

Session **05**

# *Water from* **THE ROCK**

**CENTRAL TRUTH |** We are called to serve and follow the Lord on His terms, not ours.

Shortcuts can be great. They can help you avoid traffic, shave some time off of your morning routine (hello brushing your teeth in the shower!) or make a gourmet meal in just a few minutes. But they can also ruin things. When a runner takes a shortcut in a race, that's called cheating. When we take a shortcut with the laundry mom told us to do and just throw the pile in the closet, that's called disobedience. Most boundaries or rules exist to keep us and others safe. When we make the choice to act outside of those instructions, we open ourselves up to discipline, punishment, injury, disqualification, and more. Our actions have consequences. This week we're going to look at a low point in Moses's leadership. For just a moment, he acts outside of God's instruction and then has to live with the consequences of that choice. Because God is holy and worthy of our trust, we are called to serve Him on His terms and not our own.



**REFLECT**

What questions do I have about God?

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What questions do I have about myself?

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What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

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## NUMBERS 20:1-5

<sup>1</sup> The entire Israelite community entered the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and they settled in Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there. <sup>2</sup> There was no water for the community, so they assembled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The people quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had perished

when our brothers perished before the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> Why have you brought the LORD’s assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? <sup>5</sup> Why have you led us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It’s not a place of grain, figs, vines, and pomegranates, and there is no water to drink!”

## NUMBERS 20:6-10

<sup>6</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting. They fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. <sup>7</sup> The LORD spoke to Moses, <sup>8</sup> “Take the staff and assemble the community. You and your brother Aaron are to speak to the rock while they watch, and it will yield its water. You will

bring out water for them from the rock and provide drink for the community and their livestock.” <sup>9</sup> So Moses took the staff from the LORD’s presence just as he had commanded him. <sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock, and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water out of this rock for you?”

## NUMBERS 20:11-13

<sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff, so that abundant water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. <sup>12</sup> But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me to demonstrate my holiness in the

sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them.”

<sup>13</sup> These are the Waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD, and he demonstrated his holiness to them.

Day01

# NUMBERS 20:1-5



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

## 📍 READ & RESPOND

The Israelites spent forty years in the desert, waiting for the rebellious generation to die off. In today's passage, we're closing in on the end of the waiting and wandering years. Sometime after they arrived in Kadesh, the southern boundary of the promised land, they ran out of water. Similar complaints of their parents were thrown at Moses: "Why did you bring us out here to die? Why did you take us from Egypt to this terrible place?" But they were in the wilderness because of the previous generation's disobedience and rejection of God's land and promise. Had they forgotten? Moses's frustration must have been evident. The Israelite people had not learned from the painful lessons of the past.

🔄 Why were the Israelites complaining?

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⬅️ Look back at Numbers 14. How are their complaints similar to their parents' complaints?

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⬇️ What does this passage show about how easily we resort to complaining and demanding our own terms?

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## 📍 MEMORIZE

On a piece of paper, write down **Numbers 20:12** five times. Doing this makes all the different parts of your brain turn on at the same time, which forces you to think about the information in a much deeper way.

## 📍 PRAY

*Father, I confess that I often want things on my own terms instead of Yours. Give me the patience to trust Your wisdom and the humility to serve You fully without complaining.*

## Day 02

# NUMBERS 20:6-10

### 📍 READ & RESPOND

As we continue with yesterday's story, Moses and Aaron retreated to the tent of meeting. They fell to their faces, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. The Lord gave Moses specific instructions on what to do: take the rod, assemble the congregation, and speak to the rock. From this miraculous act, God would provide water for the community and their livestock. Moses took the rod and assembled the people, but instead of speaking to the rock, Moses angrily spoke to the people and struck the rock twice. Moses also asked, "shall we bring water out of the rock?" However, we must remember that the Lord has been the rightful, sole Provider of Israel this entire time. As God's people, we are to obey Him and reflect His power and goodness through our lives.

🔄 What was the three-part instruction that Moses was to follow? Which step did he leave out? What did he do instead?

↓ How have you seen anger affect people's decisions?

