

The Instability of False Worship
The Golden Calf & Restoration
Discovering God (Exodus) Series - Part 10
July 30/31, 2022
Ex. 32:1-34:35

Introduction

- **Thanks to our pastors** who led us in teaching/preaching (Brian, Judah, Matt, Parnell)
 - **Last Week** – Pastor Matt taught us...how the Tabernacle was designed. The place where Moses would meet with God. He brilliantly explained how it was set up with the sole intention of experiencing God. It was a place of dwelling, a place of meeting. Its organization was all centered around God as Holy. It was a reimagining of the Garden of Eden reality.
- **This Week's focus:**
 - **Who/What has our heart?** – the Bible says where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. In other words, where your resources are, you will find what you truly value. So, tell me, what takes up most of your **time**? What do you mostly spend your **money** on? A better question may be: **Why that is...**
 - **Who/What do we worship?** – The Biblical way of asking the question is **what do we worship? Worship means we find value in it and to pour value into it**. It means we think it's important. So, what do we find important? What informs our decisions? What are we chasing after?
 - **Where False Worship can take us** – It's been said, *"we become what we worship."* **If we are worshipping the wrong thing, we will distort our created intention.**

Until We COMMIT, Our WORSHIP Goes to the Highest Bidder

- **The power of commitment** – If we have multiple power factors pulling us in different directions what's going to win? What will we follow most and first? What will be the final determiner of who we are and what we do? Unless there is a firm determination of commitment made, we will be directed by whatever seems most important at the time. **Commitment keeps us safe when our minds are spun.**

Lesson

- **The Revelation of Betrayal**
 - **Israel Makes a Golden Calf to Worship – Ex 32:1-29**
 - **Israel Has a Golden Calf Party (v.1-6)** – *"When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."² So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a*

golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD."⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

- **What Happened?** – This is a bizarre story and it's so unclear as to what in the world happened. How did they end up with a golden cow so quickly after getting out of Egypt?
 - **The motivation** – Moses was taking too long and they thought he was dead. They immediately put themselves in his leadership spot. Serious mistake.
 - **Why a cow¹?** – It's probably a young bull. Bulls and bull-gods/goddesses were symbols of strength and fertility and common in agricultural societies. This one may have been a link to the Canaanite god Baal, who would transform himself into a bull, but that's a guess. The way that it is written is in the plural, so it was to represent their new *gods*.
 - **Combo god** - Also, the most odd factor was that Aaron was blending it with worship of Yahweh. It was a combination of Baal and Yahweh², deeply disturbing, but considering Aaron's nature, it's likely that he was trying to please everyone.
 - **King Jeroboam does it again later** – 1 Kings 12:28 records him making 2 golden cows when the kingdom divided after Solomon. Clearly there's some tie in there that we are missing.
 - **Where did they get the gold?** – this was the gold items that they got from the Egyptians prior to the Exodus. Some of it was used for the special items in the Tabernacle and clearly there was a lot left. There are 1.5million people here and men and women wore jewelry at that time, so there was a lot to choose from.
 - **Aaron oversaw all of this** – Why would Aaron, the one closest to Moses and thus second closest to what God had been doing recently, do this? Why would he let this happen? Because he too is newish to God (albeit closer than the people) and he cares more about what people think of him and will do to him, than what God thinks. He was pressured to do it and he caved.
 - **When insecurity steals our glory** – How many times have we wimped out when it comes to doing something for God? How many times have we cared more about what people will say than God? How many times have we been too insecure to stand up for what's right? Too many. And what that's done is erode our relationship with God and steal our joy and glory.
 - **Quasi-Godly Feast** – notice that Aaron says it will be a 'feast to Yahweh'. This is the biggest example of trying to cover all your bases. Aaron had seen too

¹ Although there are multiple Egyptian deities linked with bulls and cows it would be odd to worship a god of the enemy they just defeated. So it's likely it was all about fertility and strength in general and not a direct tie to Egypt.

