

Read: Exodus 33:12-23

Rest? Really?

Exodus 33:12-14

Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Justin wouldn't budge. His feet felt glued to the side of the swimming pool. He wrapped his arms tightly around himself. His mother stood in the shallow pool water holding out her arms. She encouraged, "It's okay. You can do it. I'm right here."

In a way, Moses was standing at a pool's edge wishing someone would hold his hand. The people he was leading had just dishonored the true God that had saved them from the slavery of the Egyptians and miraculously parted the Red Sea so they could cross safely. They made a golden god that looked like a cow and then threw a party for it with singing and dancing. God was ready to destroy them. Moses pleaded, "Please, don't." God gave in.

The next day, Moses was stressed and worried because he was supposed to lead the people into the Promised Land. "You want me to lead the people but you're not going to go with me?" he asked God. God had some powerful and encouraging words that he gave to Moses and to us, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

What does that mean? Well, imagine what it would mean if God would refuse to look at you anymore. To want nothing to do with you. To turn his head away from you. God promised Moses, "I will look on you. I will come along with you. I will watch you. I will protect you. I won't leave you alone." And to prove it, God says to Moses, "Watch this." Then he allowed Moses to see the very best of all his goodness and glory and to hear God say his name. Now Moses was certain that the Lord would go with him.

That's God's answer when you say, "I can't go on without you." Jesus says, "Come to me, all you are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). When you are overwhelmed or confused, pray for God's help. Tell him, "I can't go on without you." Know that the Lord will turn his face toward you and care. His presence on the cross proves it! With his arms held out to you, his voice reaches your ears, "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest."

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What did the people of Israel choose to worship instead of the true God?
- How was Moses feeling because of this?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Recall a moment you felt distant from God. What happened? How did you handle it?
- What did God say and do for Moses to show that he was with him?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Recount a time that you thought God couldn't handle something that happened in your life. How did it work out?
- How did you feel when God got you through it?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, we are humbled and grateful that you give rest for our anxious souls! You are the God who parted the Red Sea, who showed your powerful presence to Moses, and proved your power over Satan, sin, and death so we could have peace and forgiveness. We bow before you. Amen.