

“Are you Feeling Overwhelmed?”

Numbers 11:1-35

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Teaching Aim: To examine the circumstances surrounding an emotional crash by Moses. To realize we can become volatile sinking into depression when we are carrying too big of a load and feel overwhelmed by life. To explore God’s solution to Moses’ problem and see how that solution can still work for us today. To realize God doesn’t require us to carry all the weight alone, He will walk with us and He wants us to let other people use their giftedness. To see the resiliency of Moses once he understood what God’s plan was and how it was for the better of everyone.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The people of God dissatisfied with the miraculous provision of God (Num. 11:1-15)

1. What do we find the people doing as we enter **Numbers chapter 11 (vs. 1)**? How did the LORD demonstrate His wrath to the people? Who intervened on behalf of the Hebrew people to stop the destruction (**vs. 2**)? How did he do this? Do you pray for others? Why is it better to pray “*with*” people rather than just “*for*” them?
2. What specific people group in the Israeli camp led the rebellion and yielded to their intense craving for the food they once ate in Egypt (**vs. 4**)? Who were these people? How did their complaining affect the rest of the camp (**vs. 10**)? Often in our efforts to reach unbelievers for Christ, we find ourselves compromising our Christian faith and are more influenced by “*the mixed multitude*” than we are effective at making them disciples of Jesus Christ. Where should Christians draw the line when it comes to evangelism?
3. What were these tag-along foreigners complaining about in **verses 4-6**? Why did this make God so angry? (See **Exod. 16:14-16**) What was “*manna*” and what did it look like? (See Commentaries) What does the word mean? Why do you think the people were complaining about this life-sustaining miraculous food that came down from heaven as a gift from God? Do you ever find yourself not being content with God’s provision in your life? How do you think that makes God feel?
4. God was already angry at the previous complaining; how did He respond to the grumbling in **verse 10**? How did all the negative talk from the mixed multitude affect the Israelites? How did it affect Moses? Does negative talk help or hinder the people of God? What are some ways that you can use your mouth to build others up or to tear others down?

5. What do you think led Moses to the emotional breakdown described in **verses 11-15**? Have you ever had a time in your own life where the circumstances of life were so overwhelming that, for a little while, you lost it emotionally? How did you feel during that time? Were you thinking clearly? How was your spiritual walk with the Lord affected? Was your focus on God or on your circumstances?

6. Moses snapped under the pressure of the people's constant complaining. Does this still happen to pastors and elders in the church today? Why? What is the average stay in a church for pastors? (Hint: Search online) Moses assumed it was his responsibility to make the two million+ congregation happy, to meet all their needs. Could he? Was this too big of a load for him? What did Moses ask God to do in **verse 15**? Have you ever been so discouraged that you wished you were dead?

7. Besides Moses, who is another major Bible figure that became so depressed that he asked God to take his life? (See **1 Kin. 19:1-4**) Is it possible that so many (like Moses) who feel overwhelmed by life are just really wanting the pressure of their current circumstance to stop? How should Christians respond today when family members or friends are giving signs of suicide?

8. How should we respond when we see a family member or friend begin acting in the following ways: Giving away possessions; withdrawal from (family, friends, school, work); loss of interest in hobbies; abuse of alcohol or drugs; reckless behavior; extreme behavior changes; impulsivity; or self-mutilation? Are these warning signs? How about when you see the following feelings as a pattern: desperate; angry; guilty; worthless; lonely; sadness; hopelessness; helpless? What does **Gen. 1:27** teach us about the value of the individual in God's eyes? How can the following resources help? (You; family; friends; clergy, a doctor; the ER; long term counseling; the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1(800)273-8255 or simply dial 988.)

Part II: God's solution to a problem too big for Moses (Num. 11:16-23)

1. How did the LORD respond to the cry for help from Moses (**vs. 16**)? What is the meaning of the word "*elder*?" (See Dictionary) What is the function of an elder spiritually? What role do elders play in the church today? According to **verse 16**, were these individuals men that Moses had to select and train on the spot, or were they men already proven to be the spiritual leaders of the community? Today many churches have "*a board of elders*." What difference, if any, is there between "*a board elders*" and "*an elder of the people*?"

