

TO KNOW
HIM MORE:
SEEKING GOD
THROUGH LIFE
LESSONS IN
EXODUS

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ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

PURPOSE

The purpose of this workbook is to draw us closer to our Lord. As we dig deeply into God's Word, our desire should be **to know Him more** not just know more about Him. Bible study is not about collecting facts and learning principles, but rather drawing ever nearer to our Heavenly Father. God told Moses that no one can see His face and live (Ex. 33:20) and yet Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being (Heb. 1:3) and is, Himself, the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14)! The Father's goal for each of us is to be transformed into the likeness of His Son (II Cor. 3:18) and He calls us to be imitators of Him (Eph. 5:1), but how can we do either if we do not know Him? I hope you are excited because the Almighty wants to lower the veil and reveal more of Himself to us through His Word! May we seek to know Him more through the life lessons in the book of Exodus.

PRAYERS ABOUND

Do you ever pray God's Word back to Him? It is a wonderful, powerful way of interacting with the Lord. John tells us that if we ask anything according to God's will, we have it (I Jn. 5:14-15) so when we pray His promises, we will receive them! Dear One, I have been praying God's Word over you (and myself) as I have sat and studied through Exodus, and I already feel like the Lord has connected our hearts! I encourage you to pray the verse for each week as you work through the lessons and be ready for the Lord to bless! The theme verses for this workbook are II Timothy 3:16-17: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* May we draw ever closer to our Lord as we study this portion of His Word.

READY - SET - GO!

READY: I hope you're excited about working through this study, but there is something we must each do to prepare – or get ready – for the journey. **Before you begin, I would ask you to read through the entire book of Exodus.** It is so important to read a book of the Bible in its entirety before digging for the deeper truths. It gives us an overview of the path we will be treading and sets a framework into which we can place all the treasures we discover along the way. It will also get us excited about all that God is going to show us through this powerful portion of His Word!

SET: Now that you have read through Exodus, you are ready to dive into the Scriptures! As we approach each passage, we need to set our hearts and minds before the Lord and ask Him to speak to us. The first question in every lesson allows us to do just that. It basically will ask you to read through the passage and record what the Lord speaks to your heart. **I believe this is the most important part of the workbook.** I John 2:27 tell us: *As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.* The Spirit of God Who, resides in all Believers, is your Teacher so listen closely to His still small voice and allow Him to impress His truths upon your heart before moving along in the lesson and seeing the things He showed me.

GO: It's time to sit at our Lord's feet and study His Word! As you open up your Bible, I want to let you know that I have used the New International Version as my main text but have consulted several other versions, so whatever translation you hold in your hands will carry you beautifully through this study!

FURTHER STUDY

Each week we will be taking a look at a complimentary or parallel passage to one we have studied in Exodus. This will remind us how God's Word proves Itself while also allowing us to further explore a certain principle or topic. It is on these passages that I will be sharing a message each week.

SOURCES

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AND SO IT BEGINS...

*We stand on the threshold of a study anew
Excited and ready for what we will view.
As we take every step and begin to dig deep,
The treasures and wonders we find, we can keep.*

*Some of the tales, we might already know
But we'll find from the start, and as farther we go;
The depths of the riches God wants us to see
Can challenge, equip, and in ways set us free.*

*Miraculous wonders are waiting ahead
So let's move on together, by the Spirit be led.
May our time with God change us like never before
As our hearts receive everything He has in store.*

TO KNOW HIM MORE: SEEKING GOD THROUGH LIFE LESSONS IN EXODUS

WEEK 1: GIVING IT ALL	9
<i>The Danger of Worry, Escalation, Extravagant Faith, Your Sin Will Find You Out, Meeting with God</i>	
WEEK 2: FAITH AND FEAR	32
<i>Clear Directions, Settling, Worship, Worse Before Better, Unfair Treatment</i>	
WEEK 3: UNDESERVED	53
<i>Circumstantial Doubt, Judgment, Divine Protection, Mercy Extended, The Final Blow</i>	
WEEK 4: THE LAST SUPPER	76
<i>Following Instructions, Remember, An Abrupt Departure, Conditions, Redemption</i>	
WEEK 5: HIS NAME'S SAKE	97
<i>God's Roadmap, Shortsighted, Gaining Glory, Singing Praises!, Conditional Promise</i>	
WEEK 6: AT THE WELL	118
<i>Daily Provision, Miraculous Water, Helping Hands, Delegate!, Preparations</i>	
WEEK 7: LETTER VS. SPIRIT	139
<i>Not Suggestions!, God's Plans, Obedience Proclaimed, Intercession, Righteous Anger</i>	
WEEK 8: THE GLORY OF CHRIST	161
<i>God's Presence, Seeing God's Glory, Worshipping the Almighty, Boundless Gifts and Service, Ever Present</i>	

