

**Renew your mind by remembering:**

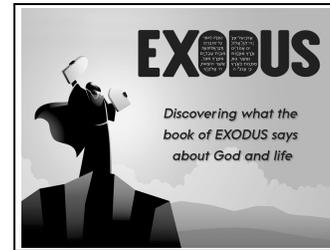
1. We see the wilderness experience as hostile territory, whereas God sees it as a training ground.
2. Be guard against judging ill-gotten circumstances by the ever-present temptation to see ourselves as the center of the universe, where nothing is more important than meeting our perceived needs.

**Peter Enns Theologian and Author:**

*The way of the cross is different. We are being trained by God to be able to rid our minds of perceived needs and their immediate gratification in order to turn our glance both upward and outward. Christ alone is our bread and water that lead us to eternal life. Therefore, we must not judge our circumstances by how we see them but by how God sees them."*

**Community Group Questions:**

1. Can you relate a time when history has repeated itself for you?
2. How has God used wilderness training in your life?
3. Where has God's grace surprised you the most?
4. How can you improve upon being more grateful to God?



**"The Israelites Cycle of Mistrust"**

*How to see difficult circumstances through God's eyes.*

<sup>22</sup>Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. <sup>23</sup>When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) <sup>24</sup>So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

<sup>25</sup>Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink. There the Lord issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. <sup>26</sup>He said, "If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

<sup>27</sup>Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

The Israelites escaped Egypt and its slavery by God's work. God then walked them through the Red Sea on dry land and killed their captors army without so much as them lifting a finger.

The apostle Paul would write some 14 centuries later these ominous words for you and I to learn from their story:

*I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. ...<sup>5</sup> Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. <sup>6</sup> These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did... And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death.<sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. 1 Corinthians 10:1,5,6,10,11*

*So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!  
1 Corinthians 10:12*

### **Why did God put Israel through a wilderness experience instead of taking them to the Promised Land?**

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." Exodus 13:17

### **Moses before his death wrote:**

*Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. Deuteronomy 8:2*

## **The Israelites cycle of rebellion against God**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Step is Abundance- Where we look up .**

Immediately following their Red Sea crossing and the deaths of their enemy, Egypt, they sang praises to God

By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall; ... Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? Exodus 15:8,11

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Step is Expectation- Where we look ahead.**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Step Disappointment- Where we look down.**

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. <sup>23</sup> When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. Exodus 15:22,23

### **4<sup>th</sup> Step of Complaint- Where we look back.**

So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" Ex. 15:24

The Israelites said to (Moses and Aaron), "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." Ex. 16:3

### **5<sup>th</sup> Step is God's Provision- Where we look around.**

Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink. There the Lord issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. Exodus 15:25

### **"Learn from History"**

(God) said, "If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you." Exodus 15:26

### **So despite their lack of faith:**

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water. Exodus 15:27

### **Because they didn't learn from history:**

Where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. <sup>10</sup> That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' <sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " Hebrews 3:9-11