2. Where did God command Moses to bring the seventy elders (**vs. 16**)? Why? In what unique way did God promise to help Moses in **verse 17**? Did the Holy Spirit function in the same way under the Old Covenant as “*He*” does under the New? How did the ministry of the Holy Spirit change once Pentecost came?

3. According to **verses 18-20**, how would the LORD answer the constant complaining of the people as they demanded meat? The Hebrew people were apparently praying, “*Not Thy will, but MY will be done!*” Have you ever been guilty of praying this sort of prayer? Why is it always better to pray, “*Not my will, but Your will be done?*” (See **Matt. 26:39; Rom. 8:28**)

4. Not thinking clearly, Moses misunderstood the LORD’s words to him in **verse 18-20**. According to **verses 21 and 22**, what did Moses think his responsibility was? Have you ever been so stressed out that you weren’t hearing clearly what others were saying to you? How did the LORD respond to Moses’ misunderstanding of what He had just said (**vs. 23**)?

Part III: God distributes the same Holy Spirit resting on Moses to the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:24-35)

1. How did Moses react to being corrected by the LORD (**vs. 24**)? How do you respond when the LORD corrects you? What does God promise us when we are obedient to Him? (See **Lev. 26**)

2. What supernatural event took place in **verse 25**? Has a similar supernatural event ever taken place in your life? Is so, when? (See **John 3:3, 5; Tit. 3:4-7**) What happened to each of the seventy elders upon receiving the Holy Spirit of God? What was the purpose behind the elders prophesying? Was this a permanent spiritual gift or a one-time sign for the benefit of those watching?

3. Some have speculated the seventy elders were prophesying and praising God a similar way to King Saul and the prophets (**vs. 25**). (See **1 Sam 10:9-13; 19:22-24**) What was the purpose behind this demonstration?

4. Two of the seventy elders apparently remained behind in the camp; we do not know the reason. What were the names of these two elders and what happened to the surprise of everyone in the camp (**vs. 26**)? How did the people respond when this happened (**vs. 27**)?

5. What can we learn about a very young Joshua in **verse 28**? Why do you think Joshua was so alarmed that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp? What was he jealous of? Have you ever become jealous when God called people into ministry that you didn't expect Him to? How should we respond when someone is called and anointed by God for ministry?

6. How did a resilient Moses respond once he realized what God was doing for Israel (**vv. 29-30**)? Does it appear that Moses was threatened by this change in his leadership role? What was Moses' wish once he understood what was happening? When would this wish of Moses' be fulfilled? (See **Jer. 31:31-32; Joel 2:28-29; Ezek. 36:25-27; Acts 2:14-21**) What are some ways that being regenerated by the Holy Spirit in salvation affected you personally?

7. What supernatural event did the LORD perform in **verse 31**? How did the people respond to the superabundance of fresh quail? Was this a gift from God or His judgment on the people for their complaining (**vv. 33-35**)? Note: Sometimes we need to be careful what we ask for, we might just get it.

8. What has caused you to grumble against the LORD in the past? What are some ways that people take God's everyday blessing in our lives for granted? How should we respond to the lovingkindness and graciousness of God in our lives? (See **Heb. 13:5**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Sometimes we create our own problems by placing too big of a load on ourselves.
- A team effort is always better than an individual effort.
- Moses thought he was the only person spiritually capable of leading the Hebrew people through the Exodus; he was wrong, there were many other capable elders willing to help.
- Moses had to reach the breaking point before he turned to God and was willing to share "his" spiritual leadership with the seventy elders of Israel.
- Once Moses submitted to God, seventy elders joined him in leading Israel spiritually instead of just one person; it was better for Moses and better for God's people.
- Joshua, being jealous for Moses' sake, thought he was protecting Moses; he was wrong, he was fighting against the work of God in the life of Moses and in the lives of His people.
- Moses longed for the day when all believers would be filled with the Holy Spirit; his wish came true on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit indwelt all born-again believers.