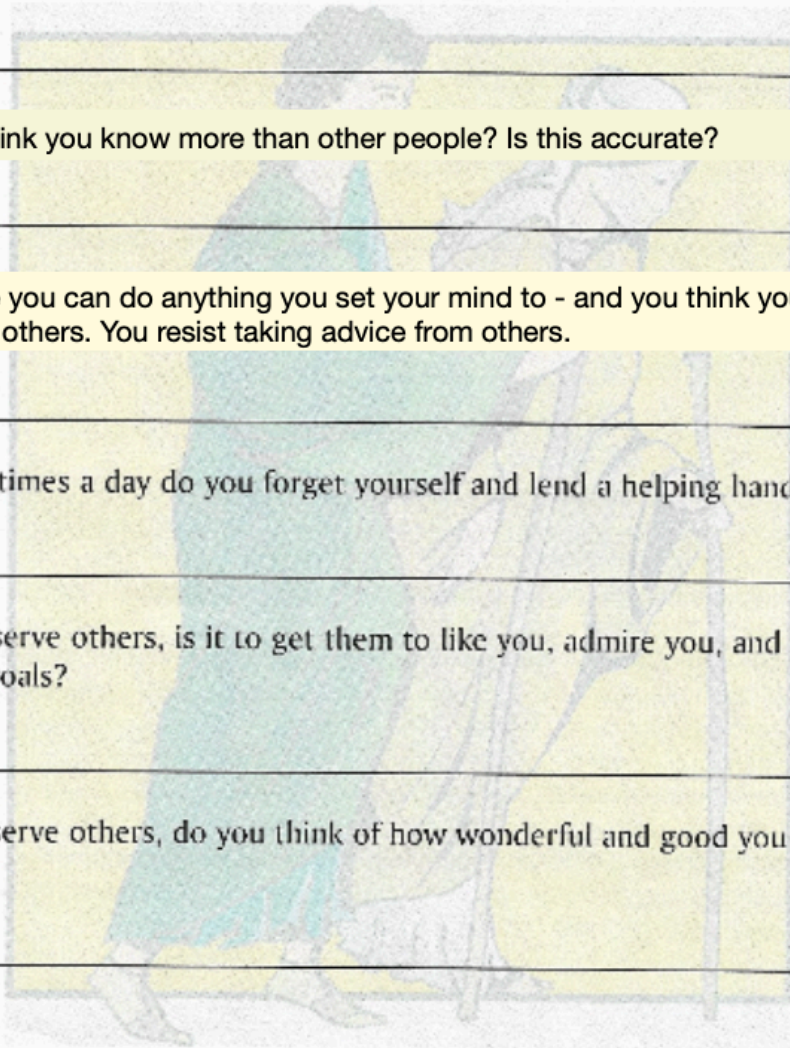
2. Do you think you know more than other people? Is this accurate?

3. You believe you can do anything you set your mind to - and you think you're better than others. You resist taking advice from others.

4. How many times a day do you forget yourself and lend a helping hand to others?

5. When you serve others, is it to get them to like you, admire you, and to achieve your own goals?

6. When you serve others, do you think of how wonderful and good you are for doing this?



God's Not Finished

MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 66:2 - "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 11:1-10

Numbers 12:3

Psalms 72:1-5

Proverbs 22:1-4

Proverbs 27:1-3

Isaiah 66:2

Matthew 5:1-5

Matthew 23:11-12

Luke 17:7-10

Philippians 1:1-6

WORDS TO KNOW

HUMBLE - not proud or haughty; not arrogant or assertive

TSUNAMI - a great sea wave produced by submarine earth movement or volcanic eruption; tidal wave

THE LESSON

December 26, 2004 an underground 9.0-magnitude earthquake shook the Indian Ocean generating tsunamis that caused one of the deadliest natural disasters in modern history. Eleven nations suffered many deaths from these tsunamis. They included such nations as Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives, and even African nations - Somalia, Tanzania, and Seychelles close to 300 miles away. At the end of the year, the death toll was expected to push to more than 200,000 people. Deaths from resulting disease epidemics pushed the death toll much higher.

Regardless of the natural disaster - and there are terrible disasters almost constantly - people suffer. News reports show the sad, anguished faces looking for their loved ones. This is horrible beyond belief. No matter what nationality you are, when disaster hits, you hurt.