→ When have you sinned because of anger? Do you need to ask God for forgiveness for any angry actions? Do you need to ask others for forgiveness for your angry actions?

### 📍 MEMORIZE

Using your phone, tablet, or computer, write out **Numbers 20:12** in a notes app using emojis. Be creative! Send the emojis to a few friends or family members and see if they can decipher the passage.

### 📍 PRAY

*Father, forgive me for when I try to serve You on my own terms, letting anger or impatience override Your commands. Give me the humility to listen closely to Your instruction.*

Day**03****NUMBERS 20:11-13** **READ & RESPOND**

In today's passage, after criticizing the people of Israel, Moses struck the rock twice. He had not been told to strike the rock—only to speak to it. Despite Moses's action, water gushed forth, and the people and livestock had plenty of water to drink. The rock itself was a symbol of God's mercy and kindness. So, in a sense, Moses was striking out against God instead of obeying Him. Because of his actions, he severely damaged the intimate relationship he had with God. Moses and Aaron failed to follow God's instructions and did so with vindictive attitudes against God's people, and because of their sin, they would not enter the promised land with the very people they rebuked.

 **What did Moses do to the rock to bring out water? What did Moses fail to do?**

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 **What does God's judgment on Moses show us about how seriously God takes even small acts of disobedience, especially from His leaders?**

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 **What is something God has clearly told you to do that you're tempted to do your own way?**

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 **MEMORIZE**

Let's map out this week's verse. Write out **Numbers 20:12**. Underline the important nouns in the verse. Circle the important verbs. Put an appropriate symbol next to any word that might be important.

 **PRAY**

*Father, forgive me when I try to serve You on my own terms instead of Yours. Give me the humility and faith to obey You completely so that You are truly honored in my life.*

## Day 04

# PSALM 51:1-5

### READ & RESPOND

When we sin against the Lord, we must confess it to Him. The sorrow and shame we have over our sin should push us to repent and change our behavior. David knew the shame of sin well. Today's psalm is his confession to God after the prophet Nathan confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba. The sorrow is clear as David begs God to blot out, wash, and cleanse his guilt. In our main passage this week in Numbers, Moses also sinned against the Lord, and he paid a huge penalty: He was not allowed to enter the promised land he had worked so hard to reach. Because God takes every sin seriously, we must confess our sins and turn away from our wrong choices.



What are the three different words David uses in verses 1 and 2 to describe his sin?



How does this psalm show us how God balances His seriousness about sin with His willingness to forgive?



What sins do you need to confess to God? Spend a few moments praying to God, asking for His forgiveness and compassion.

### MEMORIZE

Go for a walk! Recite **Numbers 20:12** aloud while walking. Assign one phrase to a set number of steps (for instance, walk five steps while saying the first phrase).

### PRAY

*Holy God, You take every sin seriously, and I need Your great mercy to blot out my guilt. Give me the courage to confess my wrong choices and grant me the power to truly repent and turn toward You.*

Day**05**

# 1 CORINTHIANS 10:3-4

## 📍 READ & RESPOND

We've been talking about how Moses missed the promised land because he didn't follow God's instructions when providing water from the rock in the desert (see Num. 20). Today, Paul reminds us how amazing that rock truly was! He says the Israelites all ate the same spiritual food (manna) and drank the same spiritual drink. That water came from a "spiritual rock" that followed them, and that rock was Christ Himself (see v. 4)! God provided spiritual nourishment and Jesus's presence every single day. The lesson is that even when we struggle to follow God's terms, like Moses and the Israelites, Christ is always there, faithfully providing for us. We need to remember His constant faithfulness and obey His commands.

← What warning does this passage give us about taking God's blessings for granted?

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↑ What does this passage reveal about God's faithful and undeserved care for His people, even when they disobey?

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↓ The Israelites needed spiritual food daily. What does this constant need show about how totally dependent we are on God for everything?

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## 📍 MEMORIZE

Once you know **Numbers 20:12**, teach it to someone else—a sibling, a parent, or a friend. Explain what it means and why it's important.

## 📍 PRAY

*Jesus, You are the spiritual Rock who faithfully provides everything I need, even when I don't deserve it. Help me to serve and follow You only.*