



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of August 20, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 1:1-4, "In The Wilderness"

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head. ³ From twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go to war, you and Aaron shall list them, company by company. ⁴ And there shall be with you a man from each tribe, each man being the head of the house of his fathers."

The book of Exodus covers a year of Israel's history. Leviticus only a month. But Numbers encompasses more than 38 years. The opening ten chapters of Numbers covers a mere fifty days & describe how Moses organized Israel for the march from Sinai to the Promised Land.

- To be human is to experience seasons of spiritual wandering. Share with the group a "wilderness" time where you really needed to hear from God. How were you tempted in that season? How did God meet you in that time?
- Read Numbers 1:1. This brief introductory verse tells us a very important things about God and how He leads His people: The LORD speaks. What do you notice about the context for His message? What do you notice about the means God uses to speak?
- Does God still speak today? Through what means? The New Testament book of Hebrews is especially helpful in reflecting on this, and other, connections between ancient Israel & the Church. Read [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) for more insight.
- Read Numbers 1:2-4. Why did the LORD number the people? Does this action tell us anything about how God sees His people?
- How does God order the people of Israel? Is this significant? This week's sermon referred to [Romans 5:17-21](#) to shows the ultimate reason why is it important to understand that God establishes representatives and authority.
- Sunday's New Testament reading came to us from [I Corinthians 10:1-5](#). Read this passage together as a group. How does the Scripture teach us that the Book of Numbers is to be applied today?
- Christians do believe that God still gathers us to bless us and speak to us. How did you see Him do that in worship last week?

*Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons*

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Numbers 1:1-4](#).

- The first two verses tell us much:
 - Who spoke
 - To whom
 - Where it was said
 - When it was said
 - What was to be done
- Our God speaks. He most often speaks through mediators. Moses, the great law-giver, stands between God and His people: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He spoken to us by His Son” ([Hebrews 1:1-2](#))
- This happened in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Sinai. Numbers is a picture of the life of the Church, between the great acts of redemption and the final culmination. Remember what has happened here.
- The people arrived at Sinai on the third new moon after the Exodus, so they had been at the mountain around eleven months by the first day of the second month in the second year.
- A census of males who would be available and eligible to fight in the army. This is not the first census. There was a previous census in Exodus 30, but for a different purpose: “Everyone who is numbered in the census from twenty years old and upward shall give to the Lord’s offering...for the service of the tent of meeting” ([Exodus 30:14-16](#))
- The means the census was taken through family or clan heads as representatives.
- Points of application: Our sin and rebellion does not keep God from pursuing us and pursuing His mission in the world. He still speaks and He work for us to do. This is not a particularly happy time for God’s people.
- We have a Mediator who represents God to us and us to God.
- Preparation for conflict and conflict are much of what life is about for the people of God between redemption and promised land.
- “Lead on, O King eternal / Till sin’s fierce war shall cease / And holiness shall whisper The sweet amen of peace. / For not with swords’ loud clashing / Nor roll of stirring drums; / With deeds of love and mercy / The heavenly kingdom comes.” ([Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887](#))
- Finally, while each of us particularly matters to God, the Lord works through representative heads.
- “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” ([Romans 5:17-21](#))