

## Message Discussion Guide SIN IN THE CAMP (Part 3)

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*The Church at Brook Hills . Dr. David Platt . February 24, 2008, 2008 . Numbers 20:1-13*

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

### **Connect . . .**

*Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.*

#### **Option 1**

Divide your group in half. Instruct one group to defend why each person below would make a great small group leader in your absence next week, even if they don't agree that he or she would, and the other group to argue why each person would not make a good leader in your absence: (Another option would be to argue for against each person filling David Platt's preaching role next Sunday.)

- **Donald Trump**
- **David Platt**
- **Hillary Clinton**
- **Billy Graham**
- **Brad Pitt**
- **The Apostle Paul**
- **Oprah Winfrey**
- **(Supplement the names or add more of your own as you have time.)**

Once you've been through the list, discuss: **What does it take to be a good leader in the church? Can imperfect people still lead well?**

Explain that we're about to take another look at a passage that deals with how one sin—only one—tarnished Moses' leadership and had severe personal consequences.

#### **Option 2**

Share the following quote by E.M. Bounds, asking your group to listen for ways they can identify with these words: **"While the Church is looking for better methods, God is looking for better men. What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use – men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not count on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men."**

- **How well would you say the Church today seems to believe these words?**
- **Why do you think the Church is tempted to look for "better methods" instead of "better men"?**
- **How has your life been affected by the methods of the church? How has your life been affected by one person reliant on the Holy Spirit?**

Explain that today's message deals with Moses' leadership . . . and how one sin in his life showed a lapse in his Kingdom Leadership.

### **Review the Message . . .**

**Review the context:** Approximately 40 years before this incident, the people of God had stood at the same place, Kadesh. They sent 12 scouts to scope out the Promised Land, and though God had promised to give them the land, they came back and rebelled against God, claiming they weren't strong enough to take it. Two

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scouts, Joshua and Caleb, placed their faith in God, but the crowd has its way so they turned back from the Promised Land in disobedience to God. It was at Kadesh that they rebelled, and God told this entire generation that none of them would enter the Promised Land. For 40 years, they wandered in the desert, and after an entire generation had almost passed away, God brought them back to the same place. They've come full circle and again the Promised Land is right in front of them. This time, it's not the people who rebel against God, but instead it is their leaders, Moses and Aaron, who rebel in their hearts. Read Numbers 20:1-13.

### Kingdom Leadership Requires...

#### 1. A radical compassion for God's people.

As you review the biblical passage, discuss these questions:

- How did Moses show a lack of compassion for God's people? In light of their complaints in verses 3-5, can you understand his frustration? Why or why not?
- How does Moses' indignation seem justified? However, how is it not justified?
- Read Psalm 106:33. How does this verse give you insight into Moses' words—and how they reflect his attitude toward the people?
- How did God show mercy compassion toward the people, even as they complained against Him? (See verse 8.)
- Why do you think Moses didn't do the same?
- How did Jesus show both compassion and righteous indignation through his life? (See Luke 19.)
- What would've been a better response from Moses?

#### **Application . . . Pray for love in your leaders.**

Read Hebrews 13:17. Stress the importance of praying for church leaders in response to this message. Then, discuss these questions.

- Why is love such an important quality in a church leader?
- When have you experienced the blessing of your leaders' love for his or her people?
- When have you experienced the detriment of its absence?
- Complete this sentence: "A leader without love is . . ."
- As you pray for your leaders' love for God and people, is it important to pray for it in yourself as well? Why?

#### 2. A radical submission to God's glory.

- Read Moses' words in verse 10. What do his words reveal about who was going to get glory for this miracle? Who was really going to accomplish this miracle? Was it Aaron & Moses? Moses & God? Or God alone?
- Do you think Moses was elevating himself as God's equal when he said "we"? Do you think he was elevating himself and Aaron in God's place of honor?
- Do you think it's possible for a leader in the church to indirectly or directly elevate himself as equal with God? How might that happen?
- What tensions do you feel about the consequences Moses faced for his actions? How does having a God-centered view of sin opposed to a human-centered view of sin help you with this?
- How do you see Moses' attitude lacking submission to God's glory?

