



# EQUIPPED

*God enables and equips His people to do the work He directs them to do.*

## EXODUS 25:1-9; 31:1-6

Most of us never think about what is required for a good Bible study group to function. We arrive to find fresh coffee and a clean room. We use the comments in resources like the one you are now reading to help the group better understand the passage. Prayer requests are shared, and the list somehow ends up in your email box.

***Consider the work of your Bible study group. What skills and abilities are needed for the group to function well? What kind of financial resources are needed for the group to function?***

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God provides through you and other people the resources needed for your Bible study group to function. He has given various gifts and talents to people in your group who make sure each action is completed.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

### EXODUS 25:1—31:18

The second half of Exodus focuses on the events at Mount Sinai and the giving of the law through Moses. In this half of the book God prepared His people (19:1-25) and gave them the law (20:1-23:19). God also gave them instructions for entering the promised land (23:20-33). In 24:1-18 the Lord confirmed His covenant with His people. In this session, our passage turns to the instructions related to the construction of the tabernacle (25:1-31:18; 35:1-3). Once again, we are reminded that the entirety of the exodus event is a gracious act of God by which He delivers, sustains, and instructs His people for new life outside of Egypt.

The instructions concerning the tabernacle and the description of the instructions make up the majority of the second half of the Book of Exodus. We must remember that the Lord had said of Israel, “I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God” (6:7). The tabernacle was the means through which God had chosen to dwell among His people. The level of detail in chapters 25-31 points to the reality that God is a holy God and His people must relate to Him according to His revealed word. The details concerning the tabernacle are important because they reveal God’s grace toward His people in protecting them from His consuming holiness. We also are reminded that God wants to dwell among His people; otherwise, He would not have gone to such great lengths to lay out the painstakingly specific details for the tabernacle.

This entire narrative points us forward to Jesus Christ, who became a tabernacle among us (John 1:14). God so desired to dwell with His people that He sent His only Son to make a way (John 3:16). Through Christ, we are able to dwell with God in the most intimate sense. Christ is the way (John 14:6). Not only is Jesus the greater tabernacle, He is also greater than Moses. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5).



***Read Exodus 25:1-9; 31:1-6. Notice the directives given to Moses. How is God's grace shown in giving the people the gifts and goods required to obey His directives?***

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### **KEY DOCTRINE: Stewardship**

According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

## **EXPLORE THE TEXT**

### **THE OFFERING (EX. 25:1-7)**

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. <sup>3</sup> And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, <sup>4</sup> And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, <sup>5</sup> And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, <sup>6</sup> Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, <sup>7</sup> Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.

### **VERSES 1-2**

Our study begins with God's directing Moses to call on the Israelites to willingly offer the supplies needed to build the tabernacle. Before anything else, the instructions for the tabernacle begin with an assessment of the people's hearts. This is important because God was instructing them regarding building His dwelling place, a tabernacle. The people were going to contribute to this work. God doesn't just want a contribution out of duty; He is concerned with the heart. There are two notable assessments in this passage.

In verse 2, God called for giving from willing hearts. Why is this important? One could argue that regardless of the state of their hearts, God could use the materials for His purposes. However, God told Moses to receive an offering ***of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart.*** God wanted the contributions to come from people who loved Him and wanted Him to dwell among them.

What moves people's hearts to give to God's work? I think it is as simple as remembering God's goodness to them. God had delivered them from Egypt and sustained them on their journey. Just as obeying the Ten Commandments was a responsive action, so is giving. We acknowledge that everything comes from the Lord's hand. We also acknowledge that God provides our daily bread, as He did with manna in the wilderness. As our hearts overflow with thankfulness and gratitude, we give. The words in Exodus are similar to Paul's words to the Corinthians: "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

**God doesn't just want a contribution out of duty; He is concerned with the heart.**

#### VERSES 3-7

In verses 3-7 we see that God requires costly or sacrificial giving. This is the second notable requirement. The materials for the tabernacle were unique and valuable. God told Moses exactly what to collect from the people—***gold, and silver, and brass, ... blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, Oil ..., spices ... Onyx stones, and stones.***

We may rightly ask: where did the people get these costly items? Weren't they wandering through the wilderness? Remember that God promised that Israel would not leave Egypt empty-handed (see 3:21-22). Israel was delivered from slavery with great wealth (12:36). In His divine provision, God provided these elements to build the tabernacle even before Israel knew what they would be used for.

The cost and the detail of the tabernacle remind us that God cannot be approached casually. But this again points us to the grace of God. What God requires, He provides. God provided His people what they needed to build a suitable place for Him to dwell among them.

This truth has a clear connection to the New Testament. We know that sin separates us from God. For this reason, the tabernacle and



temple point to a greater reality—with the coming of Jesus, God came to dwell or to “tabernacle” among us (see John 1:14). Jesus declared that His own body was the temple that would be destroyed and raised (John 2:19). Because Jesus is the resurrected temple, He is the foundation or cornerstone of a new temple (1 Cor. 3:10-11; Eph. 2:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:6), that is, the church. Therefore, in the New Testament, the people of God serve as the “habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22; see also 1 Cor. 3:16-17). The point is that God desires to dwell with His people, and He makes a way for His people to dwell with Him.

