

February 5 — Catch-22

READ

Exodus 13:1-15:21

Exodus 14:13-16, *“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm, and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’ Then the Lord said to Moses ‘...Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.’”*

THINK

"Catch-22" is one of the most used phrases in the English language. When stuck with only two lousy, opposing, paradoxical choices, what do we do? When we need experience to get a job, but we can't gain experience without a job, what do we do? When we must choose between buying gas to go to work or groceries to feed our kids, what do we do? Life is full of catch-22s!

Trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's armies, the Israelites were gripped by fear. Had God had led them into the desert to die? Would they have to choose between drowning or dying by the sword? They looked to Moses for an answer. And, though he didn't know *how*, he knew God *would* come through. So, assuring them God would do the fighting, he gave two commands: stand firm and be still. As all hope of freedom seemed lost, God told Moses to part the waters and "move on." Over 2 million people crossed the sea on dry ground before God sent the mighty waters crashing down on the enemy. God turned a dead-end into an open door.

When nothing makes sense, and you feel trapped with no foreseeable way out, stand firm and be still. There are no "catch-22s" in God's economy. Don't get caught up in your own understanding, but be a "Moses" and trust in the Lord. You may not know *how*, but you know GOD WILL provide a path for you to "move on" through the waters of life!

PRAY

Father, In my pride, I often look to my own understanding instead of believing in Your sovereign power. Today, I choose to trust in You, knowing You are faithful to make my dead ends into straight paths. Amen.

February 6 — Take a Load Off!

READ

Exodus 16:1-19:25

Exodus 18:14, 17-18, *“When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, ‘What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning to evening? ... This is not good! ... You’re going to wear yourself out — and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself.’”*

THINK

“If I want something done right, I’d better do it myself.” How many times have you thought that? We literally train our brains to think we’re the only ones capable of doing a good job, and we run ourselves ragged, juggling and struggling to keep up with our already over-packed schedules. We wear busyness like a badge of honor. But, what is it really? Pride.

Moses thought he was the only one capable of settling people’s disputes. How exhausting! Fortunately, his father-in-law was visiting and shined a light on the situation. Moses was a great leader who needed to learn the art of delegation to take his leadership to a whole new level!

Great leaders delegate work to others — not to avoid working, but to free themselves up for the most important tasks. This was Jethro’s main point. He recognized that Moses was so buried in the details that he was losing sight of the big picture. What if he had been so busy settling disputes that he had missed out on receiving the Ten Commandments?

Are you like Moses? If so, it’s time to let go of pride and delegate tasks to others. Whether you’re a mom who needs to give some chores away to your kids or a CEO who needs to entrust a future executive, it’s time to take off the busyness badge and lighten your load to free yourself up for bigger and better opportunities!

PRAY

Dear Lord, Today, I take off my busyness badge and relinquish my pride. Guide me to be a wise leader and open myself up for opportunities to be used by You! Amen.

February 7 — Words to Live By

READ

Exodus 20:1-22:15

Exodus 20:1-3, *“Then God gave the people all these instructions. And God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.”*

THINK

Too many times, we look at the Bible as just a book of rules and regulations. We tend to balk at being told what we can and can't do. This is especially true with the Ten Commandments. But we will miss the point of these directives if we don't understand God's reasoning. The first four commandments tell us how to relate to God. The other six instruct us how to relate to one other. When our lives align with God vertically, it empowers us to experience great relationships horizontally, with the people around us.

When God rescued the Israelites from 400 years of Egyptian bondage, He knew they needed to learn how to live outside of a culture centered around idol worship. The same holds true for us today. We may not worship golden idols, but we are often guilty of placing other things and, at times, other people before God. We bow to our schedules, social media, and personal pleasure, to name a few. Yet, when our hearts are in the right relationship with God, it easily overflows with love for those around us. When we do, our lives fire on all cylinders as we live our lives in the way God desires.

Therefore, don't view God's commands as a list of dos and don'ts, but as guardrails to help us live a life of purpose that brings God the glory He deserves!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me and showing me how to live. I know that Your laws are meant to bring blessings to my life. Help me always look to You for guidance with each step I take, and not place anything above You. Amen.

February 8 — On the Road

READ

Exodus 22:16-24:18

Exodus 23:20, *"See, I am sending an angel before you to protect you on your journey and lead you safely to the place I have prepared for you."*

THINK

Have you ever seen a law enforcement escort transporting an important individual? They hold authority over the road so they can help them arrive successfully at their desired destination.

