**“Trials To Make You Better, Not Bitter”**

***God’s Tests to Refine His People***

**(Exodus 15-17)**

**It must have been an unpleasant surprise for Moses and the people to face difficult hardships so soon after their deliverance from Egypt. We see that God tests His people to refine them and teach them to trust wholly in Him. We can learn much from the trials Moses and the people faced during their first three months out of Egypt.**

 **I. Test #1 – Bitter Waters at Marah (15:22-27)**

* **PROBLEM** (22-23)
* **PROTEST** (24)
* **PROVISION** (25)
* **PRINCIPLE** (26-27)

 **II. Test #2 - Hunger in the Wilderness (16:1-12)**

* **PROBLEM** (1)
* **PROTEST** (2-3)
* **PROVISION** (4, 11-12)
* **PRINCIPLE** (4-10)

**III. Test #3 - No Water, Again! (17:1-7)**

* **PROBLEM** (1)
* **PROTEST** (2-4)
* **PROVISION** (5-6)
* **PRINCIPLE**  (7)

**TO PASS GOD’S TESTS & GROW IN TRIALS, BE:**

**Truthful 🡪 Your complaining is against God! (Ex.16:7-8)**

**Realistic 🡪 The “good ol’ days” weren’t so good! (Ex.16:3)**

 **The present situation isn’t so bad! (1 Cor.10:13; 2 Cor.4:8-9)**

**Influencing 🡪 Your bitterness will defile many! (Heb.12:15)**

 **Be a “cheer-leader” not a complainer (Eph.4:29; Phil.2:14-15; 2 Cor.1:4)**

**Aware 🡪 Of all God’s blessings, past & present! (Ps.103:2)**

**Looking to Jesus 🡪 Who for joy before Him, endured cross! (Heb.12:2)**

 **Look back to His cross; Look ahead to His coming! (It will be worth it!)**

 **In Exodus 15-17 Christ is there! 🡪 The tree, the manna, the rock!**

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**(Exodus 15-17)**

**Small Group Discussion Guide**

**1. Read and discuss Exodus 15:22-27. Having just celebrated God’s great**

**deliverance at the Red Sea, how could the people possibly grumble now? What does this tell us about their faith? How can the “tree” that**

**Christ died on make our bitter waters sweet?**

**2. Read and discuss Exodus 16:1-8. Why is glamorizing “the good old days”**

**a problem when facing trials? When we grumble about things, who are we really grumbling against? If we have a complaint concerning a leader, how should we handle it?**

**3. Read and discuss Exodus 17:1-7. Why does God sometimes bring the**

 **same trial back into our lives? How can we “tempt” (“test”) the Lord**

 **when He is testing us?**

**4. Discus the T.R.I.A.L. acrostic. Why is each point important? Which one**

 **do you have a tendency to struggle with the most?**

**Digging Deeper**

**1. Note how the Israelites continue to grumble throughout their journey**

 **to the Promised Land in Numbers 10:33-11:6; 12:1-3; 14:1-4; 16:1-3;**

 **20:2-5; 21:5-6; 25:1-3, 9. What symptoms of grumbling do you see in**

 **your own life? (See further biblical commentary in Psalm 78:9-31)**

**2. Write down one or more of the verses below on an index card, and read**

 **them repeatedly this week until you truly make them “your own.”**

 **(Psalm 19:14; Ephesians 4:29; Philippians 2:14-15; 1 Thessalonians**

 **5:16-18)**

**3. For next week: Read Exodus 17:8-18:27 a couple times. How does this**

 **section emphasize the importance of teamwork in our service for God?**