Week One

GIVING IT ALL

I am so glad the Lord has led you to this study, and count it a privilege to take this journey with you. We have quite a voyage ahead of us and our Heavenly Father is just waiting to reveal truths and treasures to our hearts, ones that will not only astound, but transform us if we allow them.

You might be wondering: *Why Exodus?* As 2009 was approaching, I felt the Lord's leading to read through the Bible in a year. My husband had been doing that for quite awhile, so I followed the schedule he was using. I can't tell you what a blessing it has been! I am now in Amos, and God continues to show me so many wondrous things!

When I started reading Exodus, what really touched my heart were the life lessons that seemed to leap off the page. I have a notebook where I jot things down when I am having my quiet time, and I kept on recording practical wisdom and insights that were so clearly presented. I was tremendously encouraged by it and after a few days of nearly being overwhelmed by all the applicable principles I was seeing, I sensed that God might be leading me to Exodus for my next Bible study workbook. Although it was still early in my journey of studying through Romans, the Lord gave me a strong sense that I would be heading to this second book of the Bible in due time. I can't tell you how excited I am to be here with you as we ask the Lord to change us through this wonderful book.

For each week of lessons, God gave me a verse to pray every time I would work on them. I prayed it over myself and you as well. I encourage you to do the same as you study through this workbook. The verse He gave me for this week is:

*'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and
unsearchable things you do not know.'*

Jeremiah 33:3

Let's cry out to God with the expectation that He will prepare our hearts and reveal to us unsearchable things!

Lesson One ~ *The Danger of Worry*

Lesson Two ~ *Escalation*

Lesson Three ~ *Extravagant Faith*

Lesson Four ~ *Your Sin will Find You Out*

Lesson Five ~ *Meeting with God*

Week One, Lesson One

THE DANGER OF WORRY

Although we may be familiar with some of the stories and history recorded in Exodus, there is so much God wants to wow and change us with in this powerful book! Fasten your seatbelt, because we are about to embark on a wonderful, life changing adventure!

GETTING STARTED

I hope you have taken my suggestion and have read through Exodus from beginning to end. If so, I am sure you were blessed and perhaps even overwhelmed with the picture it paints of our Almighty God, as well as all the exciting incidents and encounters it records which we will get to dig into. I imagine you were encouraged by the practical truths and principles that God spoke to your heart as well. Now that you have seen the big picture of what we are going to be studying over the next 8 weeks, we can start digging for the treasures that our Lord can't wait to reveal.

I wonder if this is your first in-depth study of the Old Testament, since we as Believers tend to be more comfortable in the New. Although several years ago, I had the privilege of teaching through an historical and prophetic book in discussion oriented Bible studies, and have done many messages on small portions of the Old Testament, I would consider this my biggest and deepest study of it, and I am so excited to dive in! If you have traveled with me before, you know we always begin with some historical and background information on the book and author (as do most studies), which sets the framework for what lies ahead. After much reading in many different sources, I have discovered that little is known or agreed upon regarding the background to Exodus. This brought me great frustration, and, I must admit, a little bit of trepidation. After much prayer, I am finally able to compose the opening page of our first lesson together.

WHAT WE KNOW

Let's begin with the commonly accepted facts about Exodus. It is part of the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). They are also collectively referred to as the Law, Torah and the Books (or Law) of Moses. They are classified as historical books, and are considered narratives which are *purposeful stories retelling historical events of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction for a given people in the present* (Fee, page 90). There is support in Exodus itself, as well as Old and New Testament evidence, that Moses was the author (Ex. 17:14, 24:4; Deut. 31:9, 24; Josh 1:7, 8:31-32; I Kings 2:3; II Kings 14:6; Ezra 6:18; Neh. 8:1, 13:1; Mal. 4:4; Mark 7:10, 12:26; Luke 2:22-23; John 7:19). Jewish Rabbis call this book of the Bible *These are the Names* because of its opening verses. The name Exodus, which means going out or departure, came from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) which was chosen because of the monumental and pivotal event it records of the Jews leaving their slavery in Egypt. The book itself is broken down into two sections: chapters 1-19 mainly deal with the captivity and release of the Israelites, and chapters 20-34 *describe the giving of the law, and the institutions which completed the organization of the people as "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" Ex. 19:6* (Barnes).

