



Living in the Middle
Daniel Im
Sept 19/20, 2020

When we're living in the middle, we often forget the past, turn inward, and drift off-course. In today's message, we are going to read sections of the Bible from Exodus 19-32 and explore how God's people navigated the tension of living in the middle. Because of the amount of text we'll be reading, it'll be beneficial to read along in a physical Bible or your Bible app.

1. When the Israelites were living in the middle, they forgot the past, began turning inward, and eventually drifted off course

Moses came and told the people all the commands of the Lord and all the ordinances. Then all the people responded with a single voice, "We will do everything that the Lord has commanded." Exodus 24:3 (CSB)

When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make gods for us who will go before us because this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!"

Aaron replied to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me." So all the people took off the gold rings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into an image of a calf.

Then they said, "Israel, these are your gods, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of it and made an announcement: "There will be a festival to the Lord tomorrow." Early the next morning they arose, offered burnt offerings, and presented fellowship offerings. The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party. Exodus 32:1-6 (CSB)

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. Exodus 20:1-6 (CSB)

2. Like the Israelites, why is our natural tendency to drift when we're living in the middle?

The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed:

The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

Moses immediately knelt low on the ground and worshiped. Exodus 34:6-8 (CSB)

3. To live in the middle, we must:

Refuse to forget the past and turn inward

The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed:

The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation. Exodus 34:6-7 (CSB)

Respond in worship

Moses immediately knelt low on the ground and worshiped. Then he said, "My Lord, if I have indeed found favor with you, my Lord, please go with us (even though this is a stiff-necked people), forgive our iniquity and our sin, and accept us as your own possession." Exodus 34:8-9 (CSB)

Discussion Questions:

1. Are you currently living in the middle?
2. Do you see patterns of forgetting the past, turning inward, and drifting off course when you're in the middle?
3. What will change if you lay down your timeline, plans, and idols and respond in worship?