

BEFORE THE SESSION:

- Look over the suggested questions to the right. Ask God to guide you to the ones that will work best for your group.
- Be prepared to get the discussion going in your group if they're not feeling it today.
- Don't feel like you have to know all there is to know about scripture. Use this week's study notes to prepare yourself. But, if something arises that you can't answer, tell your group, "That's a great question. I'll research that and get back with you." Then, email eddie. mosley@lifepointchurch.org for help.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Like a loving father, God disciplines His children.

TO PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK:

Read Deuteronomy 1-20. We'll see the importance of living a Christ-centered life and it being evident to everyone in our lives.

AS YOU READ...

...Think about areas of your life that may still need to be sharpened in order to become Christ-centered.

CONNECT**(10 min.)**

Choose one of the following questions to begin your time together as a group. If your group has been together longer, you may want to skip question 1 in favor of question 2.

1. **What is the best or most memorable Christmas moment in your life?**
2. **When you were a child, what was your parents' philosophy of discipline? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?**

EXPLORE**(40 min.)**

Say something like, "Today we are looking at a strange story about God's discipline on His people." Then guide your group through these questions.

3. **If you attended worship this week, what statement or experience stood out to you? What stood out during last week's reading?**

(Leader: Take some time to discuss any questions that may have arisen as your members read through this week's assigned reading.)

4. **Read Numbers 21:4-9 and retell the story in your own words.**
5. **What do God do in your life when you need discipline? When you need relief? How do these things compare to what you see God doing in Numbers 21:4-9?**
6. **Why and how does God provide relief from the snakes? What does this say about repentance and mercy?**
7. **When have you experienced God's discipline? God's mercy? How did each situation uniquely point you to a Christ-centered life?**

TRANSFORM**(10 min.)**

Say something like, "Today we've seen how God's discipline of His people ultimately points to Christ on the cross taking the wrath that we deserve." Then wrap up your time by asking the following question and praying together.

8. **What new thing have you discovered this week that you did not know before? What did you learn about God? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about other people? What difference will it make in your life this week?**

This Week's Study Notes:

Scripture Notes

Numbers 21:4

Moses was trying to avoid conflict with the Edomites. God had prohibited war with Edom (Deuteronomy 2:5-6), and Moses tried to comply, but it got him in trouble with Israel. Despite God's prohibition, they were anxious to take on the Edomites.

Numbers 21:5

Certainly the Israelites were tired of manna. They had been eating it for 40 years. However, rejecting God's provision of food was the same as rejecting His provision of grace. This offense carried serious consequences.

Numbers 21:8-9

The bronze snake was not an idol but a symbol of God's grace and deliverance. The snake did not save the Israelites from the pain of snakebite, but from the consequences. In John 3:14-15, Jesus uses this event to illustrate His being lifted up on the cross like the snake so that he can save humankind from the consequence of sin: death.

What Should My Group Do During the Holidays?

That's a great question. Here are a few ideas:

- Have a party. Celebrate together. Be a family.
- Attend one of the Christmas Eve services together. Visit lifepointchurch.org/xmas eve for service times at your campus.
- Have a Matthew Party. Ideas include a cookie recipe party, christmas ornament sharing party, or even an old-fashioned open house. Be creative and use it as an opportunity to invest in your neighbors.

Leader Tips

AS YOU READ THIS WEEK...

- Think about and pray for each member of your small group.
- Think through the following questions:
 1. Who does God bring to mind as I read these verses? Why?
 2. What needs to change in my own life as a result of what I'm reading?
 3. Whom do I need to tell about these verses?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY WE RECOMMEND...

- Bible Commentary: Bible.org
- Bible Commentary: DesiringGod.org
- Pronouncing Biblical Words: Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm

* Scripture Notes adapted from and used by permission of Serendipity House Publishing, 1 LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee

