

## “The Forming of a People”

Live A Better Story- Week #4

The people cried out to God, trusted Him and through Moses were set free. But once they left their familiar surroundings in Egypt and entered the wilderness where they had only God to trust, how did their attitude change?

Numbers 11:4-6 NLT - 4 Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. 5 "We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. 6 But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!"

Here we go again- God called his people to trust Him, but after a while they fail and suffer the consequences until once again they separate themselves and return to Him for filling and blessing. This is a pattern you will find throughout the scripture, and also in our own lives.

### WRAP-UP

God calls mankind to trust Him, but we don't. In choosing not to trust God we may choose instead to trust in money or success or relationships. But those things will fail and we will suffer the consequences of our choices. Thankfully God can make a way to restore us once again. His concern is not only for us as individuals, but as His people. As Peter said “... you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.” We are blessed to be a blessing. But we have to choose to be separate and trust God so that He can fill us and bless us.

### Memory Verse

1 Peter 2:9b NLT - 9 ... you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

### PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

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Challenge-Ask God to show you anything you trust more than Him.

### INTRODUCTION

After the tragedy of the fall, man suffered the consequences of sin. There was a reawakening of the chaos, fear and destruction from which the world was formed. (*Genesis 1:2a NLT - The earth was formless (Tohu) and empty (Bohu), and darkness covered the deep waters....*) Death and decay now reined over both man and creation. Humanity descended into violence, and murder. But God did not leave us in that state. God saw the evil which pervaded the heart of man and he would no longer tolerate it. Yet still He separated the righteous man Noah and his family before he destroyed all other living things. He offered redemption from the effects of sin; a reset by way of a flood. He refilled the earth after the flood and promised a blessing to Noah. In time, the nations became discontent once again. At Babel they conspired to build a tower to reach into heaven so as not to be scattered. They relied on themselves rather than trusting and obeying God. But God had determined to create a people for Himself and so He called Abram to be separate, be filled and to be blessed to be a blessing to the world. If we look at the patterns God reveals in the story of Israel's formation, we will find they apply to our own story as well.

### Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

How many times did you take your driver's test before you passed?

### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### 1. Before Abraham

Read Genesis 6:5-9 in your Bible

Between the fall of Adam, and Abram's call from God, mankind struggled to “get it right” with God. What was the condition of man in Noah's days? How did God respond? Why did God separate out Noah from judgment?

Even after the flood, man was not content to obey and trust God. In the land of Babylon they constructed a tower in direct opposition to God's command to go fill the earth. They trusted in their own ability and wisdom rather than His. How did God intervene in order to fill the earth?

Genesis 11:7-8 NLT - 7 Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." 8 In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.

## 2. Abram/Abraham's call

Genesis 12:1-2 NLT - 1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.

As we read Abram's story how do you see God's pattern of separating, filling and blessing displayed? Why might it have been challenging for Abram to do what God had called him to do? Can you think of a time God has called you to be separate and leave what was familiar? What are some other examples of how God might call us to be separate from familiar things and trust Him instead?

Genesis 21:1-3 NLT - 1 The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. 2 She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. 3 And Abraham named their son Isaac.

Abraham had several sons, but only one of them was born to Sarah, and he was Isaac, the son of God's promise (Gen 21:1). Isaac only had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Even before they were born, what did God say about the twins?

Genesis 25:23 NIV - 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

It was Jacob who God would rename Israel. As God promised he became a great nation, separated for God's purposes. The descendants of all twelve of Jacob's sons, born to four different women, came to be known collectively as the nation of Israel.

Genesis 35:10 NIV - 10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel.

Galatians 3:14 NIV - 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

How did Paul explain the way the blessing given to Abraham can come to those who are not descendants of Israel?

## 3. Moses and Israel

Genesis 46:3-4 NIV - 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

When there was a great famine in the land, God placed one of Israel's sons, Joseph, in Egypt to shelter and protect his family. What was God's promise to Jacob (Israel) if he trusted in God and went down to Egypt?

Exodus 3:6-8 NLT - 6 I am the God of your father--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God. 7 Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey--the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

God kept His promise and while in Egypt, the nation of Israel flourished. But over time their place of safety became a place of enslavement. Can you think of circumstances in which a place that once offered safety can become a place of enslavement? How might that happen in a job? In a family? In a hobby? in a church?