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

Although I so wanted to include some dates and timelines in this section, I can't because they are unknown. No one is sure when the book was written or how long a period of time it covers, and the possible dates for the exodus itself fall either in the thirteenth or fifteenth century B.C. The route the Jews took from Egypt to the Promised Land is also unclear. Some reasons why these things cannot be substantiated are: (1) because neither of the two pharaohs mentioned in the book of Exodus are named, and (2) Egyptian history does not have any record of the plagues or devastation of their land or army. It was very common for civilizations to only record historical events that reflected well on them and their culture. I like how one of my commentaries summed up the unknowns: *There are problems with Exodus ... but many of them are geographical or historical and few of them, if any, affect the theological message of the book. ... It is not essential that we know the numbers, or route, or date of the exodus. It is enough that, with later Israel, we know and believe an event happened, and that we too interpret it as a saving act of God* (Cole, page 18-19).

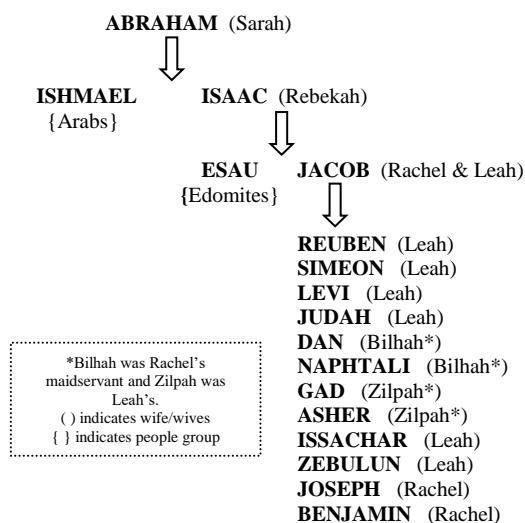
Now that we have some historical context for Exodus, we can dive in to the deep truths and transforming principles in this riveting and powerful book.

Passage for Today: EXODUS 1:1-14

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart as you read these verses, then share any insights, questions, or comments He brings to mind. This will be our practice in each lesson, because it is important for us to read and digest the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us first. I will then share the things God has shown me.

WHO AND WHY (Exodus 1:1-7)

As we begin our study of Exodus, we need to look back to Genesis to get the historical sequence of events so we can understand what has happened up to this point. Although the Introductory Message that goes with this series covered this in detail, I think some of it bears repeating. God called Abram (later known as Abraham) to leave his homeland and travel to a place God would show him. Nothing like getting clear directions! The Lord made Him this promise: *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"* (Gen. 12:2-3). As he set out for the land of Canaan, *The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land"* (Gen. 12:7). Although there was much drama and a wondrous miracle, Abraham was blessed with the son of promise: Isaac. Below is a diagram as well as some details about how his family grew.



Abraham's wife Sarah was barren but God promised him a son. Instead of waiting on the Lord, they took matters into their own hands and Sarah gave her maidservant Hagar to Abraham to sleep with so she could build a family through her, which was a very common custom of that time. Hagar conceived and gave birth to a son who was named Ishmael. He became the father of the Arab nation which has been at war with the Jews ever since.

Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. The promise was to go through Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. His twelve sons grew into the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob loved Joseph most of all his sons which caused his brothers to hate him. They sold him into slavery and told their father he had been killed by a wild

animal. Joseph ended up in Egypt and became second in command to Pharaoh. Because he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph knew that seven years of bounty were going to be followed by seven years of devastating famine, so he stored grain in the good years and fed the entire region during the bad. When his father (Jacob) and brothers ran out of food, they came to Egypt to buy some. Although things did not go smoothly at first, Joseph eventually revealed who he was to his brothers, and his entire family moved to Egypt.

So, as it says in v.1, the sons of Jacob (or Israel) went to Egypt and Joseph was already there. They continued to grow in numbers and filled that land.

