



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JUNE 03 2023

Scripture Story: Numbers 11; 12; Leviticus 10:1-11.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 33 and 31.

what about me?



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"Moses felt the importance of the great work committed to him as no other man had ever felt it. He realized his own weakness, and he made God his counselor. . . . Miriam and Aaron, blinded by jealousy and ambition, lost sight of this. . . . Regarding themselves as equally favored by God, they felt that they were entitled to the same position and authority" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 383).

keytext

"When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face."

(Numbers 12:6-8, NIV)

what do you think?

Have you ever been jealous of someone else? Check off the situations that might make you jealous.

- A classmate beats you in an election for student council president.
- Your parents praise your sibling for an accomplishment while making no mention of anything you've done lately.
- Your closest friend starts hanging around with a new friend and doesn't seem to have time for you anymore.
- You work with other students on a group project, but one person in the group gets all the credit and praise from the teacher, while the rest of you are ignored.
- Your best friend is better-looking and more popular than you are.

did you know?

Moses' wife, Zipporah, was a Midianite. She may have been very dark-skinned. She was, however, a descendant of Abraham by his wife Keturah, and a worshipper of the true God. Ellen White calls her timid and retiring in nature, gentle and affectionate, and greatly grieved at the sight of suffering.

When Zipporah's father, Jethro, brought her to rejoin Moses in the wilderness, she could tell just how tired and overworked Moses was. She told her father she was worried about him, and Jethro advised Moses on a plan for the administration of the approximately 2 million unhappy campers.

INTO THE STORY

"Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 'Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?' they asked. 'Hasn't he also spoken through us?' And the LORD heard this.

(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

"At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, 'Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you.' So the three of them went out. Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, he said, 'Listen to my words: When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in

visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' "

"The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them.

"When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam's skin was leprous—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, and he said to Moses, 'Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away.'

"So Moses cried out to the LORD, 'Please God, heal her!'

"The LORD replied to Moses, 'If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.' So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back."

(Numbers 12:1-15, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Who are the main characters in this story?

Why do you think Aaron and Miriam were jealous of Moses?

Why do you think Aaron and Miriam focused on Moses' wife as a target when they felt angry?

What qualities did Moses have that made him a good leader for Israel at this time?

Does God's punishment seem a little harsh? Why was it directed at Miriam and not at Aaron?

Why do you think God needed Moses to "talk Him out of" punishing Miriam with leprosy?

What do you think Miriam and Aaron learned from this experience? What do you think Moses might have learned as a result?

punch lines

"Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" (**Proverbs 27:4, NIV**).

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" (**Psalm 25:8, 9, NIV**).

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" (**Proverbs 14:30, NIV**).

"Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple" (**Job 5:2, NIV**).

"Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy" (**Romans 13:13, NIV**).

further insight

"The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. . . .

". . . Make it a rule never to utter one word of doubt or discouragement. You can do much to brighten the life of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and holy cheer."—Ellen G.

White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 115, 119.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 3:12, 13.

In the *What Do You Think?* section, you were asked to think about your own experience with jealousy and envy. In our reading today Aaron and Miriam wondered why God spoke only to Moses, not to them.

We don't always understand why other people get privileges and opportunities we don't get. But if a person is chosen by God to be a leader, at least part of the reason has to be that they leave themselves open to letting God lead in their lives. At this point in Aaron's and Miriam's lives, they were focused on their own feelings—feeling hurt, offended, and left out—and not on how they could serve the Lord.

Think about your own life right now. Are you open to letting God use you? If not, what's standing in the way?

Sunday

Read Numbers 12, then read through and answer the *Out of the Story* study questions given in your lesson. Why do you think this story is in the Bible? As you read it, how do you feel about Moses? about Aaron and Miriam? How does this story make you feel about God?

Monday

Read Psalm 25:8, 9.

In the *Key Text* for this week, God explains to Aaron and Miriam why He has chosen Moses for a special role. It's because Moses has a special relationship with God—he is faithful and reliable, and God is able to speak to him more directly than He can to others. It's kind of like God's reference letter for Moses!

If God were writing a reference letter for you, or describing to others what He sees in you, what do you think God might say? Write it here:

Tuesday

Read Psalm 25:9.

In the *Flashlight* section Ellen White says that God was able to use Moses because Moses recognized his own weakness. How can recognizing your weakness make you a good leader?

Think about people you know of in different leadership roles. What kinds of weaknesses would they need to be aware of? For example, a teacher might tend to favor one student over another. She would need to be aware of that weakness so that she could be careful to treat everyone equally.

Pastor _____
Parent _____
Business owner _____
Politician _____
Church administrator _____

Wednesday

The Bible verses in this week's *Punch Lines* section talk about how destructive envy and jealousy can be. As you read through these verses, think about who is getting hurt. When you're jealous of someone, is that feeling most destructive to them or to you?

Now read Numbers 12 again and think about what happened to Miriam. How could her punishment be seen as an illustration of the destructive power of jealousy?

Thursday

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13.

People in leadership positions are usually under a lot of stress, as Moses was. In that situation, they don't need friends and family reacting like Aaron and Miriam did—with

jealousy and resentment. Good leaders need our encouragement and support.

Think about a leader you admire—a teacher or pastor, one of your parents, or a friend your own age who is in a position of responsibility in school, at church, or on a sports team. Take a moment to call, email, or write a note to that person telling them that you think they're doing a good job!

Friday

Read Exodus 15:19-21, Exodus 4:13-15, Exodus 28:1, 2.

One thing that Aaron and Miriam didn't pause to think about when they criticized Moses was that they had special roles to play in God's work too. What was Miriam's role in Israel?

What special jobs was Aaron given?

What about you? Maybe you've been envious of other people's gifts without recognizing your own. What special role do you think God might want you to play in your church, your school, or your community?

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 33 and 31.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-company-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the *Conflict of the Ages* series each year.