



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N9 February 27 2022

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Patience

I take a long time to over-heat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

"Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."
Proverbs 14:29



How does faith respond to setbacks?

WAY OUT "God's People Pay a Price" Exodus 5:1-21

Faith and patience go hand-in-hand. After commenting on the faith of Abraham and his family, the author of the book of Hebrews writes: "*All these people* were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive *the things promised*; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth" (11:13). "*All these people*" refers to Abraham and his family, and "*the things promised*" refers to the things promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. One commentator explains: "That 'they did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance' alludes to the content of God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3; 15:5; 17:1-8. The possession of the land, the multitude of descendants (including those who would be kings), and the blessing of the nations all would be fulfilled in a time after Abraham and his immediate family passed from the scene" (George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, 378). During his lifetime, Abraham *did* receive the son whom God promised, but only after the patriarch turned one hundred and his wife turned ninety, twenty-five years after the promise was given.

Another example of the link between faith and patience is evident in the opening chapters of Exodus. God told Abraham his promised descendants would be enslaved in a foreign country for four hundred years but afterward would be brought out with great possessions (Ge 15:13-16). That both Jacob and Joseph believe God's promise—i.e., have faith—is evident in the fact that Jacob is buried in Canaan, not in Egypt (Ge 46:4; 49:29-32; 50:12-14), and in the fact that Joseph, although buried in Egypt, demands his bones be exhumed and taken to Canaan when God keeps his promise to emancipate the Israelites (Ge 50:24-25). But neither Jacob nor Joseph lives to see the Exodus.

And neither do the generations of Hebrews who die in Egypt, whose oppression is documented in Exodus 1. In fact, deliverance isn't imminent until eighty years after the birth of God's deliverer,

Moses. Following his call (3:10) and after some negotiation, Moses returns to Egypt to meet with the elders of Israel to tell them about God's theophany and his intention to rescue them. Everything is looking up until it isn't. Moses and Aaron gather the elders, tell them everything the LORD said to Moses (3:16-17), perform the authenticating signs God gave (4:2-9), and they believe. Afterward, Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh, but he refuses to let the people go "a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD" (5:1-3). Instead, he decides if they have enough time on their hands to plan a festival, they have too much time on their hands, so he makes their work harder. He tells them in so many words, "Find your own straw to make bricks. It will no longer be provided." By the way, "Neither will your quota of bricks be reduced." Of course, when the Israelite foremen are unable to meet his unreasonable demands, they are beaten, which causes them to rail against Moses and Aaron: "May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us" (5:21). Things get worse for the Israelites before they get better.

As one commentator observes, "Exodus 5:1-21 shows us that God's direct involvement in the affairs of his people does not guarantee *immediate* results . . . The problem here is not so much that Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go. God said that would happen (3:19). Rather, the problem is that the people, whom Moses had just won over to his side (4:29-31), begin to grumble. They are worse off after the initial confrontation than before, and as a result the people begin to resist Moses, and the whole plan begins to unravel before his eyes. One would expect Pharaoh to be less than receptive to Moses' words, but the Israelites' reaction is disconcerting to say the least" (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 161). The people simply run out of patience.

Exodus 5:1-21

1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'"

2 Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."

4 But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!" 5 Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working."

6 That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: 7 "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. 8 But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

10 Then the slave drivers and the overseers went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. 11 Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.'" 12 So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. 13 The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." 14 And Pharaoh's slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, "Why haven't you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"

15 Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way? 16 Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people."

