

Journey Into God's Word



#11

Numbers 1-11

Psalms 123-150

Hebrews 8-13

My Dear Friends and Co-workers

How has your past week been going? Did you find yourself struggling with various cravings and desires? Perhaps there were even battles with depression, frustration, a longing to be somewhere else, or even a crisis of faith. As you will see from our study of the Scriptures, you are not alone. As we study **Numbers, Hebrews, and the Psalms**, we find the Biblical antidote to these poisons that can attack our relationship with God and those He has placed within our Christian community.

Look what happened to the Children of Israel when they started complaining about their problems instead of praying to God about them in Numbers 11:1. What was the result and what stopped the punishment they experienced? (**Numbers 11:1,2**)

Pornography, drugs, alcohol, cravings for money and certain foods can result in destruction. What was the end result when in verse 4 we read, “the rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing.”? (See result in **Numbers 11:33**) Any type of dissatisfaction that shifts our attention from what we have to what we don't, causing us, like it did the Children of Israel, to not recognize how God is setting us free through Jesus Christ, is deadly. That's why we are reminded in **Hebrews 12:1**, “Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” In addition to the key words “throw off,” what do the key words “run”, “fix” and “consider” in verses 1-3 tell us about what we must do to avoid the temptations that will lead us back into destruction.

The key word for personal survival is “faith”. What does **Hebrews 11** tell us about faith? According to **Hebrews 11:1** what is the definition of faith? Sure and certain are two key words that describe faith. But these two words need a beginning and an end. The beginning involves believing in who God says He is and the end is

believing in His promises based upon His character of love. What was the end result of faith in Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses' life? The Old Testament is filled with the lives of those who experienced great victory as a result of faith. They include Joshua (see book of Joshua) and Deborah (**Judges 4,5**) who conquered nations. Then there is Nehemiah who administered justice (book of **Nehemiah**), Daniel who spent the night with the lions (Daniel 6) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through the fiery furnace (Daniel 3), and Elijah escaped Jezebel's sword. (**1Kings 19:2**) The list of overcomers goes on and on. But "some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned, they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated." (**Hebrews 11:36,37**) Is Hebrews saying they were real losers? If not then in verses **38-40**, what does it say about them?

Just like you I have experience pain and suffering. In **Hebrews 12:6-13** we see such referred to as discipline. In verse **7** we read, "endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons." What else does verses **6-13** say about discipline?

Sin blocks our vision of God. It makes us rebellious, refusing discipline, and we want to do our own thing. **Hebrews 12:14,15** says, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Verse **29** says, "our God is a consuming fire." In verses **16-25** we see the key words, "sexually immoral," "godless," do not refuse Him who speaks," what does all this have to do with living a victorious holy life?

What four tangible results does real love produce according to #1? **Hebrews 13:2**, #2. **Hebrews 13:3**, #3. **Hebrews 13:4**, # 4. **Hebrew 13:5**?

Are you content or do you want more and more and more? **Phil 4:12** says, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." What is this secret Paul learned and how is it shared with us in **Hebrews 13:5,6**?

Yes you can live a victorious life throwing off "everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." (**Hebrews 12:1**) "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of our lips, that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."(**Heb. 13:15,16**)

This fruit of the lips, praise, is a sacrifice from the mouths of those who confess Jesus is Lord. Praise is so very important and is stressed throughout the Psalms. Please review **Psalms 123-150** and list those **Psalms** that emphasize praise. Also, note, for example verses **1-5** of **Psalm 124** the reason why verse **6** says “Praise be to the Lord.”

Did you notice **Psalm 125:5,6** where it reflects on God’s ability to restore life when everything seems lost and hopeless? How is it that our tears can be seeds that will grow into a harvest of joy when God is in control of our lives?

When is the last time you have declared, praise the Lord for, “the Lord is righteous; He has cut me free from the cords of the wicked,”(**Ps. 129:4**) In what ways does the verse before that, verse **3**, describe what happened to Jesus as the soldiers beat him? After reflecting on that, read verse **4** once again; now what is it saying to you?

Do you ever get depressed? “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.”(**Ps 130:1**) In verses **3-6** what does the Psalmist say he reflects on and then does to deal with his depression? In verses **7** and **8** what does He tell, not only Israel, but also all of us to do? Do you think Israel and America, through their war on terrorism, are escalating the situation with their dependence on weapons or do you think they would be better off doing what verses **7** and **8** say?

Look at **Psalm 136** as it declares, “His love endures forever.” Then look around you. How does the presentation of creation along with God’s historical preservation of Israel and His covenant people who believe in Jesus demonstrate, “His love endures forever”?

There are many narrow-minded people today who will try to make you feel like you are some kind of second class citizen if you don’t have lots of money. How does **Psalms 139:1-18** expose this lie? What will it take for you to declare unto God along with the Psalmist in verse **14**, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”? Not only are you wonderfully made, but also according to **John 3:16**, what else has God done for you? Now what excuse do you have to feel sorry for yourself? Doesn’t **Hebrews 8:12** promise, “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more”? What a mighty God we serve! “How much more, then will the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (**Hebrews 9:14**)

Now please note those key words in **Hebrews 10:19-25** and write out the instructions they give us for having a powerful prayer life and being a victorious people. These words and phrases are “confidence to enter” (vs.19), “opened for us”(vs.20), “draw near”(vs.22), “hold unswervingly”(vs.23), “spur one another”(vs.24), “not give up” and “encourage one another”(vs.25).

Time is running out. “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised”(Heb. 10:35, 36).

Whether it is the Children of Israel in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy traveling through the wilderness or you and I in our daily lives, one thing is clear, we must trust God and move ahead by faith. In the same way the lamps were lit for the priest in the tabernacle (**Numbers 8:1-4**), Jesus is the light of the world (**John 8:12**), and His word for our daily paths. (**Ps. 119:105**). With this light directing us, what assurance do we have in the midst of injustice for the poor that God upholds the cause of the needy? (**Ps. 140:1**) In the midst of the darkness when our “spirit fails” (**Ps. 143:7**) what must we do according to **Ps 143:5,6** to turn the light back on? What 5 key words do you see in those two verses?

As you have read these Psalms **123-150**, have you noted as requested earlier how praise is given to God, not only for what He does but also for who He is—loving, just, faithful, forgiving, and merciful? Next week let's try to praise God more in every situation. Please join me in reading **Numbers 12-36**, **Proverbs 1-6**, and **John 1-5**.

Now please don't forget “we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”(**Heb. 10:39**)

Yours in Christ,

Larry Rice