

Small Group Guide
Fire on the Outside, Fire on the Inside - Exodus 33
Chapters of Faith - Part 7, 05/31/26

Icebreaker Question: Have you ever experienced a moment when you realized you needed someone's presence more than their help or gifts? Share briefly with the group.

Highlights:

- We Need God's Presence More Than His Blessings.
- God's Presence is Personal and Intimate
- God's Presence Brings Rest and Peace
- God's Presence is Experienced Through His Glorious Goodness
- God's Presence is Beyond Comprehension

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Exodus 33:1-6. God challenged Israel: did they want Him or just the blessings they could get from Him? How does your daily life answer this question?

a) What would need to change for your answer to be different?

2. The Israelites stripped off their ornaments when they realized life without God's presence was meaningless (v5-6). What are the 'ornaments' in your life—things you use to find fulfillment apart from God?

3. Read Exodus 33:11. God spoke with Moses 'face to face, as one speaks to a friend'. How would you describe your current relationship with God—distant, formal, friendly, intimate?

a) What affects the quality of that relationship?

4. Read John 14:23 and 2 Corinthians 1:22. God's presence moved from the Tent of Meeting, to the Tabernacle, to the Temple, to believers through the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to you personally that God's Spirit permanently dwells within you?

a) How does understanding that God's Spirit permanently dwells within believers change the way we approach worship, prayer, and daily spiritual practices?

5. Read Exodus 33:12-16 and Matthew 11:28-30. His presence doesn't guarantee easy circumstances; it provides peace within difficulty. This rest isn't about comfort—it's about confidence in God's sovereignty. How do we reconcile the idea that God's presence brings rest and peace with the reality that many faithful believers still experience anxiety, stress, and turmoil?

a) Where do you need to experience God's rest instead of striving in your own strength?

6. Read Exodus 33:18-19 and John 1:14. Moses asked to see God's glory and was shown God's goodness instead because God's glory is experienced through His goodness. How can we tell the difference between genuine encounters with God and emotionally-driven experiences?

a) If God's glory is His goodness revealed through grace and truth, how should this understanding shape the way churches pursue experiencing God's presence versus manufacturing emotional or intellectual experiences?

b) How does this connection between glory and goodness challenge or expand your understanding of what it means to seek God's glory?

7. Read Exodus 33:16, John 13:35 and Galatians 5:16-25. Moses said God's presence is what would distinguish Israel from other nations. What should distinguish Christians today?

a) What does 'keeping in step with the Spirit' look like practically in daily life?

b) How visible is God's presence in your life to those around you?

Prayer:

- Confession: Acknowledge times when we've wanted God's blessings more than God Himself
- Gratitude: Thank God that His Spirit permanently dwells within us
- Surrender: Ask God to help each person truly desire His presence above all else
- Empowerment: Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading throughout the week