

Leadership by NUMB3RS

Study Guide

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Series Overview

The book of Numbers contains powerful lessons on leadership. First, there's a lesson on the importance of being organized and balancing our inner and outer worlds. There are lessons on how to respond to difficult leadership challenges. There's even a lesson on our biggest challenge as leaders, ourselves. One of the most powerful lessons is remembering our goal as leaders, to lead people to Jesus. This guide provides questions to help your group explore these key leadership lessons from the book of Numbers.

Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- ◆ for personal study and reflection
- ◆ as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in biblical leadership

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1-A Leader's Two Worlds: Outer and Inner

Icebreaker: Are You Organized?

Share some tips for getting organized:

- ▶ around the house
- ▶ at work
- ▶ with your schedule

Questions for Study or Discussion

- ◆ What about being organized appeals to you? From the beginning, God organized things (**Gen 1:1-10**). Our God is a God of order (**1Cor 14:33**). What are the benefits of godly order?
- ◆ You may have heard the expression, “fight the good fight” (**1Tim 6:12**). Christian life is a battle ground. You can’t remain neutral (**Mat 12:30**). If Christ is your Savior, how is this relevant to you? Read **2Timothy 2:3-4**.
- ◆ Notice in **Numbers 1** how they got organized for their mission, their outer world. In what ways do you cooperate with God to bring order to your life?
 - ▶ What can you do to be sure you are listening to God (**Rom 8:14** and **Mark 1:35**)?
 - ▶ What can you do to continue your spiritual growth (**1John 2:4**)?
 - ▶ How can you strengthen yourself with godly companionship (**Ecc 4:12**)?
 - ▶ In what ways can you cooperate with leaders (**Heb 13:17**)?
 - ▶ In what ways can you cooperate with God’s attempts to bring order to your life (**Pro 3:5-6** and **1Cor 14:40**)?

Dig a Little Deeper: Worship First

Compare **Numbers 1:1-3** to **Numbers 9:1-2**. Notice the dates. What did God ask Moses to instruct Israel to do before he numbered them for war? In what way does this illustrate the importance of focusing on inner leadership (worship) before outer leadership?

Application Exercise: Pray

During the coming week, pray each day that God shows you where He wants to bring order to your life.

2-Handling Leadership Challenges

Icebreaker: Brainstorm Challenges

- ◆ Brainstorm a list of challenges that leaders face.
- ◆ Multi-vote: Each person has half as many votes as there are items on the list. Everyone gives their votes to whatever items on the list they believe are the biggest challenges. (You can spread your votes among many items or give them all to one item.)
- ◆ Circle the three or four items on the list that got the most votes.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- ◆ Complaining is the non-constructive airing of grievances. Grumbling and murmuring make God angry (**Num 11:1** and **1Cor 10:10**). When you are displeased about something, what tends to be your first response?
 - keep it to myself, avoid any kind of conflict
 - grumble to those around me
 - complain to leaders
 - take my thoughts and feelings to God (**Psa 142:1-2**)
 - work in a positive way to resolve the issues (**Mat 18**)What changes might you make to please God in the way you handle grievances?
- ◆ As a leader (parent, group leader, person to whom others listen), there will be times when people complain to you or about you (**Mark 3:20-21**). Consider times when you've had to endure complaining. Notice what Moses does for the complainers in **Numbers 11:2**. What could you do to remember to respond as Moses did?

◆ One of the most difficult things to handle as a leader is when those closest to you complain to you. God takes complaints about leaders seriously because no one becomes a leader without His permission (**1Sam 8:7**). It is not easy; however, we should expect criticism (**Ecc 7:21-22**) and handle it as God desires. Read **Romans 8:33-34** and **Matthew 5:44**. Discuss what these passages suggest we do to handle criticism against us.

◆ When God presents you with a direction that seems overwhelming, what do you see?

opportunities (**Num 13:1-25**)

obstacles (**Num 13:26-33**)

How big is your God? To what degree do you know and trust His promises?

Dig a Little Deeper: Godly Counsel

◆ Sometimes people want what is not good for them. You may do your best as a leader to give godly counsel; however, sometimes God must teach them a lesson. He may let them have their way to make His point (**Rom 1:24** and **Psa 106:15**). In what situations are you most likely to push to get your own way instead of accepting God's way?

◆ When Israel rejected the manna, they were rejecting Him (**Num 11:20**). The way we treat God's Word is the way we treat Him (**Heb 12:5-11**, **Psa 1:1**, **Mat 4:4**, **1Pet 2:1-3**). How do you treat God's Word?

Application Exercise: Pray

During the coming week, pray every day for those who look to you as a leader.

