



Study Guide Numbers 11-12

1. Mismanaged Discontent- Read Numbers 11:1-9

The Hebrew word (11:1), "complained" is, "*as ones complaining evil*". Huh! We know it's ok to complain to God (i.e., Psalm 64:1; Lamentations), however, the people seemed to mismanage their complaining. They were spreading discontent and discord in the camp. That's damaging. (Matt. 12:36-37; John 6:43; James 5:9). Notice how the people were having the wrong conversations in the wrong places that were exaggerated (v.5-6) ...Share an example of when you saw discontent in a group managed well or poorly.

2. Graves of Craving- Read Numbers 11:33-35

In the story, Moses wants to reject his role as leader and God sets up a team of 70 leaders to support him. Then God sends an over-abundant supply of quail, and the people gather a minimum of 2000 birds per family. It was extreme. What a vivid illustration of where our cravings will take us. God's anger burned and many died of a plague. Kibroth-Hattaavah means 'graves of craving'. Discuss the concept that our lusts never satisfy us. How can we properly manage our desires so we are not consumed by them? Discuss.

3. Undermining Authority- Read Numbers 12:1-2 & 8b.

Notice how Moses' siblings, Miriam and Aaron, undermined his leadership in a misplaced discussion with each other. The Lord heard it (v.2b). He called them to account and struck Miriam with leprosy. Moses intercedes and asks God to relent on her behalf.

How could Miriam and Aaron have done a better job at managing their discontent with Moses? Discuss.

Read Romans 13:1-2 and discuss as a group the importance of accepting God ordained authorities in our lives. Why is this hard at times? What are possible solutions?

Managing our Discontent

1. Name your longings to God. Write out your complaint.
2. Ask God to search your heart. (Psalm 139:23-24)
3. Affirm to God that you trust His goodness.
4. Read Scripture to hear a 'word' from God.
5. Ask God whether it's time to have a crucial conversation, or to wait on Him.

Numbers 11-12

1 Corinthians 10:6a+10

"Now these things took place as examples for us...nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents..."

Big Idea: Mismanaged Discontent is Toxic.

I. Discontent as Followers (11:1-23; 31-35)

A. Mismanaged Complaining- The 'Where' (11:1-3)

And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. ² Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire died down. ³ So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them.

Psalm 64:1 "Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint."

Matthew 12:36-37

"But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Acts 6:1 "And when the disciples increased in number a murmuring arose..."

John 6:43 "Do not grumble among yourselves."

James 5:9 "Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door."

Proverbs 6:19 "Seven things that are an abomination to him: ...one who sows discord among brothers."

Big Idea: Mismanaged Discontent is Toxic.

A. Mismanaged Complaining- The 'How' (11:4-9)

⁴ Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat! ⁵ We remember the fish we ate

in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶ But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

A. Mismanaged Complaining- The ‘How’ (11:4-9)

⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸ The people went about and gathered it and ground it in hand mills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. ⁹ When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.

B. Toxic Results (11:10-23; 31-35)

1. Moses is Crushed (11:10-17)

¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the Lord blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹ Moses said to the Lord, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹² Did I conceive all this people?...¹⁵ If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”

Psalms of Lament:

Psalms 6:3 “My soul is in deep anguish. How long, LORD, how long?”

Psalms 130:1 “Out of the depths I cry to you LORD. LORD, hear my voice.”

Psalms 38:9a “All my longings lie open before you, LORD.”

B. Toxic Results (11:10-23; 31-35)

1. Moses is Crushed (11:10-17)

¹⁷ I will take some of my Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you.

2. The People are not Satisfied (11:18-23; 31-35)

Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the Lord who is among you ...

2. The People are not Satisfied (11:18-23; 31-35)

³¹ Then a wind from the Lord sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. ³² And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.

3. When Cravings become our Grave (11:18-23; 31-35)

³³ While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck down the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving. ³⁵ From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

II. Discontent among Leaders (11:24-30 & 12)

²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

II. Discontent among Leaders (11:24-30 & 12)

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.² And they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the Lord heard it. ³ Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

⁸...Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

Big Idea: Mismanaged Discontent is Toxic.

Romans 13:1-2

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

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