17 Pharaoh said, "Lazy, that's what you are – lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks."

19 The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." 20 When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, 21 and they said, "May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Pharaoh" in v. 1.
- Circle "festival" in v. 1.
- Bracket "three-day journey" in v. 3.
- Box "or" indicating an *alternative* in v. 3.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 4, 8, 11, 16.
- Circle "said" in v. 5.
- Circle "slave drivers" in vv. 6, 10, 13, 14.
- Circle "overseers" in vv. 6, 10, 14, 15, 19.
- Circle "lazy" in vv. 8, 17 (2x).
- Circle "lies" in v. 9.
- Circle "stubble" in v. 12.
- Circle "obnoxious" in v. 21.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain the need to go outside Egypt into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD (see 8:25-27).
2. Pharaoh rebuffs Moses' and Aaron's initial request (v. 2). His *rhetorical* question has a negative connotation. Explain it.
3. They ask again (v. 3). Compare their second request to their first.
4. Pharaoh denies both requests. Why?
5. Pharaoh accuses the Israelites of being "slackers" (cf. "lazy," v. 8). Describe how he proposes to address the problem.
6. Pharaoh demands the impossible. Describe the consequences for the Israelite overseers.
7. They express their unjust treatment to Pharaoh in a *contrast*. Explain the *contrast* in verse 16.
8. Do you see any "hardening" evident in Pharaoh's response to their protest? Explain.
9. The overseers were quick to attack Moses and Aaron (v. 20). What does this suggest to you?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about how we are prone to respond when things go from bad to worse and how to respond differently.

Commentary On The Text

Exodus 5:1-21 *opens on a high note*. Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites and told them about the theophany (3:2-6) and what God intended to do (vv. 7-10). When Moses performed the two authenticating signs God gave him, they all believed (4:31), and hearing of the LORD's concern for them, they all worshipped (v. 31).

So in obedience to God's command, the two appear before Amenhotep II, the Pharaoh at that time. In the words of one commentator: "They are confident. They are bold . . . The long period of Egyptian oppression is about to end with but a command from Moses' mouth" (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 152). Unfortunately, nothing could be farther from the truth. When Moses and Aaron abruptly deliver God's command to Pharaoh, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness'" (5:1), Pharaoh brusquely dismisses the LORD's command. After all, he sees no reason to obey it for Yahweh is no Egyptian God that he acknowledges. His *rhetorical* question, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go?" implies both an initial hardness of heart, as well as the fact that the "true battle in Exodus is not between the Israelites and Pharaoh, nor even between Moses and Pharaoh. Rather, it is between the God of Israel and Pharaoh" (Enns, 153). Pharaoh's flat refusal invites a second, less abrupt ask from Moses, identifying Yahweh as the God of the Hebrews and warning that Yahweh "may strike *us* with plagues or with the sword. This is not Moses *begging* Pharaoh to let the people go. This is Moses *warning* Pharaoh that God may become angry with *us*—*us* Hebrews and *you* Egyptians. He believes Pharaoh runs the risk of losing his workforce even if he denies his second request. Nevertheless, without further ado, Pharaoh orders the Hebrews back to work, thinking to himself, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you *Moses* are stopping them from working" (v. 5) . . . ridiculous! In the words of one writer: "Pharaoh must consider the command absurd. He has no experience of any Yahweh, thus no reason to pay any mind to what he says, and of all the actions he is likely to undertake, sending out Israel is not one of them. This king of Egypt is presented as a no-nonsense ruler, completely sure of himself, whose time is being wasted" (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 64)—a ruler who has neither heard of Yahweh nor now that he has, has any regard for him.

What follows in verses 6-14 is Pharaoh's further response to Moses' request. He orders the Israelites' *Egyptian* slave drivers and the Israelites' *Hebrew* overseers to stop supplying the straw used as a binding agent in making clay bricks. He doesn't order his alien workforce (i.e., "the people of the land") to make bricks without straw,

only that they find and collect their own straw. Yet, he says, "But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota" (v. 8). His orders are carried out (vv. 10-13), but the work is so much more taxing and time-consuming that the daily quota of bricks cannot be met. As a result, the Israelite overseers are beaten by Pharaoh's slave drivers, who insist that they comply with Pharaoh's demands. One commentator sees the irony in all this: "The irony, of course, is that as Pharaoh punishes Israel by making the people work 'hard,' his own heart is 'hardened,' which results in his punishment—the plagues and the Red Sea incident" (Enns, 156).