² Some scholars imagined that it was a bull that allegedly the unseen Yahweh would ride as dominant, thus a combo.

much to fully deny God, so he incorporates Him too, but he's not strong enough to fully resist. He does the cow AND God. Isn't that the way that a lot of us live? We are Christians and know what Christ has done for us, so we can't fully turn our backs but our sin-cows are too tempting so we try to incorporate both. We are part-Christian, part-pagan.

- **How Did This Happen?** – This is one of the greatest violations against God that Israel ever did. Soon after a great and miraculous rescue, they abandon God and try to start over without Him.
 - **Israel had Seen & Done So Much Already** - Israel had already verbally committed themselves to God³. They promised to be obedient⁴. They had seen the Red Sea part, they had seen the bitter waters made sweet, they had seen water come out of a rock, they had eaten heavenly manna. All of that was in the first month with God! They already knew the 10 commandments and how the 2nd one said, don't make any image, statue to worship⁵. They even saw Moses go up and talk with God and come back down again at least once (to convey info and get the elders), if not twice. The elders had even met with God and seen glimpses of His glory and throne room⁶. They were told to wait until Moses & Joshua got back⁷. It was all clear cut. So, what in the world caused them to go this far astray so quickly?
 - **Fear Clearly Didn't Work: God started with Fear** – it wasn't that long ago that God showed up with fire, thunder, lightning and smoke on the mountain⁸. They should have been freaked out. The reason God did that was to establish 'fear of God, respect' in them. But fear is not a lasting motivator. It's effective in the short-term but cannot keep someone's heart.
 - **The people translated fear/respect into distance** – they asked God to stop talking to them and distanced themselves⁹. Is that what we have done in our hearts? We were only given a demonstration of God's power and scary side in church and we emotionally distanced? Have we remained in the Master/Servant level? Is God far away for you?
 - **SOME of the People = Not ALL of the People** – I wonder how much of this incident was that while one group of people and leaders were buying into the Yahweh worship, a bunch weren't. They were talking amongst themselves and they seem to be quite a majority (or at least verbal majority). They took advantage of this situation to rally their troops and rebel. This is one of those situations where a church can't move forward because although the leaders and a minority are bought in, the rest aren't and God holds the whole group accountable for the whole group.

³ Exodus 19:8; 24:3

⁴ Exodus 24:7

⁵ Exodus 20:4, 23

⁶ Exodus 24:9-11

⁷ Exodus 24:14

⁸ Exodus 19:16ff

⁹ Exodus 20:19-21

In the end 3,000 are killed. I have to imagine those were strategic and not random kills.

- **Insufficient Relationship to Sustain** – The only way that this type of relational collapse could happen is if there wasn't any foundation in the first place. It was a house of cards. They proclaimed with their lips but their hearts were far from Him¹⁰. Remember, they just got out of Egypt and they didn't seem to have any discernible relationship to God while in Egypt (other than using Him as a giant aspirin/rescuer). They are brand new to God. When things got tense and it looked like leadership was gone, they fell apart. They were functionally pagan.
 - **Has your faith been tested?** – how did it turn out? When you were pushed? Did your relationship with God remain or did you find yourself immediately looking for relief in other areas?
- **Weak Commitment & Character** – You'll notice that not everyone messed up. The Levite crew didn't get involved. Why? They were of a different caliber. They didn't know God any better than anyone else, but they were men and women who, for whatever reason, had the character and commitment to do the right thing. **Commitment pulls you through when your heart gives up.**
 - **The Shield of Faith** – Paul uses an analogy in Ephesians 6 about the Armor of God. He describes faith as a shield. It's the type of shield that you hunker down behind when the volley of fiery lying arrows rain down on you from the devil. You don't even know which way is up so you hang on to the last true thing you heard God say. And you hold on for dear life. That's what faith is. That's what commitment is.
- **God Gets Ticked (v.7-10)** – *“And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. ⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ ” ⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”*
 - **Your people** – I find it kind of funny (maybe I shouldn't) that God calls the rebellious Israelite's “Moses' people”. It's like one parent calling a rebellious child, ‘your son/daughter’. It's an emotional distancing out of disappointment.
 - **They corrupted themselves** – God says that they ruined themselves. It wasn't an external demand, it was in internal implosion. He describes it as ‘they have turned aside QUICKLY’. It shows that they SHOULD HAVE done better. They SHOULD have listened to God and learned from their mistakes. But they were too short-sighted, too selfish, to see.

