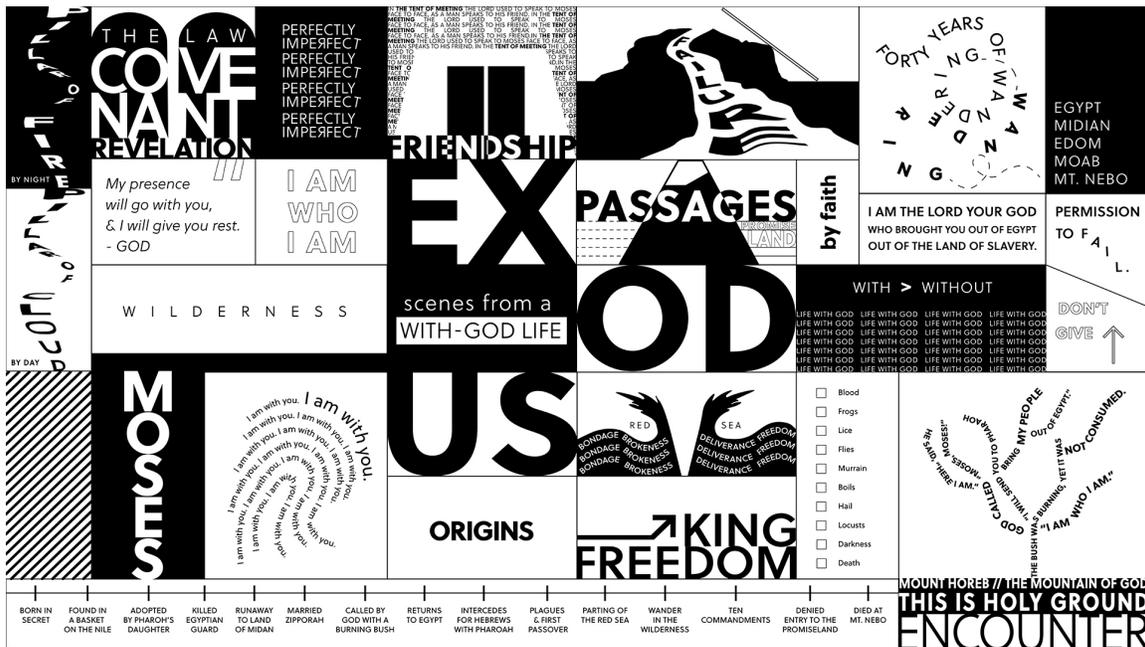




Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE
 for the Sermon given on October 16, 2022
 by Pastor Jon Kim
 "The Way of Wandering" - Numbers 13:26-33



Question: Have you ever found yourself wandering in the wilderness before?

Bottom Line: When we wander in the wilderness, God equips us with a promise and a purpose.

If this is your first time back, welcome to the new ministry year and if you took a break this summer, welcome back to this Life Group (new year, new name :)

We just crossed the halfway mark on our Fall Series called "Exodus." Throughout this series, we have been covering a lot of Scriptural ground across the second book of the Bible, *Exodus*. We

are looking into key scenes of Moses' life: from "Origins" which narrates Moses' birth and adoption into Pharaoh's home, to the "Encounter" at the Burning Bush, to "Freedom" as the children of Israel dramatically flee Egypt after the 10 Plagues, and to "Revelation" when God gives Moses and the people the 10 Commandments. This week we focus on the "Wandering" and consider the truth – "When we wander in the wilderness, God equips us with a promise and a purpose."

We are excited to try something a little new this year, and that is to utilize some of the gifting and passion of talented and experienced group leaders. So much of this study has been created by one of our seasoned Life Group Leaders. Thank you for being here today and let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Reading: Numbers 13:26-33

²⁶ They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸ But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

³⁰ Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." ³² And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ³³ We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Jon began his message with a story of how he was literally lost in the woods at Wheaton College. Can you remember the last time you were lost? How did you feel? How did you find your way back?
2. In Numbers 13:26-33, the returning spies return with a report of several key details. Can you identify them? Though they describe the promise of the beautiful land they are also intimidated by the giants who live in Canaan. Imagine for a moment that you are Moses and you and your people are stuck wandering - upon hearing this what would you be thinking?
3. A point that Jon made regarding the Scriptural understanding of the word "wilderness" is worth discussing here.

“But the word wilderness in Scripture is interesting. Because the word for wilderness comes from the word *midbar*. And the word *midbar* itself comes from the verb ***lehadbir*** ***which means “to pasture one’s flock.”***”

Lehadbir: pasture one’s flock.

Although the wilderness is a place where you can feel you are wandering around in a place of uncertainty and danger, in Scripture, God uses the wilderness to pasture his flock, to feed his sheep. He uses the wilderness to help his sheep grow. **This means that the wilderness isn’t just a place of barren nothingness. It is a place of nurturing and growth. It’s a place where God equips a purpose.**”

Likely, we have not described the wilderness like that – as Jon expressed, **“This means that the wilderness isn’t just a place of barren nothingness. It is a place of nurturing and growth. It’s a place where God equips a purpose.”** What comes to your mind as Scripture helps us reframe what God can do in the wilderness of life?

4. As the message turned towards the practical application to our lives, Jon asked a very probing and deep question – “Is there a hurt you’ve held against God that formed from a promise he hasn’t made?”

Not everyone may be ready to share their answer today but let’s take a few moments to meditate on this in silence together and invite the Holy Spirit to be with us.

***Leader spend a few minutes in meditation yourself and then read the room to when to conclude the time. Transition out by asking, “As you considered this question, did the Lord reveal anything to you that you would like to share?”

5. What purpose(s) is God equipping you with in the midst of your wilderness? Or considering your past journey, how has God equipped you in the midst of a wilderness experience?
6. If know someone wandering in the wilderness today, how can you encourage and support that person?
7. Each time we gather, we want to encourage each other in our journeys of discipleship. If you had an opportunity to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and/ or the GPS Assessment, please share your results with your group and discuss where you think God may be calling you to serve. Has there been a resource, a book or podcast or a serving experience that you have found helpful to your journey?

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us; it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families and extends to our communities.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. These resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Let's Pray

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

Teaching Points:

- God equips the Israelites with a promise; that he will dwell among them in the midst of their wandering. However, they expect something more, to have lives free of hardship and suffering.
- When we confuse what we want with what God has promised, we wander away from Him.
- In the wilderness of our lives, God makes that same promise to us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit that dwells within us.
- The wilderness isn't just a place of barren nothingness. It is a place of nurturing and growth.
- You can look for God in the wilderness through prayer, worship, fellowship or other spiritual practices.
- It is in the wilderness that God prepares us with a purpose.
- Walk with someone who is going through the wilderness.

For Further Biblical Study:

Deuteronomy 2:7

⁷The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything.

Lamentations 3:19-24

I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.

²⁰I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.

²¹Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:

²²Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.

²³They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

²⁴I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."

Matthew 4:1-10

⁴ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[b]"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[c]"

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[d]"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^[e]"

Luke 15:3-7

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace from the Group Life team.