

## I Want To Go Back

**Opener:** Ever felt unappreciated (justly so, of course!)? What happened?

**Scripture:** The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?” <sup>3</sup>But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

<sup>4</sup>Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup>The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup>And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” Exodus 17:1-7

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. . . .” <sup>12</sup>Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Luke 4:9–12

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2–4

### Discussion Questions

1. In Exodus 17:1–3, the Israelites once again had no water and they blamed Moses. We’ve all been frustrated due to unmet needs. Was their fear justified? How should they have responded? How would you have responded?
2. Moses responded to their demand for water with a question: “Why do you put the Lord to the test?” How did their demand for water amount to putting the Lord to the test? Compare this scenario to Luke 4:9-12. When and how do we test God today?
3. In James 1:2–5, we’re told to welcome trials because they test our faith, which produces perseverance. How do you explain the difference between putting God to the test and God allowing our faith to be tested?
4. Moses cried out to God in frustration. He was at the end of his spiritual rope, and the Israelites were again wallowing in self-pity. How do exhaustion and self-pity tempt us to give up on God?
5. Once again, God heard the people’s grumbling and miraculously provided what they needed, but they still had to wait for His provision. Why do you think the Lord sometimes waits before He provides?
6. It can be difficult to trust God to meet our needs. What happened to the Israelites so long ago reminds us to trust Him in all circumstances. What’s an example of when you or someone you know trusted and waited on God during a really tough time?

**Wrap Up:** On one hand, it’s hard to blame the people of Israel. They were, after all, out in the middle of the desert. On the other hand, they had the benefit of recent history. God had recruited Moses to lead them to freedom, introduced plagues to break Pharaoh’s will, brought them through the Red Sea, and provided manna to eat. Given all this, it’s surprising that they were so anxious, distrustful, and belligerent. But that’s the nature of sin. It forgets. It happened to them and it happens to us. Note to self—trust God, no matter what.