

Session 1: Faithfulness

NOTE TO LEADER

We intentionally created this study guide with more than enough material so that you can pick the questions that work best for your group. Before your meeting, watch the video, read the study guide's corresponding session, and decide which questions you'd like to discuss. For more information on using this guide in your group, click the three lines in the menu bar and select How to Use This Guide. Thank you for choosing this study and for faithfully leading your group.

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea: God's faithful patience toward Israel in Exodus gives us confidence that he sees, hears, and knows us.

Head Change: To know that no matter how long it takes, God is faithful to answer our prayers.

Heart Change: To feel close to God, even when he seems to be silent.

Life Change: To trust God's timing and walk by faith rather than what our circumstances tell us.

OPEN

Who would you consider to be a faithful friend? In what ways have you experienced the faithfulness of that friend or family member during a hard time?

We've all found ourselves in unforeseen and unexpected circumstances where we cry out to God, knowing he is our ultimate faithful friend. But sometimes, it can feel like God is late answering our prayers or maybe isn't hearing us at all. In the book of Exodus, we see a God who is faithful to act swiftly on our behalf, even when he feels far away.

In this six-session series, Dr. Phillip Pointer will walk through the major themes found in the book of Exodus, helping us see how we can trust God while examining God's faithfulness to, protection of, and relationship with the nation of Israel.

READ

Read Exodus 1:8–17; 2:5–15, 23–25; 3:1–17.

Note: *This series touches on parts of the story of Exodus. If you would like to read the whole book of Exodus, check out our daily reading guide in **Go Deeper Section 4** at the end of this study.*

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dr. Pointer's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What are the three ways we see God's faithfulness in Exodus 2–3?

What are the three tenses Dr. Pointer said we are delivered from?

Show Session 1: *Faithfulness* (11 minutes).

DISCUSS

Dr. Pointer started the session with a great reminder for us as we begin to walk through Exodus: Yahweh is faithful and will remember his promises from long, long ago. But, as Exodus opens, it does not seem like God is keeping his promises. His people, the Israelites, are suffering. Read Exodus 1:8–17.

Note: *To learn about the context of the book of Exodus, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.*

In Exodus 1, we find God’s people oppressed under the reign of a new king of Egypt. The king forced them into arduous labor and demanded the execution of their sons.

What reason does the king give for his harsh treatment of the Israelites? Who are the first people to resist the king?

We might not know how it felt for the Israelites to be enslaved, but many of us have dealt with feelings of manipulation or mistreatment. **Has someone ever treated you shrewdly—maybe by a co-worker or teammate—due to jealousy or fear? How did you handle it?**

Verse 12 says that the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied. As they suffered, God continued to bless them, and the king of Egypt took notice. **How have you seen God bless you during a trying time? What can we learn from the Israelites about what it means to be blessed?**

The new king in Egypt became so anxious about the growing population of Israelites that he commanded all their firstborn male infants to be killed. But Moses was able to escape the decree. Read Exodus 2:5–15.

Between the work of the Hebrew midwives and the divine insight of Moses’s mother, Moses’s life was divinely protected from the beginning. **In what ways can you see God’s sovereignty in the saving and adoption of Moses? What role did the midwives play in the future deliverance of the Israelites?**

Note: *For more information about the Hebrew midwives, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.*

In what ways do the circumstances of Moses's birth help you understand the faithfulness of God? How does God's control over Moses's birth and upbringing give you comfort for your own journey?

In verses 11–15, Moses killed an Egyptian for his mistreatment of the Hebrew people and flees to Midian after being caught. During this time, the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites continued to cry out to God. **When have you responded to a difficult situation in a way that you regret? How could waiting on God changed your response?**

Read Exodus 2:23–25. These three verses describe the state of desperation the Israelites were in after the king of Egypt died. **Why were the Israelites crying out to God? What is God's response to their suffering?**

We tend to doubt God's faithfulness when he seems to delay help or answer our prayers differently than we'd like. Israel had been groaning for generations, but God was faithful to act on their behalf in his perfect timing. **Describe a time when you felt God was late. What made waiting on God to act most difficult for you?**

The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years. For us, it may only take a few days before we start to wonder if God hears us. But Dr. Pointer talked about how God actively remembered Israel—he heard their cries and acted in his perfect timing. Dr. Pointer said that crying out to God is important because denial is not deliverance. **When have you felt burdened to “keep it together” instead of crying out to God? How does it feel to know that God can handle our cries, groans, and questions?**

What do you think it looks like to wait for God's timing?

In God's timing, he appeared to Moses in a burning bush. Read Exodus 3:1–10.

God's divine intervention began to take shape. He explained to Moses that he heard his people's prayers and had plans to rescue them. While the people were waiting to be rescued in Egypt, God was preparing their liberator in the desert. Just because we cannot see God moving, it does not mean he is inactive. **What would it look like to trust God and his plan, even when you feel like your circumstances are not changing?**

Dr. Pointer reminded us that God’s promise of deliverance points to an old covenant he made with Israel’s forefathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His plan will fulfill the promises of that covenant and show himself as faithful. **How does the reality of God’s never-changing character comfort you?**

Note: *To learn more about the fathers of Israel, also known as the patriarchs, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.*

God’s faithfulness in Exodus 2–3 shows us that God’s character never changes. He was faithful to keep his promise to the Israelites, even when they could not see it. He’s also been faithful to us, delivering us from bondage to sin through the coming of Jesus Christ. **What could you do this week to remind yourself of God’s faithfulness in your life? How can you be intentional about thanking him for all that he’s done for you?**

LAST WORD

Even when our lives are in chaos, we can rest, knowing that God will remain faithful to fulfill his promises. Like the Israelites who were finally answered in all their groans year after year, we too can have faith that God will answer us when we call on him.

