

IN THE WILDERNESS

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Week 5: God's Jealousy & Our Holiness

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.

CONNECT

****Note to leaders:** *The subject matter in this discussion is sensitive and will require prayer, wisdom, a willingness to boldly call people to repentance, and the readiness to care for people who need help.*

- What's one of the first things you're going to do on a warm Spring day?
- What parts of the Bible can make you feel uncomfortable? What do you do with the discomfort?

INTRODUCTION

The author of numbers sticks Balaam's oracles, which are full of blessings for Israel, and Israel's unfaithfulness at Peor side by side. The effect is jarring. It shows that the major threat to Israel wasn't external but internal—being lured away by the false promises of other gods. Disciples of Jesus have to beware of the same internal threat, because they'll face it in this age. This is particularly true in a culture like ours that is obsessed with sex.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Numbers 24:1-9

Discuss: One of the keys to reading Hebrew poetry is envisioning what's being described. What strikes you about the images described in verses 5-8?

Read: Numbers 25:1-9

Discuss: This is a sobering passage. What do you learn about God's wrath from it?

Read: Numbers 25:10-13

Discuss: Phinehas turned God's wrath away from Israel by piercing Zimri and Cosbi with a spear. Jesus, however, turned God's wrath away from us by being pierced with a spear. How do these passages help you understand the work of Jesus on the cross?

APPLICATION

- (Real talk alert) Are there any ways you've "yoked" yourself to sexual immorality that you need to repent of?
- (Read 24:6-7 again) How can the promise of God's blessing over his people encourage you to flee from sexual immorality?
- How is your heart moved by the atoning work of Christ?

PRAYER

- Pray with anyone who needs to repent. (1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.)
- Spend time praising Jesus for his atoning work.
- Pray for the boldness to flee sexual immorality.