In today's reading, God makes a promise to the Israelites — the promise of His presence — a promise He still extends to us today! Not only does God go before us, but He is also with us. He leads us through life, and our job is simply to obey. When we have a personal relationship with Jesus and follow Him closely, we experience a life of purpose, escorted by the ultimate authority on the "roads of life."

God loves us and wants what's best for us. But if we don't choose to follow Him daily, we will end up taking the wrong exits, detouring away from God's best. So choose to allow God to guide you along His direct path and follow the road to His destination!

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for the promise of Your presence as You guide and direct my life. Help me to follow You and allow you to lead me to Your best! Amen.

February 9 — A Heart that Hears

READ

Exodus 25:1-28:43

Exodus 25:1-2, 8, *“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. ... Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them.’”*

THINK

What prompts you to give to someone or something? Do you often have the desire or is it only a rare impulse? We are blessed to be a blessing, but if we aren't listening for God's voice, we may miss out on opportunities to be a part of what He is doing. There are so many things in this world that can fill our hearts and minds, sidetracking us from His voice. From binging on TV shows to our own anxious thoughts, it seems there are a million ways to distract us from giving our time, talent, and resources to the Lord's service.

Is your heart in a place today that allows you to hear when God is moving you towards something? In today's reading, God gives Moses instructions on what offerings the people should bring, and then he carefully begins to lay out the instructions for the sanctuary and everything that would go in it. He wanted the people's hearts ready and willing to contribute to the work ahead.

Where is God calling You to give? What instructions is He laying out before you in your life and ministry? Don't let the world's noise sidetrack you from God's prompting. Quiet Your heart and listen for His voice.

PRAY

Lord, Quiet my heart. At this moment, I put all other thoughts, concerns, and distractions aside. How can I be faithful in my giving? Let my heart be still enough, long enough, to truly hear Your voice! Be glorified in my life, Lord! Amen.

February 10 — Be Still

READ

Exodus 29:1-31:18

Exodus 31:17, *“In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”*

THINK

Do more with less. That’s the motto of many companies. They want to streamline their businesses to cut expenses. However, this mindset can put a lot of strain on employees. People wind up working extensive hours and, before long, they end up on the fast track to burnout. We can do the same as individuals. We want to get as many things done as we can for our family, at school, or in our careers. So we burn the candle at both ends until we can’t go anymore.

God created us and knows what we need. He put rest into the equation because He knows sleep is a vital part of living and a key ingredient to good health. But in our fast-paced age, taking any time off can feel like a sin. The world’s workaholics spend countless hours just to get work done, seal deals, meet deadlines, or get ahead of the competition. But that’s not what God wants! He wants us to work hard within a rhythm so that we have time for healthy relationships with Him and others.

So, take a moment each day to stop. Breathe. Pray. Be still before Him and shut out all the white noise around you so that you can hear His voice. And each week, set aside a day to worship Him and break up the steady hum of your busy life. Then He will give you strength, endurance, power, and grace to get through the highs and lows of life.

PRAY

Lord, Help me set aside time to rest and be still before You. Revive me with Your Spirit and fill me with Your replenishing Living Water. Use me as Your vessel today. Amen.

February 11 — Where are You Leading?

READ

Exodus 32:1-34:35

Exodus 32:21, *"[Moses] said to Aaron, 'What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?'"*

THINK

Have you ever been pressured into doing something? Whether it was pulling a prank on the playground or compromising your ethics in a business deal, most of us have given in to the pressure at some point. We have all felt the influence of family, friends, classmates, or co-workers on our actions and words.

While Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments, Aaron, his second-in-command, caved under the Israelite's demands to make "gods to go before [them]" and forged a golden calf for them to worship. Then he blamed the situation on "how prone these people are to evil." But Moses cut to the truth of the matter! He flipped the script and asked what caused Aaron to *lead* the Israelites into such great sin. Talk about a curveball! Gulp!

If you have the light of Christ in you, you are a spiritual leader. Not only should you stand firm against pressure to disobey God, but you can actively influence others to do the same. No matter your day-to-day routine, you can be a difference-maker, someone shining the way towards righteousness. Where are your decisions leading others to go?

PRAY

Dear Lord, Help me to stand firm for You against the sinful pressures of the world. Thank You for Your strength in the face of adversity! Amen.