



SUMMER READING PLAN

DAY 6 EXODUS 12:1-30

6

In one epic face-off, God and Pharaoh duel over the freedom of the Israelites. Every time Moses demands their release, Pharaoh refuses. So God brings a plague that shows His superiority to the gods of Egypt. Ten rounds climax in the Passover when the firstborns in Egypt will die unless the blood of a lamb covers the door frame. Throughout the conflict there is a repeated theme: the hardness of Pharaoh's heart. God gives him chance after chance to come to his senses. But he will not relent—no matter how bad things go for him. When Pharaoh's son dies during Passover, he releases the people but then pursues the Israelites with his army. Pharaoh dies while stubbornly resisting God. We have to ask ourselves: is my heart so hard that I will go my way, no matter how bad things go for me?

DAY 7 EXODUS 20:1-17

7

You've probably heard of the Ten Commandments. But did you notice what comes first? In the first verse, before a single command is given, God makes it clear that He is already their God. He has already chosen them, rescued them, and wants to bless them. The rules followed the relationship. We understand this: we don't discipline other people's kids in the grocery store because we don't have that relationship with them! The Big Ten show God's children the best way to interact with God (2-11) and each other (12-17). Good rules do that: they make clear the best path to take in life. That's why you don't let your kids run with scissors or dash into the road without looking. If you create boundaries because you love—why wouldn't God? Rules don't save us, Jesus does that. We follow because we love the One who leads.

DAY 8 LEVITICUS 16:1-34

8

Sinners is like using a credit card: we might get away with it at the moment, but eventually, we'll have to pay. Sin accumulates spiritual debt. When someone gossips about us, betrays us, or steals from us, we feel the wrongness of it. We feel very deeply that the wrong must be made right—through an apology or some form of restitution. But sometimes, we are the ones committing the wrongs. We owe more than we care to admit. Don't let the sacrifices and symbolism in today's reading distract you from the main point: our sin demands payment, and God provides a way. Two goats were used. One to pay for their sins and the other to remove their sins far away. In Christ, our sins are forgiven and removed. We are no longer facing punishment or guilt—our debt is paid in full.

DAY DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25

9

How often do you find yourself saying, “I meant to do that?” We don’t lack good intentions; we just fail to follow through. Early in the book of Deuteronomy Moses stands before the people and declares God’s promise: If they love Him wholeheartedly, He will bless them abundantly. Moses does his best to persuade them to choose the right path. Deuteronomy closes with this same urgent call to love God wholeheartedly. But then Moses says, “I know you won’t.” The illusion of their good intentions is shattered. Why is Moses such a downer? Moses understood that our problem is not knowing the right thing, or wanting the right thing, or desiring the blessing—the problem is deeper. The problem is the cancer of sin in our hearts. No amount of good intentions, recommitments, or even tears over sin will change us. So Moses tells them the day will come when God will heal their hearts (Deut. 28-30). The cure is Christ.

DAY JUDGES 2:6-19

10

Have you been devastated by reading the news? There is a lot to break our hearts. The rampant racism and retaliation are horrifying. We shake our heads; we thought we were making progress! Optimism turns to cynicism. Will the cycle never end? The book of Judges is a lot like reading the worst news. Within its pages, we watch Israel’s downward spiral from good to bad, to worse, to horrible. The cycle starts with sin, which is followed by foreign oppression, they see the error of their ways and repent, God raises up a deliverer who rescues them, and there is finally peace. Then they plunge back into sin only to do it all over again—only worse. Israel’s total failure makes us face the truth about our world and ourselves: no matter how many attempts we make, we need saving from ourselves. That’s why God sent The Deliverer.

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