The plagues that God brought on Egypt, because Pharaoh would not allow the Israelites to go into the wilderness and worship Him, were devastating to that nation. The Egyptian people suffered greatly from them. But God wasn't finished because Pharaoh kept reneging on his word. God said, "I will send just one more disaster on Pharaoh and his land, and after that he will let you go; in fact, he will be so anxious to get rid of you that he will practically throw you out of the country."

God always sees the big picture. He looked ahead and could see what the Israelites would need. They were poor slaves without money or fine earthly possessions. So God told Moses to prepare the Israelites to ask their Egyptian neighbors for costly gold and silver jewelry. God had one final disaster to bring on Egypt, and they would be anxious to get rid of the Israelites. As a matter of fact, the Egyptians would practically throw them out of the country.

Because of the type of person Moses was, he was highly respected among the Egyptian people and revered by Pharaoh's officials. God caused the people of Egypt to be very favorable towards the Israelites. Have you ever asked God for a favor in the eves of a person or group - maybe your teacher or employer when you want time off for the Feast?

Think about it. What kind of man did Moses have to be for the Egyptians to hold him in such high regard and Pharaoh's officials to revere him? We've learned in a previous seminar that "God resists the proud." Don't you resist the proud too? Isn't there something about a proud, self-righteous, know-it-all person that gets under your skin? You'd probably rather not see her coming. We certainly don't want God running from us when we come to Him in need.

Numbers 12:3 tells us what kind of man Moses was. "Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." He was not proud or haughty, not arrogant or assertive. Moses was a servant of God's people. Do you remember what we learned last week about servants? Servants think more about others than themselves. Servants focus on others, not themselves. This is true humility: not thinking less of ourselves but thinking of ourselves less. They are self-forgetful. Paul said, "Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand." This is what it means to 'lose your life' - forgetting yourself in service to others. When we stop focusing on our own needs, we become aware of the needs around us.

Jesus "emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant" (The Purpose Driven Life). Going before Pharaoh, and repeatedly giving him bad news, was not some kind of glamorous joy ride. Moses didn't want this job, but God called him through the burning bush to save His people from slavery. This was a self-sacrificing job that did his self-esteem no good. Israel recognized this and had the highest regard for him.

Now Moses announced to Pharaoh, "Jehovah says, 'About midnight I will pass through Egypt. And all the oldest sons shall die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest child of Pharaoh, heir

to his throne, to the oldest child of his lowliest slave; and even the firstborn of the animals. The wail of death will resound throughout the entire land of Egypt; never before has there been such anguish, and it will never be again."

Moses told Pharaoh God promised to completely protect the Israelites through this disaster. Not even a dog shall move his tongue against them, nor shall any of their animals die. Why? To show the Israelites that Jehovah makes a distinction between His people and the Egyptians. After this disaster, the officials will run to Moses bowing low and begging, "Please leave at once, and take all your people with you." Then, red-faced with anger, Moses stomped from the palace.

What do you think? Would Pharaoh listen this time and let God's people go worship Him? No, but it did provide God with the opportunity to do mighty miracles to demonstrate His power. "So although Moses and Aaron did these miracles right before Pharaoh's eyes, the Lord hardened his heart so that he wouldn't let the people leave the land."

This is high drama. Pharaoh had to have wondered if the heir to his throne would be dead in less than 24 hours. How did the people of Egypt react when their firstborn sons and even animals died because Pharaoh was so self-willed and stubborn? The saga will continue in the next seminar.

STUDENT PRAYER

Awesome God,

Thank You for making a difference between Your people and the Egyptians. Your people today are those who obediently submit to You and live by every word of God. It gives me confidence to know You will make a distinction when Your time comes to punish this earth. Help me to live a life worthy of Your protection.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Proverbs 22:1-4