***How do believers honor God by participating in willful and costly giving toward His purposes? Give an example of how God provided for a specific need through His people.***

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**BIBLE SKILL: *Compare similar passages.***

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul called on these believers to fulfill a commitment they made to take an offering to assist believers in Jerusalem. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 and compare it to the directive given by God to Moses to collect an offering for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:1-9). How are these calls similar? How are they different? What principles about giving can be seen in both accounts?

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## THE PURPOSE (EX. 25:8-9)

**<sup>8</sup> And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. <sup>9</sup> According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.**

### VERSE 8

In verse 8, God instructed the people to make Him **a sanctuary** that He might **dwell among them**. This theme of God's dwelling in the midst of His people is a significant biblical theme. In the garden of Eden, God walked in the midst of the garden in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8). Creation itself was the sanctuary in which God dwelt with Adam and Eve (Ps. 104:1-3,13). The tabernacle, like the garden of Eden, is where God dwelt, and various details of the tabernacle suggest it is a picture of Eden—of paradise lost. Both had an east-facing entrance guarded by cherubim, the tree of life (symbolized by the lampstand), and the tree of knowledge (symbolized by the law). This tabernacle pointed back to Eden and pointed upward to the heavenly tabernacle in which God dwells (Heb. 8:5).

**God desires to dwell with His people, and He makes a way for His people to dwell with Him.**

### VERSE 9

God called His people to build the tabernacle exactly as He instructed them. He demanded that they follow His pattern. It is significant that Moses did not devise the plan for creating a sanctuary for God; rather, the Lord provided a detailed **pattern of the tabernacle, and ... all the instruments thereof**.

As a holy God, He was not to be approached according to the best Israelite ideas or the whims of the culture but according to His word. God stipulates how we must approach Him. No one can approach God in his or her own way without being condemned by sin. God must provide the way. The carefulness of following God's pattern was important as a heart check for Israel.

In the tabernacle and later in the temple, God's presence was separated by a veil (see 26:31-35). The Gospel accounts tell us that when Jesus was crucified, the veil was torn in two (Luke 23:44-45).





This shows us that access to God was granted through the sacrifice of Christ. Christ did all of the perfect law-keeping so that we could enjoy fellowship with our God. The Book of Hebrews makes it clear that Christ makes intercession between God and man (Heb. 7:25). What made the travels through the wilderness bearable for the Israelites was the ever-immediate and knowable presence of God always before them. Through Christ, we have even greater access to that comfort and security.

***Is there a relationship between our obedience and God's presence?  
Explain.***

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#### **THE LEADERS** (EX. 31:1-6)

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: <sup>3</sup> And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, <sup>4</sup> To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, <sup>5</sup> And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. <sup>6</sup> And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee.

#### **VERSES 1-6**

This section names **•Bezaleel the son of •Uri** and **•Aholiab, the son of •Ahisamach** as those whom the Lord had prepared to work in every craft He had prescribed for the construction of the tabernacle and all its elements (see 35:30–36:2). Bezaleel is described as being **filled ... with the spirit of God**, which means here that he had been equipped to fulfill the particular task to which he was called. The expression **filled ... with the spirit of God** appears in the Old Testament with the idea of God's equipping a person for a task that serves His purposes and the well-being of God's people.

Not only had God provided the materials and the instructions for the tabernacle, He also empowered the workers to build this

tabernacle by the power of His Spirit. Once again, the giving of the Spirit prefigures Christ's building the church through the Spirit. If the Spirit builds us up as the dwelling place of God on earth, let us be eager to build on that work.

This passage points us to 1 Corinthians 14:12, where Paul exhorted the church, "forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." Similarly, in Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul reminded the church that we are "of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Just like the workers mentioned in this passage, we are equipped by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the particular tasks to which God has called us. God prepares us through the power of His Spirit for the tasks that serve the well-being of God's people. Imagine what the church can accomplish when we all set our hands to the task. We already have a promised outcome. We are to do what God has called us to do, knowing that He is empowering us by His Spirit to accomplish His work.

## **God is already on mission. The church is called to join Him on His mission.**

If you step back and look at Israel's wilderness journeys, you come to an amazing realization. They followed God every step of the way. When God's presence stopped, they stopped and set up camp. When God's presence moved before them, they pressed on. God was on a mission, and they joined God on that mission. God does not merely send the church on mission; God is already on mission. The church is called to join Him on His mission. This also means, then, that the church does not simply have a missions program; it should wholly exist to be on mission.

***How does God's provision of skills and talents give both confidence and humility in doing His work?***

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# IN MY CONTEXT

- Believers honor God by giving offerings for His purposes.
- Believers can enjoy the presence of God when they come together for worship and work together for His purposes.
- God provides skills and talents that can be used for His honor and glory.

*Discuss as a group the needs seen in your church or community that could be met with the resources and talents available in the group. What will be the next steps in meeting these needs?*

*In what ways are you using the skills and talents that God has given you to join Him on His mission? What actions do you need to take to develop and refine your skills and find a place of service in your church or Bible study group?*

*Read and memorize Exodus 31:6. Reflect on the role Aholiab would have in completing the building of the tabernacle. Thank God for the opportunity He gives you to be involved in His work.*

## Prayer Needs