ANTICIPATING THE WORST (*Exodus 1:8-14*)

Although Exodus is an historical book, there are so many life lessons that God wants to teach us through it, and the first one we encounter has to do with something many of us struggle with: worry. The new king whom Moses writes about fell prey to it which caused him to look for a problem where there was none, and take action which only made matters worse.

Can you remember a time when worry caused you to think, act or react in a way that complicated things or brought harm or trouble to yourself or someone else? Please share it below.

I imagine we have all found ourselves in situations where our concerns got the better of us. Our child isn't home at the time we expected so we begin to worry that something has gone wrong, and by the time he walks in the door, which might only be ten minutes later than usual, we're just about ready to call the police, or local hospitals to see if there have been any John Doe accident victims! Am I the only one who has had such thoughts? In this difficult economy, have you wondered what would happen if you were downsized or laid off? Although that may be a reasonable thing to consider, worrying about it will only make us crazy and can cause us to become paranoid. Maybe you've been deeply hurt by a dear friend or loved one and out of fear that it is going to happen again, you pull away from other relationships in your life. Worry zaps our energy, consumes our thoughts, clouds our thinking and even harms our bodies. It is such an easy trap to fall into, yet we are promised that God will never leave us or forsake us (Deut. 31:6), He won't give us any more than we can handle (I Cor. 10:13), and that all things will ultimately work together for our good (Rom. 8:28) so why should we worry? Unfortunately, that is easier said than done, but let's consider the path that worry can take us down, as we see how it affected Pharaoh, and use it as a motivation to ask and allow the Lord to break us of its chains.

Look closely at the train of thought Pharaoh's mind takes when he realizes that there are so many Jews in Egypt (v.10). Now, turn each of them into a positive and write them down. What can we learn from this exercise?

As I read these verses, I can almost hear a hysteria in the king's voice. It is one thing to acknowledge that there are a large number of a certain type of people in your country, but how did he get from that fact to *They're going to fight against, then leave us?* Our minds can be a very dangerous thing when they are not surrendered to our Lord. Suppose Pharaoh's thoughts took this path instead: *There are so many Israelites in this land... mmm... if another country would dare to attack us, the Jews could be part of our army and help us fight them off. And they are such a wonderful source of labor.* Quite a different scenario. I wonder how many times we take something, and go down a fearful path in our thoughts with it, when we could just as easily see it as leading to something positive. I think I need to ponder that for awhile. How much stress and anxiety might we be saved if we took our minds in that direction instead of the one that ends in the worst possible outcome?

Let's take this back one step further. From our text, we see that the king is sharing his concern with his people (v.9). What can we glean from this and how can it help us not fall into the same trap?

If Pharaoh is talking about this to others, then it is something he has been thinking about for awhile. How do we know that for sure? Because he already has a plan in place as to how to handle it. Most of our worries start with a passing thought. It's only when we begin to mull it over that it brings anxiety to our hearts. What should we do when we begin to fret over something that pops into our heads? We need to take our thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ (II Cor. 10:5). Sometimes, that is enough to stop us from going down the wrong path, but we often need to pour truth over the situation to really be released from it. Instead of thinking about the *what ifs* of it, we need to focus on what really *is* going on, then turn to the Scriptures and pray God's truths over it.

Another lesson we can learn from Pharaoh has to do with our interaction with others. He wasn't asking for advice, he was simply stating a perceived problem and declaring the solution. This wasn't a committee meeting, it was a proclamation. Do we do that? When we are struggling with a concern, do we merely tell our friends or family what the issue is and how we are going to handle it, or do we seek their input? So many times we are too close to a situation to see it clearly. If we would take the time to share it with someone we trust and be willing to listen to their insight, they might be able to put things into perspective for us. King Solomon, the wisest man to ever walk the earth (except for Jesus), puts it this way: *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed* (Prov. 15:22).

In the New International Version of the Bible, v.10 is written as *Come, we must deal shrewdly with them* (underline mine), although a better choice of words, as in other translations, is *wisely*. How ironic, since his plan seems more desperate than wise. That's what often happens when we react out of fear rather than sound thinking and good counsel. The actual Hebrew word that is used means to *act craftily towards them. ... {it} is used here of political craftiness, or worldly wisdom combined with craft and cunning* (K/D).

What are some principles you can identify from the result of Pharaoh's plan to subdue the Jews (v.12-14) and apply to your life?