Taken aback by their harsh treatment, the Israelite overseers go to Pharaoh, thinking there must have been some miscommunication, some breakdown in the chain of command. Surely, he doesn't expect them to produce the same number of bricks as before, when they were provided straw. Their unproductive encounter with the truculent Egyptian ruler is recorded in verses 15-18. They complain that they are being beaten for missing their quota, but the fault lies with the ones who are beating them, the ones who give them no straw (vv. 15-16). Pharaoh not only ignores their appeal, but also rubs salt in their wounds by accusing them of being slackers. "Lazy, that's what you are—lazy!" he barks, and in the same breath, orders them to "get back to work" (cf. v. 4). Pharaoh's response appears intended to disparage Moses' reputation among the people, or put differently, to drive a wedge between Moses and the Israelites, and it works.

And so Exodus 5:1-21 *closes on a low note* in verses 19-21. The obvious intent of the section-leaders' visit to Pharaoh was to undo the harm brought upon Israel, and themselves in particular, by the intercession of Moses and Aaron. Having failed, their first move after being rebuffed and insulted by Pharaoh is to immediately attack Moses and Aaron, accusing them of turning the ruler against them and giving him reason to kill them. They are now a stench to him, and in their opinion, it's all because of Moses and Aaron. Because emancipation did not come as quickly as expected and because things are not getting better quickly as expected, the Israelite overseers call on the LORD to judge and punish the very ones he will ultimately use to deliver them.

The *upper* story is about God's education of Pharaoh. He neither knows Yahweh nor has regard for him, but he will as the story of the Exodus unfolds. Yahweh will demonstrate that he alone is God—Pharaoh and Egypt's other so-called gods notwithstanding. The *lower* story is about the Israelites' reaction to Pharaoh's initial refusal to let the people go. Unwilling to accept that things might get worse before they get better, having no patience, they immediately go dark and attack Moses and Aaron, the ones the LORD will use in due time to deliver them.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 **Pharaoh** I.e., Amenhotep II, son of Thutmose III. "A ruler of valor and strength in his own right, Amenhotep II had been carefully trained by his outstanding father. Ascending the throne at the age of eighteen, he prided himself in his horsemanship and claimed to be a better handler of ships and more expert with the bow than any other. He conducted at least three successful military campaigns north in Syria, maintaining his father's holdings there, and was able to continue Egypt's southern boundary at Napata near the Fourth Cataract" (Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*, 123).

v. 1 **festival** "Their request is stated in verse 1 and expanded in verse 3; Moses and Aaron, asked for permission to undertake a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD" (John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 115). "By Egyptian law, the Israelites could have worshipped only the gods of Egypt while in the land, but they had to leave Egypt to worship a non-Egyptian God. Moses' request was a request to exercise a basic human right, namely, freedom of worship. Verse 1 does not contradict 3:18: '... say to him [Pharaoh], "... please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'" Celebrating a 'feast' (v. 1) would have involved sacrifices" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2021 ed., 60, planbiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf)

v. 3 **three-day journey** "The predominate scholarly view is that 'three-day' indicates not the time away from Egypt, but the approximate time it would take to get to the proper site for the celebration without in any way implying that a return to Egypt is in view . . . As we will see in 14:1-5, Pharaoh is utterly surprised to find out that the Israelites have fled. As I will spell out in more detail there, Pharaoh's surprise that the Israelites have left makes little sense since he is the one who gave the order (12:31-32). I suggest, therefore, that Pharaoh's surprise is not that they left, but in his sudden awareness that they are not coming back. In 12:31 Pharaoh tells them to leave and 'worship the Lord as you have requested'" (Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*, 154).

v. 4 **people of the land** I.e., "the alien labouring class of Egypt, the state slaves, largely Semitic in origins and including Israel" (R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, TNTC, 81).

v. 5 **said** Cf. "Pharaoh was thinking, 'The people of the land are now many, and you are giving them rest from their labor'" (NET). "This is not the kind of thing that Pharaoh is likely to have said to Moses, and so it probably is what he thought or reasoned within himself. Other passages (like Exod 2:14; 3:3) show that the verb 'said' can do this. (See U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 67.)" (*The NET Bible*, 14tn on Ex 5:5).