Monday - Matthew 5:1-5

Tuesday - Psalm 72:1-5

Wednesday - Matthew 23:11-12

Thursday - Luke 17:7-10

Friday - Proverbs 27:1-3

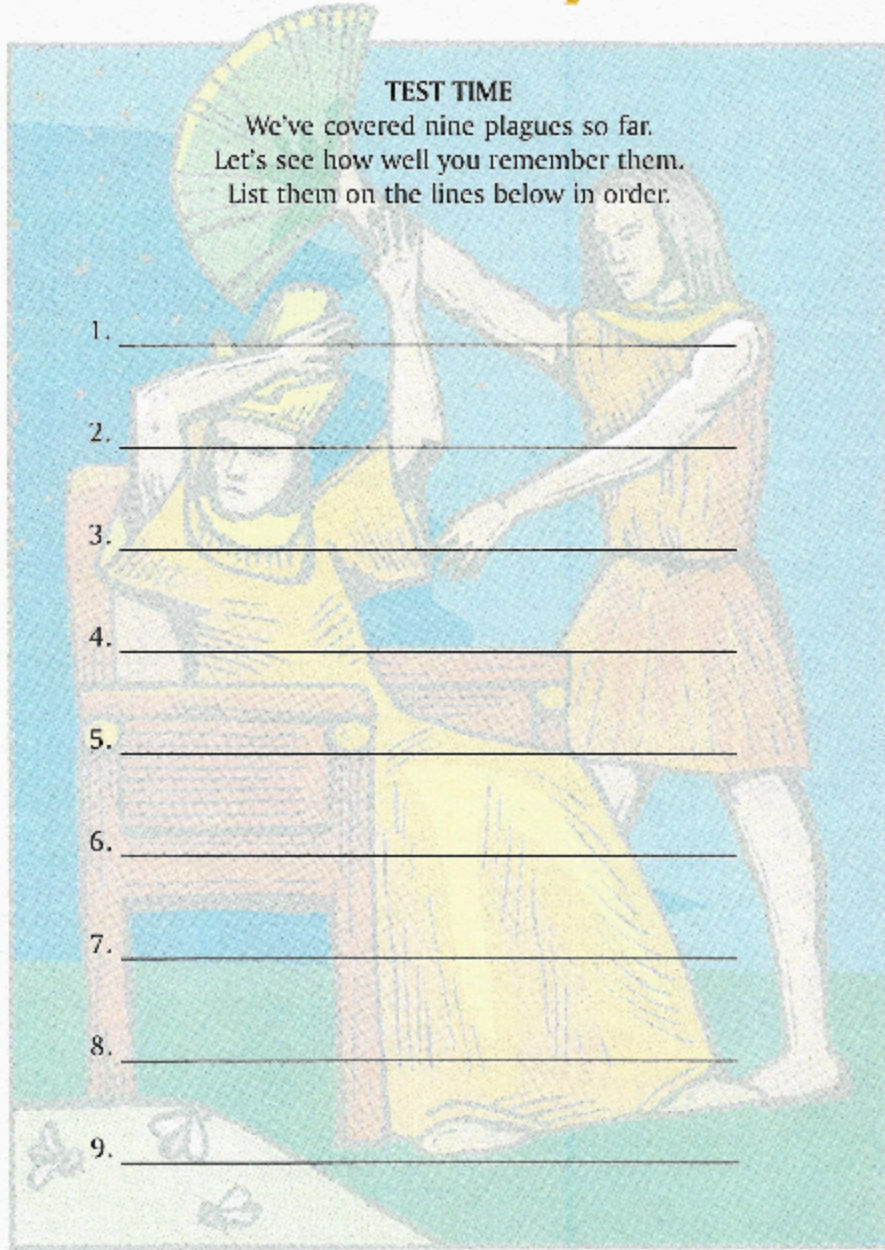
Saturday - Philippians 1:1-6

Activity

TEST TIME

We've covered nine plagues so far.
Let's see how well you remember them.
List them on the lines below in order.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____



Payday

MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 12:17 - "And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever."

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 12:1-51

Exodus 12:17

Exodus 13:1-22

Joshua 24:32

Psalm 15:1-5

Psalm 33:1-11

Psalm 72:1-11

Proverbs 1:1-21

WORDS TO KNOW

CONSECRATE - dedicate to a sacred purpose

THE LESSON

God spoke to Moses and Aaron and told them that this month was to be the first month of the year. They were to address the entire community of Israel. "Tell them that each man is to take a lamb for his family, one lamb to a house. If the family is too small for a lamb, then share it with a neighbor. Give some thought to how much each person will eat. The animal is to be a one year old male sheep or goat, without any defects. Keep it penned up until the evening of the 14th day of this month and then slaughter it. Take a cluster of hyssop branches, dip them in the blood from the animal you kill, strike them against the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which you will eat. Don't eat the meat raw, or boiled: make sure you roast the whole animal, head, legs, and innards. Eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Burn any leftovers, and don't leave any of it until morning. No one is to leave the house until morning."