Where to begin? There are so many to choose from! When we worry about something that is out of our control, then try to intercede, things usually become worse. Have you seen this at work in your life? I certainly have in mine. Sometimes this happens in a measurable sense, like when we try to fix a relationship that isn't broken out of fear of losing it, and we damage it. Other times, it expresses itself as greater stress in our already busy lives. We see something else in this verse. Not only did the Jewish population continue to grow, but *the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites* (v.12). Suddenly, a fear Pharaoh had has now spread to the whole country! People who had no problem with the Israelites now dread them, but what exactly does that mean? *To be (causatively, make) disgusted or anxious* (Strongs); *to be grieved, to loathe, to abhor, to feel a loathing or abhorrence or sickening dread* (BDB). It happens so quickly: someone shares a concern with us and we begin to take it on as our own. This can be a good thing as we carry one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2), but when the unwarranted anxiety an individual has about something is passed along to us, it can cause us to fret about an issue that doesn't even concern us.

Another result of Pharaoh's ill advised plan was that it gave the Egyptians a reason to mistreat the Jews. Up to this point, the two probably lived and worked side by side cordially, or at the very least, with little or no negative interaction. Now, there was rage and violence. How might this look in our lives? If I share with you that I am worried that our boss is going to fire me, it not only may cause you to worry about your own job security (the issue described above), but you may very well begin looking at him and even possibly treating him differently.

Now that we've talked about some physical principles we can learn and apply from the result of Pharaoh's worry, let's take a look at some spiritual ones.

If you did not include them in your answer to the previous question, what are some spiritual principles you can pull and apply from our text (vv.8-15)?

Perhaps you saw them right off, but I must admit I didn't. My mind went right to the physical, but as God started to reveal applications we can make to our spiritual lives, I was so blessed!! We must keep in mind that there is a spiritual battle going on all around us (Eph. 6:10-20). There are forces out there working against the cause of Christ, like Pharaoh was against the Israelites, and as Believers, we are targets. Satan *deals shrewdly* with Christians and tries to stop us from growing closer to and being fruitful for God, and he oppresses us. As our enemy turns up the heat, our Heavenly Father's grace abounds and we become more effective for our King, just as the Jewish population continued to grow.

There are also seasons in our lives where we go through trials and difficulties. Whether brought or allowed by God, they come to strengthen our faith, prepare us for what's ahead, and make us look more like Jesus. James 1:2-4 tells us: *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* Paul writes this to the Romans: *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.* (Rom. 5:3-4). The times we are facing issues with our health, finances, relationships, children and the like, can be such precious seasons as we rely more on our Lord and draw nearer to Him, and the work He accomplishes in and through us in the valleys is immeasurable.

Like the Jews in Egypt, we face oppression and Moses describes their time in captivity as an *iron-smelting furnace* (Deut. 4:20). I love the word picture that paints, because as we walk through fiery trials of the world, God melts more of us down and molds us to be who He created us to be. It is a difficult and often painful process, but it is more than worth it.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What we have studied today is an historical account of what happened to real people who lived centuries before us, and we see and empathize with the struggles they faced. But Exodus is not merely a history book, but the inspired Word of God. We can take what the Jews experienced and pull out principles to apply to our own situations, since the things they did and faced *were written down as warnings for us* (I Cor. 10:11). That will be our practice throughout this entire study. Today, we looked at the issue of worry and how destructive it can be. I hope God has impressed some things upon your heart that can better equip you to cast more of your anxieties on Him and walk in a greater sense of peace and hope.

One thing we need to realize when it comes to worry is that when we do it, we are basically on our own. Of course our God never leaves us, and His grace is sufficient (II Cor. 9:12), but it is only promised to us for what is happening now, not for what might happen in the future. Worry has to do with the *what ifs* while grace only covers *what is*. I would venture to say that ninety-nine percent of the things we worry about never come to pass, but if they do, God's grace will be there in abundance. We will never find it in the anxiety that accompanies potential disasters of things that *might* happen. Knowing this can also help us deal with our fears because most of them are rooted in what may lie ahead. God is not only with us but He goes before us and promises to give us what we need to handle whatever comes our way. Let's trust Him in this and not complicate our lives with worry, but rather ask our Lord to free and heal us in this area.

You have worked so hard today! This lesson is a little longer and less interactive than most because the scene needed to be set, and I'm so glad you made it all the way through. Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow!