

# 1

## Quiet Time

Exodus 33:7-34:10, 27-35

When we really want to get to know someone, there is no substitute for spending quality time together. The same is true of our relationship with God. Throughout the Gospels we see that Jesus placed a high priority on being alone with his Father. Despite the overwhelming demands on his time, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16). This discipline can be seen in the lives of the great men and women of the Old Testament as well. Moses was one such person.

Returning from Mount Sinai, Moses finds the people of Israel worshipping a golden calf. He is infuriated, yet he intercedes before the Lord for his people. While we will probably never spend forty days and nights alone with God, Moses' heart for God and time in his presence is a good example of what a quiet time is all about.

1. Spending time regularly with God is difficult for many people. What are some of the reasons for this?

2. Read Exodus 33:7-23. What do we learn about the purpose of the "tent of meeting" in Exodus 33:7-11?

3. Describe Moses' relationship with God as depicted in these verses.

4. In Exodus 33:12-23 we are allowed inside the tent of meeting while Moses converses with God. What requests does Moses make in Exodus 33:13, 15 and 18?

What seems to be his overriding desire?

5. How does your desire to know God compare with Moses'?

**6.** Read Exodus 34:1-10. In Exodus 34:1-3 what commands does God give to Moses?

**7.** Why do you think God demands that Moses come to him alone, apart from "even the flocks and herds" (Exodus 34:3)?

How might Moses' example relate to our meeting with God?

**8.** What distractions hinder you from spending quality time alone with the Lord?

**9.** In Exodus 34:4-5 Moses carefully obeys God's commands, and the Lord reveals himself to him. What does Moses learn of God's character (Exodus 34:6-7)?

**10.** What else do we observe about how Moses spent time with God (Exodus 34:8-10)?

**11.** Read Exodus 34:27-35. In these verses we see the conclusion of Moses' time with God and some of the results of that time. How are the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28) a partial fulfillment of Moses' request in Exodus 33:13?

**12.** In Exodus 34:29-35 Moses comes down from Mount Sinai and returns to the camp. How was he affected by his time in God's presence?

**13.** In what ways can we expect to be changed by our times alone with God?

**14.** In many ways Moses' experiences with God were unique and unrepeatable. Yet what practical help for our own quiet times can we derive from these chapters?

## Leader's Notes

### Study 1. Quiet Time (Exodus 33:7-34:10, 27-35)

Quiet Time.

Exodus 33:7-34:10, 27-35.

*Purpose:* To reflect on how Moses' experience with God can give us practical help for our quiet times.

**Question 1.** Almost every study begins with an "approach" question, which is meant to be asked *before* the passage is read. These questions are important for several reasons.

First, they help the group to warm up to each other. No matter how well a group may know each other, there is always a stiffness that needs to be overcome before people will begin to talk openly. A good question will break the ice.

Second, approach questions get people thinking along the lines of the topic of the study. Most people will have lots of different things going on in their minds (dinner, an important meeting coming up, how to get the car fixed) that will have nothing to do with the study. A creative question will get their attention and draw them into the discussion.

Third, approach questions can reveal where our thoughts or feelings need to be transformed by Scripture. This is why it is especially important *not* to read the passage before the approach question is asked. The passage will tend to color the honest reactions people would otherwise give because they are of course *supposed* to think the way the Bible does. Giving honest responses to various issues before they find out what the Bible says may help them to see where their thoughts or attitudes need to be changed.

**Question 2.** The "tent of meeting" was a temporary meeting place of God and his people.

**Question 4.** While it may seem simple, this is a very important question. Don't settle for merely observational answers. Be ready to help the group to grasp how truly startling (and unlike us today) were Moses' requests. These verses expose Moses' deep hunger to know God "as the deer pants for streams of water" (Psalm 42:1). This, after all, is the essential ingredient of a quiet time. Without this a quiet time easily degenerates into legalism.

**Question 10.** Four elements of a quiet time can be noted here: worship, petition, confession and listening to God speak (that is, Bible study). While it will be helpful to observe these things, they should in no way be imposed as laws for daily quiet time.

**Question 13.** In 2 Cor. 3:18 Paul writes, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Paul uses the experience of Moses to illustrate the transforming work of the Spirit in our lives.