Further instructions included being fully dressed with your sandals on, and your stick in your hand when you eat the Lord's Passover. Eat it in a hurry. God will go through Egypt on this night and strike down every firstborn in the land, whether human or animal, and bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. "I am God. When I see the blood on your house, I will pass over you, no

disaster will touch you. The Passover is to be celebrated as a memorial festival forever! Get rid of all the leavening in your house and celebrate the Days of Unleavened bread for seven days and don't let a trace of leavening be found in your house during that time. The first and seventh days are holy: do no work on those days, only what you have to do for preparation of meals."

When your children ask you, "Why are we doing this?" Explain, "It's the Passover sacrifice to God who passed over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt when he hit Egypt with death but rescued us." The people bowed and worshiped. Then the Israelites did what God had commanded Moses and Aaron. They did it all.

The drama began at midnight. God struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from Pharaoh's firstborn, who sits on his throne, right down to the firstborn of the prisoner locked up in jail. Even firstborn animals were killed.

God had at last gotten through to hard-hearted Pharaoh. He, his servants, and everyone else in Egypt got up that night. What wild wailing! There wasn't a house where someone wasn't dead. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron during the night. "Leave us, please go away, all of you; go and serve Jehovah as you said. Take your flocks and herds and be gone, and oh, give me a blessing as you go." The Egyptians were urgent to get the Israelites out of the land as quickly as possible. Pharaoh was in no mood to renege this time.

The Israelites had asked the Egyptians for gold and silver jewelry and clothing, and the Egyptians gave them what they wanted. They took their bread dough without yeast, bound their kneading troughs into their spare clothes, and carried them on their shoulders. They baked unleavened cakes. Their dough was without yeast because they left Egypt in such a hurry.

The Israelites left Rameses, Egypt by night and started for Succoth. There were 600,000 men besides women and children, and many other people walked with large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds. The number of people walking out was most likely considerably more than one million people.

What a happy sight this must have been for the Israelites! Free at last! What a night this was to remember! The Israelites were rescued from slavery exactly 430 years to the day from the time they lived in Egypt.

Think about it. Pharaoh tenaciously held on and wouldn't allow the Israelites to go for three days into the wilderness to worship God. He was warned repeatedly, and he and his nation were severely punished. But in his arrogance and hard-heartedness, he refused to let God's people go after nine plagues and ten warnings. Payday came. Now he was a broken, grieving man. His slave workforce was gone. The nation had been ravaged with plagues. He lost his firstborn son, the heir apparent to the throne. Did he win? No! Did his tenacious defiance of God pay off? Absolutely not!

There was another thing that God wanted the Israelites to do. He told Moses they should "Consecrate every firstborn male to him whether person or animal, it's God's." God had spared all firstborn Israelites and took the lives of the Egyptians. The Israelites were special to Him and He wanted them to be consecrated to Him. He said to tell their sons, "I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt. This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the Lord brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year" (Exodus 13:9-10, NIV).

At last the plagues were over. The Israelites were free. They were on their way to the Promised Land in military formation. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly swear to do it, saying "God will surely hold you accountable, so make sure you bring my bones from here with you." They buried his bones in Shechem (Joshua 24:32). God went ahead of them in a Pillar of Cloud during the day to guide them, and a Pillar of Fire gave them light at night. They traveled both day and night.

STUDENT PRAYER

Holy Father,
Thank You for showing me how much You love Your people and how You delivered them from slavery. This is truly a sobering seminar. Help me to learn every lesson I should from it.
In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Sunday - Psalm 15:1-5

Monday - Psalm 33:1-11

Tuesday - Psalm 72:1-11

Wednesday - Proverbs 1:1-21

Thursday - Joshua 24:32

Friday - Exodus 13:9-10

Saturday - Exodus 12:17

Activity

Answer the following questions:

1. There were _____ (number of) plagues on the Egyptians.
2. _____ men left Egypt by night.
3. Did other people go with them, other than Israelites? _____
4. Why did they take Joseph's bones with them? _____

5. The Passover lamb was boiled? True or False _____
6. The Days of Unleavened Bread are to be kept for how many days? _____
7. How far in the future are the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread to be kept? _____
8. Pharaoh's firstborn son, his heir apparent, died in the ninth plague?
True or False _____
9. What time of the day or night did the Destroyer kill the firstborn?