What situations do you need God to speak into, answer, or fix? No matter how long you have to wait, he will not abandon you in your time of need.

GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of the book of Exodus.

1. How Did Israel End Up in Egypt?

Exodus begins in the middle of the story of God's people. Before the Israelites came to Egypt, they were just a small group of shepherds in Canaan. But through one man—Joseph—God brought the Israelites from the countryside to the courts of Egypt and turned them into an influential nation.

Joseph was the most favored son of his father, Isaac. But his brothers' jealousy turned his life upside down. They were so envious of their brother's favor that they sold Joseph into slavery. God carefully watched over Joseph, guiding him from slavery, to prison, and, miraculously, to the right hand of Pharaoh.

Many years after selling their brother, famine struck Canaan and Joseph's brothers were forced to go to Egypt to find food. They eventually met with Joseph, but he did not seek revenge or punish his brothers for their evil actions. Read Genesis 50:15–26.

We see in verse 19 that Joseph turned an opportunity for revenge into reconciliation. He told his brothers that even though they meant to hurt him, God used their actions to create a greater good. **In what ways does God undo the evil of Joseph's brothers? What can you learn about forgiveness from this story?**

Verse 24 shows us that Joseph reminded his brothers of God's promises. **What will God do for his people who are in Egypt? Is Egypt their permanent home?**

Joseph moved his family from Canaan and settled them in Egypt under the reign of a Pharaoh that Joseph knew personally. The people of Israel flourished. Read Exodus 1:1–7.

God worked through Joseph and his suffering to save and bless a nation. By the time Exodus begins, his people were prosperous and plentiful. But things took a turn for the worse when a new king, one who did not know Joseph or care about his people came to power. But God was not forgetting his people; he was preparing them to return to the land he had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **Put yourself in the Israelites' shoes—how might a new and hostile regime change your hope for your life? How might it change the way you view God?**

In what ways does the story of Joseph and his family's settling in Egypt help you understand the narrative of Exodus better?

2. The Midwives

In Exodus 1:8–22, the king of Egypt became fearful at how numerous the Israelites were becoming and assumed they would become a strong enemy. When his oppression over them only made them multiply, he asked the Hebrew midwives—Shiphrah and Puah—to kill every male Israelite infant.

Read verses 15–19. **According to verse 17, why did the midwives save the sons of the Hebrew women? According to verse 19, what reasons did the midwives give Pharaoh for not complying?**

If the midwives were deceiving Pharaoh, do you think they were wrong for doing so? Why, or why not?

The Hebrew midwives are only mentioned in a few verses, but their obedient actions made a huge impact on the entire world. Their dedication to God helped save the life of Moses, who would eventually go on to deliver the entire nation of Israel from the oppression of Egypt, fulfilling the will of God who desired to bring his chosen people into a promised land. By honoring God in a tense moment, they pushed forward the promise originally given to Abraham in Genesis. **When have you experienced a blessing due to someone else's**

obedience to God? In what ways have you ever considered how your obedience to God could impact future generations?

Many people think to make an impact on the world you've got to be out in front—preaching and teaching from a stage or have a large following on social media. But the Hebrew midwives served God faithfully in their jobs that were mostly behind the scenes. They weren't Hebrew leaders or part of the royal family, but their actions shaped the future of God's people. Even if you cannot see change come from your actions, you can trust that God is using your faithfulness to make an eternal impact.

What small steps of obedience is God asking you to take today? What could it look like for you to be in prayer about God using you where you are?

3. The Patriarchs

One of the most important events in the Old Testament is God's covenant with Abraham. In his covenant with Abraham, he promised land, territory, and an unfathomable number of descendants. This covenant was reinstated to both his son Isaac and grandson Jacob, who God eventually renamed Israel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are considered the patriarchs of the Hebrew people, the nation of Israel.

Read Genesis 12:1–3.

Abraham, whose original name was Abram, was living in the land of Ur when God called him to move to Canaan. God promised to make him a father of many nations and bless him with a promised land. **What are the specific ways God intends to bless Abraham according to this covenant? How will the covenant affect the people around Abram?**

What aspects of God's covenant with Abraham do you see displayed in Exodus 2–3?

Read Genesis 15. God warned Abraham that some of his descendants would live as enslaved foreigners. Even though they'd be oppressed for four hundred years, God said that he would judge the nation they served. **In what ways—if at all—have you connected these verses to their fulfillment in the story of Exodus 1–3?**

Consider what we've learned about Abraham's covenant.

In what ways do you see the constant faithfulness of God displayed through his covenant?

4. Weekly Reading Plan

Exodus is a long book, and we won't be able to study every verse of it during our group sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of Exodus so that you can dig more deeply into God's Word. Some weeks will have more reading than others, so feel free to complete the daily readings at a pace that makes the most sense to your group.

Day 1: Exodus 1:1–14

Day 2: Exodus 1:15–22

Day 3: Exodus 2:1–10

Day 4: Exodus 2:11–20

Day 5: Exodus 2:21–25