v. 6 **overseers** Cf. "foremen" (GNT, ESV, NET); "officers" (NKJV); "supervisors" (NRSV). "The taskmasters were junior Egyptian 'warders'; the foremen were Hebrews set over their fellow, probably because of their willingness to be stooges of the Establishment" (George A. F. Knight, *Theology as Narration*, 39).

v. 8 **lazy** Cf. "idle" (ESV); "slackers" (HCSB, NET). "They must have too much time on their hands if they can plan a religious pilgrimage; that time can be removed by an expansion of their responsibility. This logic is consonant with that of 1:9-11, whereby Pharaoh sought to control the Israelite birth rate by giving the Israelites a wearying work load. Of course, neither plan can succeed, for the longing for a pilgrimage, like the astonishing increase in population, is from Yahweh" (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 65).

v. 9 **lies** "The words of Moses are here called 'lying words' . . . Here is the main reason, then, for Pharaoh's new policy. He wanted to discredit Moses. So the words that Moses spoke Pharaoh calls false and lying words" (*The NET Bible*, 28sn on Ex 5:9). "To discredit the message, Pharaoh slings mud at the messenger: Moses is a liar (v. 9). Moreover, he discredits the people by misconstruing their complaint: They are crying out because they are lazy (v. 8). By belittling the Israelites' pain and suffering, Pharaoh is positioning himself even further into direct conflict with the God who cares about his people" (Enns, 156).

v. 12 **stubble** Straw is stalks of grain after threshing. "'Stubble' was the part of the corn or grain stalk that remained standing after field hands had harvested a crop (v. 12). From then on, the Israelites chopped up stubble and mixed it with the clay to strengthen their bricks, because they were no longer provided 'straw' for this purpose" (Constable, 64).

v. 21 **obnoxious** Cf. "made us stink" (ESV, NET); "made us repulsive" (NASB). "A metaphor depicting an object of strong hostility, as in 2Sa 10:6; 16:2; Ge 34:30; Ex 5:21" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Sa 13:4).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Don't let unforeseen delays and setbacks shake your faith
in what the LORD has promised to do.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Stuck in the weeds is an idiom that suggests you're feeling completely overwhelmed with the task at hand and the pace is so driven you're unable to keep up. Do you ever feel this way in parenting? There have definitely been times I have felt the insurmountable task of parenting, the burden of discipline combined with the push for discipleship, that I've just thrown my hands in the air and given up. High frustration plus low patience equals bad mommy (or daddy) in any parenting equation. Again, here are the weeds, threatening to choke me out of blooming as the parent God designed me to be. What makes it even more difficult is when you're trying hard to follow the Lord. Soon after taking the role of Children's Minister, I was faced with a giant parenting challenge and I remember crying out, "God, I answered your call and I'm doing what you asked of me. Why is parenting so hard?!" In reading about the Israelites being pushed to their breaking point, it's easy for us to shout from the sidelines, "Hold on! God has a plan!" We know the end of the story; we know about the Red Sea parting and the great deliverance of the Israelites. We may not know the end of the story, what kind of adult our child will turn out to be, but God certainly does. He has an aerial view and is inviting us to come along with faith and trust. What's causing you to be stuck in the weeds today? I'm praying your patience in parenting grows exponentially and God blesses your family.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 5:1-21.

1. What was Pharaoh's response to Moses and Aaron's request?
2. How did Pharaoh punish the Israelites?
3. How did the Israelites respond to Moses?

What Do You Think?

Moses obeyed God but the Israelites were still punished. What does this make you think about God?

What Do You Do?

Bake a cake one afternoon (and don't lick the bowl). Think about all the times you need patience in the process. Is the end result worth it? Why or why not? How can you be patient this week?

CORE COMPETENCY: Patience

I control my temper when things don't go my way.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 121:1-2

"I lift my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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