- ▶ Pray that they seek a closer relationship with their Savior.
- ▶ Pray that they cooperate when God says, "no" so that they benefit from the protection He wants to provide.
- ▶ Pray that they experience contentment with His provision.

3-Our Greatest Leadership Challenge: Self

Icebreaker: If I Could Change One Thing

- ◆ Give each person a small piece of paper and be sure everyone has a pen. Put a container (box, sack, hat) where everyone can see it.
- ◆ Say, "Do NOT put your name on the paper. On the paper, write one thing you would change about yourself if you could. Then crumple the paper and toss it in this container. "
- ◆ Once everyone has tossed in a paper, pass the container around the room. Ask each person to draw out one paper and read it.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- ◆ Think about a time when you were determined to make one improvement about yourself. What are the challenges we face in trying to manage ourselves?
- ◆ One serious struggle many of us face is anger. There are times when it is okay to be angry (**Eph 4:26**); however, it is wrong to let anger control us. In **Numbers 20:1-13**, Moses' anger caused him to disobey what God told him to do. What are some practical things we can do when we begin to feel our anger rise?
- ◆ People tend to follow leaders who have lives they admire. To be a leader worthy of followers, you must welcome God's discipline (**Heb 12:5-11**) and discipline yourself (**Heb 12:12-13**). In what ways could you use the following for self-leadership?
 - ▶ Use time wisely (**Eph 5:15-16**).
 - ▶ Maintain your integrity even in small things (**Luke 19:17**).
 - ▶ Finish what you start (**Luke 14:28-32**).
 - ▶ Keep your commitments (**Mat 5:37** and **Jas 5:12**).
 - ▶ Watch your thought processes (**Rom 12:3** and **2Cor 5:13**).

- ◆ As a leader, it is easy to get preoccupied with day-to-day responsibilities. One day, you wake up and wonder who you are and how you got where you are now. In **2Corinthians 13:5**, Paul advises us to examine ourselves. How often do you have a frank talk with yourself? Can you clearly see your part in any problems you have or do you place the blame elsewhere as Moses did when he struck the rock against God's orders (**Deu 1:34-38**)?

Dig a Little Deeper: Manage Your Anger

- ◆ Read **1Corinthians 1:11-13** to see how Paul reacted when he had a challenging conversation.
- ◆ Cultivate a forgiving spirit (**Eph 4:30-32**).
- ◆ Consider the needs of others (**Php 2:1-3**).

Application Exercise: Area to Address

During the next week, examine yourself as a leader. Identify an area that God most wants you to address.

- ▶ Pray, asking God to give you the strength and grace to address the problem.
- ▶ Make a plan to address the problem.
- ▶ Begin implementing the plan.

4-The Goal of Leadership: Lead to Jesus

Icebreaker: Leader Goals

Pick one setting where you are a leader (parent, group leader, supervisor) and give one of your goals as a leader in that setting.

Questions for Study or Discussion

- ◆ Consider the sequence of events that we see Israel repeat in Numbers when they sin. In the table below, list an alternate sequence of events that is available to us as Christians.

<i>Israel</i>	<i>Us as Christ-Followers</i>
1- sin 2- confess to leader 3- request that leader pray 4- leader prays 5- God answers	1- sin 2-confess directly to Jesus 3- 4- 5-

- ◆ Your goal as a leader is to lead others to Jesus. This is easier if you keep your own eyes on Him ([John 3:14-16](#)). When you take your eyes off Christ, you become an easier target for Satan's temptations and torments ([Num 21:8](#)). What are some ways to remind yourself when your eyes wander that can help you return your focus to our Savior.
- ◆ God does supply all our needs ([Num 21:16](#)). Every good thing comes from Him ([Php 4:19](#)). God enjoys hearing our song of thanks and praise to Him ([Col 3:16](#)). Either sing some songs of praise or make a list of things for which you truly thank God.

Dig a Little Deeper: Making a Vow

When Israel got into a difficult situation, they often made a vow in exchange for God's help (**Num 21:2**).

- ▶ Did they think He would refuse to help them if they did not do something for Him?
- ▶ Is it appropriate to “bargain” with God in this way?
- ▶ Would it be better to pray earnestly and trust that whatever He answers is best?
- ▶ Why not make a vow out of love and devotion to God without expecting something in return?

Certainly, if you make a vow, regardless of your motive, God expects you to honor it (**Ecc 5:4-5**). Have you ever made a vow to God or anyone else? Did you do everything in your power to keep the vow?

Application Exercise: Reflecting Christ

As a leader, who are you leading to Jesus? Consider those closest to you. In what ways do they see you model the example of Jesus? Make a plan for what you will do to better reflect Christ in your life.