#### **Application . . . Pray for humility in your leaders.**

- Why is humility as an important quality in a church leader?
- When have you experienced the blessing of your leaders' humility?

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- When have you experienced the detriment of its absence?
- Complete this sentence: “A leader without humility is . . .”
- As you pray for your leaders’ humility, is it important to pray for it in yourself as well? Why?

### 3. A radical trust in God’s plan.

Read Numbers 20:8. Remind your group that archaeologists have discovered extensive aquifers beneath the surface rock strata of the Sinai peninsula that, when jarred, would open up a stream of water to the thirsty. Though scholars have debated why God commanded Moses to speak to the rock instead of striking it this time as he did in Exodus 17, the point is that Moses modified God’s command.

- Read Numbers 20:11. How did Moses modify God’s command?
- Read Numbers 20:12. What does God say Moses’ actions showed?
- Read Numbers 20:24 and 27:14. What indictment did God have against Moses and Aaron?
- What does this tell you about the way God views leaders modifying His plan or only giving partial obedience to it?
- When you first read the story, did you think of Moses’ actions as rebellion against God?
- What does this story tell you about God’s value of obedience in the lives of His leaders?

### ***Application . . . Pray for obedience in your leaders.***

- Why is obedience as an important quality in a church leader?
- When have you experienced the blessing of your leaders’ obedience to God?
- When have you experienced the detriment of its absence?
- Complete this sentence: “A leader without obedience is . . .”
- As you pray for your leaders’ obedience to God, is it important to pray for it in yourself as well? Why?
- How are obedience and trust closely connected in this passage? What does that tell you about God’s heart for all of His people to obey Him? Why is it so important to God?
- Why do you think leaders today are tempted to follow their own plan to reach this generation, culture, and world? Will they ever be successful by following their own plans?

### 4. A radical responsibility for God’s reputation.

Divide your group in half. Ask one half to read verse 12 and list all the reasons they know Moses didn’t trust God. Ask the other half to list all the reasons they know Moses didn’t honor God as holy in the sight of the Israelites. Then, discuss these questions:

- How do you see in this passage the truth that God raises up leaders before His people for a reason: to show Himself holy through them?
- How did Moses fail to show God’s holiness to the people in these verses?
- Read James 3:1. How does Moses’ life illustrate the truth of this verse?
- How was Moses’ personal holiness connected to the way the people would view God?
- How does that truth make you aware of the need for leaders to take responsibility for God’s reputation?

### ***Application . . . Pray for holiness in your leaders.***

- Robert Murray McCheyne, one of David’s favorite pastors from the past, said, “My people’s greatest need is my personal holiness.” How have you seen this as true through leaders from your past?
- How does this truth also apply to each one of us in relation to the lost world around us?
- When we personalize the truth that one sin warrants the swift and just wrath of God, how does that change the way we live?

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- When have you experienced the blessing of your leaders' holiness before God?
- When have you experienced the detriment of its absence?
- Complete this sentence: "A leader without holiness is . . ."

### The Bottom Line...

#### Kingdom leadership requires Christ in Kingdom leaders.

Read Deuteronomy 34:1-10. Point out how God allowed Moses to look over the promises that he wouldn't take part in. Emphasize that though it seems unfair from men's eyes, it teaches us an important lesson: The whole point of the story is that we have to be perfect, but like Moses the great law-giver, covenant mediator . . . we can't be. Only Christ, in us, is perfect. And only as we follow Him closely allowing Him to lead us daily, can we lead or live the way God has called us to lead and live, exalting His Name among the nations.

Conclude by challenging your group to take a few minutes to pray for your leaders, specifically, in response to the message.