¹⁰ Isaiah 29:13-14

- **Switching gods** – Clearly the most irritating thing to God was their calling the golden calf, ‘these are your gods, who got you out of Egypt’. The people switched their gods like changing underwear. They attributed God’s glory to another. They praised what their hands had made more than the one that made their hands. Do we do that? Do we give credit to things, for our success, to something/someone other than our Creator?
- **God’s Willing to Flush the Whole Crew** – Multiple times in the desert God tells Moses that He is fully willing to wipe out all the Israelites and start over again with Moses. On one hand it’s unsettling to know that God will verbalize something so severe, but on the other hand it seems to be a beautiful leadership tool to develop Moses into an intercessor and greater leader (incites him to defend the people that even tick him off personally – thereby turning into their defender in his heart).
- **Moses Intercedes for the People (v.11-14)** – *“But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ” ¹⁴ And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.”*
- **Moses’s Intercession Arguments** – The Bible says that Moses ‘implored’ God. That means emotionally begged Him. That means that Moses was super passionate about this. For the moment, Moses was reacting with his full heart. So, what did he use to try to convince God? 2 primary arguments:
 - **1.) It’s gonna make you look bad** – Although it’s true it makes me chuckle. Moses says, everyone is looking. If you kill them now then the Egyptians will think ill of you. If for nothing else, don’t do it for your own name’s sake. You don’t even have to do it for them.
 - **2.) You are a Promise Keeper** – Moses cites that from what God has revealed, He is a promise keeper and faithful. That means it’s against His nature to wipe them all out. He promised their forefathers, not just Moses’ forefathers (Moses is from Levi’s lineage only), and God always keeps His promises.
- **The Lord relented** – God shifted gears. Does this mean that God changed His mind? Not really. I think that this outcome was ALWAYS God’s intent but He was training Moses. But He did change gears and action items on His agenda. It used to say, ‘kill everyone’, not it didn’t. When we pray it’s not so much about changing God’s mind as it is about changing the trajectory and outcome, ultimately aligning with God’s intention.

- **Intercession Matters** – it matters because God says it matters. He designed a prayer system where it matters. May we utilize this powerful element in our lives and ministries.
- **Moses Loses It & Breaks Stuff (v.15-20)** – *“Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. ¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” ¹⁸ But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.” ¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.”*
 - **The Coolest Tablets¹¹** – I know it’s nerdy, but I cannot help wondering what font God used to write with His own hand. How cool would it be for us to have those today and see something that God wrote? Wow! But of course those were broke and it’s not clear if the replacements were written by God or just translated and written by Moses. But we don’t even have the 2nd set so it doesn’t matter.
 - **Not a War but a Party** – the people were so into it that their party sounded like a roar of intense people. The more you look into the party, it gets more and more creepy. There’s a lot of inuendo that it was orgiastic in nature.
 - **Moses’ Anger** – I realize that for Moses it was breaking the tablets as a sign that they weren’t following the covenant at all so what’s the point. They broke it so he was breaking it physically. But considering they just had to make some more, clearly there was another way for Moses to handle that. My point is: Moses has an anger problem. The funny thing is when God got mad, Moses told Him to calm down and now that it’s his turn, he freaks out and breaks the tablets. Later his temper is going to cost him the Promised Land. Will ours?
 - **Drinking Gold** – it’s likely that the ground idol, gold and all, was put in the normal water source (pond, spring, well, etc.). The point was that they would consume what they made. The sad thing is that was a lot of gold that could have been used for something else. What a waste. But that’s what happens when we sin, we waste what God intended for good.
- **Moses Rebukes Aaron (v.21-24)** – *“And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?” ²² And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. ²³ For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has*

¹¹ It says they were written on both sides, which according to scholars was highly unusual for stone tablets.

become of him.’²⁴ So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

- **The Blame Game** – all through the Bible we see this game played over and over. From the Garden of Eden through the New Testament. Aaron blames the people and plays on Moses’ own struggles with them to try to temper his temper. He even subtly blames Moses for taking too long. But where it gets completely absurd is that he tries to blame magic: I put in the gold and out popped a cow! C’mon man. I was with you until that. There is a complete shirk of responsibility.
- **The Levites Execute Justice (v.25-29)** – *“And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies),²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD’s side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.²⁷ And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’ ”²⁸ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.²⁹ And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”*
- **The People had ‘broken loose’** – I love that Moses wrote, ‘because Aaron let them...’. Broken loose means to intentionally fall apart, to come undone. It means that they were united to God but that loyalty had been undone, they broke loose from their loyalty to God, intentionally.
 - **When we ‘cast off restraint’** – Some of our sins are unintentionally and they sneak up on us. We fall prey to the traps of the devil. But most of our sins are due to this very ‘breaking loose’ concept. We determine that we want more what we want than what God wants. Our assessment leads us to ‘cast off’ the restraint that loyalty and adherence and faithfulness binds us with. We willingly and intentionally choose ourselves and what we want. The opposite of this concept is ‘remain steadfast or faithful.’
 - **The Levites respond** – The Levites were Moses & Aaron’s crew/tribe. Perhaps that’s why they were more loyal, although later in Korah’s rebellion you see that family bloodline doesn’t always mean loyalty.
 - **Killing in the Name of...** - 3000 men were killed. Interestingly in Genesis 49:5, the tribe of Levi is mentioned along with the tribe of Simeon as particularly violent warriors. How or why God used a tribe known for violence as His priests is a mystery to me. Perhaps it was the passion behind it and zealotry for justice.
 - **The future blessing** – It appears that chronologically, the only Levites that were operating as priests (serving God directly) were Moses & Aaron (later we find that while on Mt. Sinai during this time God anoints Aaron’s line – Ex 28¹² but it’s

¹² The Oddity of Anointing - How Ironic is it that in Exods 29-29 we read that while Moses is up on the mountain with God for that 40 days and nights, God is giving him instructions on how Aaron and his sons will be anointed as high priest of Israel and his lineage permanently, yet meanwhile down below Aaron is leading the people in one of

not public yet). The rest of the Levites weren't temple helpers yet, that comes later. It is possible that this situation was what God used to highlight why they were being set aside for special purposes later on.

- **What legacy are you leaving in your family with your actions today?**

- **Master Intercessor**

- **Moses Intercedes for the People - Ex 32:30–33:23**

- **God Rebukes the People (32:30-33:6)** - *"The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."³¹ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.³² But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."³³ But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.³⁴ But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them."³⁵ Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made. **33** The LORD said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.'² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."⁴ When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.⁵ For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.'⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward."*
- **Perhaps I can make atonement for your great sin** – Whether being dramatic to shock the people, or whether Moses honestly didn't know, he says that he's going to go try to make atonement (make everything right) with God. It seems he doesn't know if it will work or not. Atonement means to soothe and cover over what was wrong. It means to reestablish relationship with someone that has been broken. It means the guilt of sin is removed and reconciliation happens. Moses is going to try to fix what they did.

the greatest acts of rebellion in the bible. It just goes to show that Anointing doesn't have to do with maturity, faithfulness, or character. It's that God needs and wants to get something done, period.

Despite Exodus 19:22 – which says, 'priests' but probably means 'elders'. See the Tyndale Bible Commentary – *"The priests*. There is no evidence for priests, as such, existing in Israel until after Sinai. In Exodus 24:5 it is the 'young men' who offer sacrifices. Perhaps the word stands for 'elders', to whom there has been reference already (18:12) in a religious context. If 'priests' be kept, in the full sense, whoever are meant, the point is that, on such a solemn occasion, even those who stand in peculiarly close relationship to God have need to purify themselves, and cannot presume on their position."

- **Full-Shepherd Mode** – Moses goes into full shepherd mode: if you don't forgive them, blot me out (shepherd gives his life for the sheep). God didn't allow that, but it was powerful that Moses was in that emotional place. As you study the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible) you will see that Moses is challenged over and over by every single leader he has. The people grumble, complain and rally against him as their leader. They are rebellious and mean. They even try to stone him at one point. But God has done such a good job of burying them in Moses' heart, ALREADY, that Moses is willing to suffer along with them and defend them. This must have made God's heart soar. God couldn't have a half-hearted leader of His people.
- **God's not having it** – God rejects Moses' manipulation attempt (although I think Moses meant it). God said, you'll keep leading them, but I'm not going to let them be blessed with ALL their blessing. There is a cost to this significant sin. There are ramifications.
 - **Anonymous Plague Hits** – there's nothing said about the plague, but one line tells us that in addition to the 3,000 slaughtered, there was a general plague that wiped out people. Judgment, correction, training, discipline.
- **We are still on plan** – God says, 'let's stick with the plan. Let's get these people into the Promised Land like I originally told you. I will fight for them and drive out the people in front of you.'
- **My angel will go but not me** – God says, if I go personally, I'll end up killing them all. I'll send my angel. I believe this angel is Jesus pre-manger.
 - Ex 23:20-21 – *“Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. ²¹ Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.”*
 - **Mourning and no more ornaments** – what are these ornaments? From my research it seems to be jewelry. Just like sackcloth and ashes indicate mourning and a solemn time, so too was taking off the jewelry indicating that this is no time to celebrate. This is no party. This is no time to shine. You all blew it. Dress down. Clearly the people understood the seriousness of God's rebuke because they were mourning. That's good.
- **Tent of Meeting Recap (v.7-11)** - *“Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹ When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. ¹¹ Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the*

camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.”

- **The Tent of Meeting** – we have already covered this extensively in Pastor Matt’s message last week. It’s a mobile temple. What this passage is doing is a brief recap but speak more to HOW it was used and WHAT happened between Moses and God in there.
 - **Why it’s far outside camp** – How Israel was set up was supposed to be a visual of a deeper meaning. Moses knew that God didn’t want to be around sin. Moses knew that the concept of holy meant ‘set apart just for God’. So, he would set the tent far away from everybody else for a couple reasons. 1.) They would be able to see that God wasn’t just a buddy. He was holy. 2.) They don’t just get to walk in and out, it’s special. 3.) God didn’t want to be around sin, so if it was going on in the camp, it’s safer to put it out here.
 - **People could seek God there** – Honestly, I don’t know how the regular people interacted with it. At this point, I think only Aaron, Moses and Joshua utilize it. But clearly there was a process where people could seek God there. Perhaps it was through the mediating priests of Moses & Aaron.
 - **Special Moses Meetings** – The Bible is very clear that how God interacted with Moses was wholly different than everyone else. When Moses went out for specific meetings with God, when God would come down in a cloud and cover it, that meant a solemn time. The people all knew it and they would even stand at their doorways to their tents and watch him go in. It was a big deal. God was speaking with Moses directly and personally.
 - **Presence meant worship** – When the cloud was there and they knew that God was meeting with Moses, it meant God was tangibly closer and they all used that time to worship Him.
- **Like a Friend** – Notice the powerful language here with God speaking to Moses ‘face to face, like with a friend.’ That is perhaps one of the most intimate statements in the Bible between a person and God. Friends share information. Friends connect. It’s not just all business. It’s doing life together and enjoying one another. It’s less formal. It’s personal. It’s exchanging emotional items as well as spiritual items.
 - **My Dream** – my greatest dream is to be fully connected and intimate with God. I want Him to enjoy me and I want to move beyond fear and enjoy Him fully. I want to laugh with Him and tell stories together. I want to know that He is peaceful with me and loves me. I want to continually tell Him how wonderful He is. I want to be God’s friend.
- **Joshua Doesn’t Leave** – Too many people miss this. Moses would come and go, but Joshua stayed as a guard. Joshua didn’t get to go in and see God like Moses did (just like when he stayed guard halfway up Mt. Sinai and didn’t get to see God), but he would guard the place afterward. This was all the work and none of the fun or glory. Joshua was amazing.

- Moses Intercedes for the People (v. 12-16)** – *“Moses said to the LORD, “See, you say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’”¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.”¹⁴ And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”¹⁵ And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”*

 - Moses begs for God’s presence** – Moses knows that where God is, there is victory. Where God is, there is hope. Where God is, there is peace. He doesn’t want to move one step further without God personally. Sure, God offered a lighter version of His presence, but Moses wasn’t having it. Moses knew the daunting nature of leading this nation through the wilderness (into the Promised Land) and knew that if he had any chance it would have to be because God was there. Now, I truly believe that Jesus’ presence would have been more than sufficient, but this demonstrates that **Moses was not content with part of God, he wanted all of God.**
 - Presence makes the difference in us** – Moses says brilliantly, ‘isn’t that what makes your people special? That you are with them? Otherwise they are just people, or maybe religious people. But when you are with us, we are extra special.’ **Think about that for you and I. It’s not that we know the Bible, it’s not that we give money to the church, it’s truly that God is with us and in us that makes the difference.**
 - Our Own Strength Won’t Cut It** – at the heart of Moses plea, is not just Moses’ personal craving for the presence of God as his everything, but there’s a deep sense that his own strength and leadership will never be sufficient. It’s God or nothing. And that’s how we should view life as well.
- God Reveals His Glory (v. 33:17-34:9)** – *“And the LORD said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”¹⁸ Moses said, “Please show me your glory.”¹⁹ And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”²¹ And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”^{34:1} “The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.² Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain.³ No one shall come up with you, and let no one be*

seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.”⁴ So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone.⁵ The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”⁸ And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.⁹ And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

- **Powerful Passage** – This passage is one of the most powerful in the whole Bible! It’s God revealing Himself, personally, to Moses. I am doing the devotional this Wednesday, so make sure you are signed up to receive that. This is my passage and it’s special to me in a couple different ways. I will simply say this about it, this is one place that God tells us what he is like without using a biased human mediator. Every time I want to know the unvarnished truth, I think about this passage. It’s not what people think He is, it’s who He knows He is.
- **A Cry for Deeper Experience – Show Me Your Glory** - Moses has already done some of the most radical miracles in all of history. He’s already been front row to mind-blowing acts of God. **He already talks with God face to face, but He wants more. He wants it all. He wants to know God deeply, because the more we truly know God the more we are formed into His image.**
- **The Glory Reveal Plan** – God is very clear that human beings can’t handle all of Him and live. He’s too much. So he concocts a plan for Moses to see MORE of Him and that means His backside and to know more about Him. The plan is to find a spot in the mountain’s rock wall that has a niche, or cleft and Moses would stand there while God approaches by covering him with His hand. Then as God passes by, He removes his covering hand and Moses can look out at God’s backside. Meanwhile God will proclaim what He is like so that Moses may always know. Can you imagine???
- **The Revelation – God said 7 things about His nature to Moses.**
 1. **I AM who I AM** – Yahweh means that God isn’t LIKE anyone or anything. He is wholly other. That means He is special and needs to be treated and interacted with completely differently. It means He is too much to fully grasp, that there’s mystery to Him. It means that He is to be respected.
 2. **I AM Merciful and Gracious** – Mercy and Grace are two sides of the same coin. One says that we don’t get what we deserve, and the other says that we get things that we didn’t earn. In other words, God is kind and doing things for us that we cannot do for ourselves out of His love. It means that He is constantly covering us and drawing us near. It means He is constantly rescuing us.

3. **I AM Patient** – God said that He is slow to anger. That means He is not a capricious like the pagans thought of their gods. He is not an emotional roller-coaster. He is long-winded. He is long-suffering. He doesn't just react, but takes His time to respond. He will stand with us longer than He probably should. He will be the parent when we are the brat. He gives us enough rope to hang ourselves. He is not a hammer waiting to fall but a father waiting to hug.
 4. **I AM Overflowing with love** – the concept of abounding means that it keeps flowing. When we run out of contingent love, God doesn't. When we give up on people, God doesn't. When we ebb and flow with mood, God doesn't. He has more love than you can imagine (literally). He loves because it's His nature and He doesn't have to try. It flows naturally from Him.
 5. **I AM Faithful** – God doesn't give up or bail out. God doesn't just stop because it no longer works for Him. He is not flakey. He is consistent, strong, sure, and you can count on Him. He maintains His promises. He does what He says He will do. He is there when everyone else leaves. He's more committed to you than you will ever be to Him.
 6. **I AM Forgiving** – God doesn't have to forgive. Justice says that He should destroy us all. But His love propels Him to forgive and forgive and forgive again. God is the mature one in the relationship, not having to react off what we do, but able to be consistent in His nature, doing what is right all the time. But beyond what is right, is what is extraordinarily loving. God forgives so many for so many things. He wants to move forward in the relationship. The only reason it's broken is we are adamant to break it despite His love.
 7. **I AM Judge** – As loving and kind as God is, He is fair, right and just. He doesn't just 'let things go.' He doesn't play favorites. If someone is guilty they will be called out. He doesn't miss things. People can't pull the wool over His eyes or hide their sin. God sees all and responds to all. In fact, for a time (it was later amended) God even held generations accountable for what their forefathers did, to demonstrate ramifications. God disciplines. God judges. Why? Because it's right and it's His nature. To let something slide for no reason distorts what's good and right. God is always good and right.
- **The Result** – **Moses worships more. And that should be our response to God's revelation** through His Word, both at church and at home. We are not amassing information, we are learning about the One we love the most.

- **Let's Try This Again**

- **God Reestablishes a Covenant with Israel - Ex 34:10-28**

- **God Promises to Root Out the Enemy (v. 10-11)** – *“And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.*

¹¹ *“Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”*

- **Another Covenant** – If you remember the teaching prior in the series, a covenant is a contract or an agreement. God is saying right here what His side is, what He will do for Israel.
 - **God’s Act 1** – I will do miracles in your midst to demonstrate my presence and power.
 - **God’s Act 2** – I will drive out the Canaanite people because I have judged them already and they have to go. You get to backfill their spot.
- **God Gives the Rules for Israel’s Side of the Covenant (v. 12-28)** – *“¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. ¹⁷ You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal. ¹⁸ You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. ¹⁹ All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep. ²⁰ The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty-handed. ²¹ Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. ²² You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end. ²³ Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year. ²⁵ You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until the morning. ²⁶ The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.” ²⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” ²⁸ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.”*
- **Israel’s Side of the Covenant/Contract** – The covenant is relational and has two sides to it. God gave a short summary of some of the significant things that He will do for Israel and now it’s time to call out some of what’s expected of them:
 - **Israel’s Act 1** – Do not make covenants with the Canaanite people groups. That will be snare and problem for you. This means business contracts, marriages, deep connections. I don’t want you attaching yourselves to them in any way.

