

Provision
September 14, 2025
Allen Power

Numbers 11 (selected verses)

Opening: Body language exercise using no words.

In the first nine chapters of Numbers, Moses and the Children of Israel prepared for their journey to the Promised Land. In chapter ten they head out from Mount Sinai. Up to this point the Israelites had been obedient without complaining however, as chapter eleven begins the cracks of their sin nature begin to show. Some foreigners who had tagged along began to sow discontent among the people and these dedicated disciples became disagreeable dissenters.

1 Soon the people began to complain about their hardship, and the Lord heard everything they said. Then the Lord's anger blazed against them, and he sent a fire to rage among them, and he destroyed some of the people in the outskirts of the camp. **2** Then the people screamed to Moses for help, and when he prayed to the Lord, the fire stopped.

- You would think God's display of anger would shut up the complainers but nope.

4 Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. **5** "We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. **6** But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!"

- Here is the technical, theological term for these people: "Spoiled brats!"
- God delivered them from slavery, provided for their needs including manna to eat and they took it all for granted.
- They were like a child who (after opening the tenth present) asks, "*Are there any more?*" Or, "*I don't want steak and potatoes I want a "Happy Meal!"*"
- After their Dramatic Deliverance they slipped into the Danger of Dullness.
- We know from experience every day with Jesus is not a "Red Sea parting miracle" kind of day. Life can get dull especially with only one thing on the menu.
- Here is the Danger of Dullness: Dullness brings discontentment. Discontentment brings disdain. Disdain brings disobedience. Disobedience brings discipline.
- God was not happy!

20 You will eat it for a whole month until you gag and are sick of it [ESV: "until it comes out at your nostrils"]. For you have rejected the Lord, who is here among you, and you have whined to him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" ' "

- The Life Application Study Bible reminds us: “Dissatisfaction comes when our attention shifts from what we have to what we don’t have.”ⁱ
- None of us are perfect but ALL of us can avoid being a “spoiled brat” before God!
- It’s a matter of perspective:
 - Life is not a trip to Disneyland.
 - Every meal is not a gourmet feast.
 - Skies come with clouds.
 - Flower beds come with weeds.
 - And, no, every day is NOT Friday!
- Life can be D-U-L-L (dull) and some days it’s H-A-R-D (hard) but God is always G-O-O-D (good)!
- Daily gratitude for God’s power, promises, and provision can turn any “discontented dissenter” into a “delighted disciple!”
- Now the story shifts to a “disillusioned director” named Moses.
- Everyone is a leader (even without a title) and the people we lead can lead US to become discouraged. Our assignment from God can feel like punishment.

10 Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and the Lord became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. **11** And Moses said to the Lord, “Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? **12** Did I give birth to them? Did I bring them into the world? Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors? **13** Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep whining to me, saying, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ **14** I can’t carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! **15** If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!”

- Moses was not bashful about being honest with God! A good lesson for us!
- Moses also modeled one of my favorite lessons for members of any group: Take your complaints to someone who can do something about it NOT to everyone who can’t! Two more “D” words: discord and division, are caused by people complaining to people who can’t solve their problem.
- Moses took his complaint to God and God did something about it.

16 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather before me seventy men who are recognized as elders and leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle to stand there with you. **17** I will come down and talk to you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the Spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone.

- What is the lesson for us when our leadership feels like punishment?
- Carrying out our assignment for God requires sharing the load with God-given, Spirit-led team members.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Let's summarize what we've learned in this short study of Numbers 11.
- **The lesson for followers:** Gratitude for God's power, promises, and provision can turn any "discontented dissenter" into a "delighted disciple."
- **The lesson for leaders:** Sharing the load with God-given team members can turn you from a "disillusioned director" into a "decisive delegator."
- **The lesson for all:**

Numbers 11:23 (NLT) — 23 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Has my arm lost its power? Now you will see whether or not my word comes true!"

- Life can be dull or disastrous and we can become discouraged, discontented, and disillusioned. Numbers 11 teaches us we can avoid disobedience if we will always remember God's power, promises, and provision.

ⁱ Tyndale. NKJV Life Application Study Bible, Second Edition . Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.