- **Israel's Act 2** – Remove the Canaanite idols whatever they may be. As you take the land, rid it of the pagan idols they worship. I want them gone.
 - **Israel's Act 3** – do not make any statues of Me. I can't be contained in an image, so don't try.
 - **Israel's Act 4** – Keep the 3 major feasts: 1.) Feast of Unleavened Bread. You know how this works. It's a constant sign of how I rescued you. 2.) Keep the Feast of Weeks (firstfruits). You need a continual reminder of who is really providing for you. 3.) Keep the Feast of Ingathering (harvest) at the end of the year. All your males are for sure to show up 3x's per year before Me as a part of these feasts. Don't miss them, I'll cover your stuff at home while you are gone (anticipates there being a land, temple and travel later).
 - **Israel's Act 5** – All Israel's firstborn are mine, both people and animals. Either you offer them to me or you pay to redeem them. No one is exempt of this.
 - **Israel's Act 6** – You have to take a rest day every week and make sure the Sabbath is special.
 - **Israel's Act 7** – Always contribute the first and best portion of your harvests to me as a tithe to demonstrate your loyalty to me and to remind yourself that money can't rule your heart.
 - **Israel's Act 8** – Don't boil a young goat in it's mother's milk – what the heck? That sounds super random. It is most likely a Canaanite religious act that was tied to a fertility rite. Awfully specific.
- **Shekinah Skin Tone**
 - **Moses Physically Radiates From God's Glory**
 - **Ex 34:29-35** – *“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. ³² Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, ³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”*
 - **Time with God = Shining skin** – This is miraculous and so incredibly cool. Moses had been on another 40-day trip with God and this time he came back physically shining. It freaked the rest of the people out and Moses didn't even realize he was shining.
 - **What's the impact on you when you spend time with God?** – our faces may not shimmer like Moses' but I can guarantee you that there is an impact from

spending extended and powerful time with God that people can notice. **It may show up in your demeanor. It may show up in anointing. It may show up through your actions, but being with God has an impact. Are you demonstrating any impact? Are you having deep times with God?**

- **The Veil** – Moses would veil his face when he wasn't acting as a prophet sharing the words of God, because it was odd and freaky and distracting. When he was sharing God's word, he would remove the veil because it added to the weight of it (he also didn't wear it when meeting with God of course – in the Tent of Meeting). Eventually it wore off.

Conclusion

- **The Advancement of Relationship Between God & Israel**
 - **The Focus of This Series** – This focus of this series has been to chronicle the development of the Hebrews to connecting with their God. How does a group of people enslaved for hundreds of years, reconnect or connect with a God that they only had heard of vaguely from their grandparents? How does God take a practical pagan man named Moses and transform him into a godly shepherd extraordinaire? More practically: What are the steps that God uses to draw us closer into relationship to Him and what can we learn about Him that makes us love Him more?
 - **Lesson 1** – **If there's no deep relationship with God, our worship of Him is only temporary.** We will bail and bail hard.
 - **Lesson 2** – **The answer is intimacy** – God set up the **Tent of Meeting** as a way to connect with His people, namely Moses. God wants to be near. It's the sin that separates us. If Jesus Christ has paid for yours, you can approach without fear. If He hasn't, you are still separated.
 - **Lesson 3** – **Moses is made an intercessor** – God was forming a powerful intercessor and shepherd in His leader to be a demonstration for his people.
 - **Lesson 4** – **Moses didn't want to go if God didn't** – Moses refused to go forward if God wasn't going to be with them and lead them. He knew that **God's presence makes all the difference.**
 - **Lesson 5** – **God is who He says He is, not who you imagine Him to be** – we must not let our circumstances dictate our theology. God is who He is. Period.
 - **Lesson 6** – **Time with God Leaves a Mark** – when we are connected to God, it changes us for the better. As the Holy Spirit is given room and we surrender, He begins to glow through us.
 - **Next Week is our Last part of this Series** – Don't miss it!