Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 29

You Belong to God’s Family

Numbers · Lesson 1 · Chapter 1

Learning to Walk with Our Father. We begin with belonging, shared responsibility, and caring for one another through faith in Jesus.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

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Read one section at a time. Take turns reading the verses aloud, discuss the questions, and choose one practical response. Every passage referenced in the teaching is included in full.

Let’s begin together

Father, help us understand Your Word. Teach us to receive Your love, care for others, and do our part with a willing heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

After Leviticus, we come to Numbers. Israel is still at Mount Sinai, in the second year after leaving Egypt. God has already rescued this people. Now He is preparing them for the journey ahead. They need to learn how to walk together.

Think of a caring father preparing his family for a trip. He makes sure everyone knows where to go and how to help. Giving a child a task does not mean that child must earn a place in the family. Responsibility grows out of belonging.

Main truth: Through faith in Jesus, we belong to God's family. We learn to care for one another and carry our responsibilities together.

1. Understand what God asked

Numbers 1:1-4

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

A census is an organized count of people. This count had a clear purpose: to identify men age twenty and older who could serve in the army. It was not a count of every person in Israel. Women, children, and others outside this group still mattered. Their value did not depend on being on this list.

An old Bible word in this passage is “polls.” Here it means individual persons. Moses was to count the men one by one, with help from the leaders of their families.

2. No one had to do everything

Numbers 1:5-16

5 And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur.

6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

9 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon.

10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni.

12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

13 Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran.

14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan.

16 These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

God named a leader from each tribe to help. Moses and Aaron did not have to carry the whole task alone. These names remind us that a large community is made of real people and families.

Numbers 1:17-19

17 And Moses and Aaron took these men which are expressed by their names:

18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.

19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

The leaders listened, gathered the people, and did the work. Sometimes obedience looks like an ordinary task done carefully. At home, that might mean putting things away, keeping a promise, or asking how you can help. A good family makes room both to give help and to receive it.

3. Different sizes, one people

Numbers 1:20-27

20 And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

21 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred.

22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

23 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

25 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

27 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

These verses count Reuben, Simeon, Gad, and Judah. The words repeat because the same instructions apply to each tribe. Try reading the name and total of each tribe aloud. You do not need to memorize every number to understand the lesson.

Numbers 1:28-35

28 Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

29 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

31 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

32 Of the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

33 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred.

34 Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

35 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

Next come Issachar, Zebulun, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Some groups are larger than others. That does not make them more loved or more valuable. A family should not measure a person's worth by strength, popularity, or how much work that person can do.

Numbers 1:36-43

36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

37 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

38 Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

39 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

40 Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

41 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

43 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

Benjamin, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali complete the tribal count. Each group has its place in the same people. Working together does not require everyone to be exactly alike.

Numbers 1:44-46

44 These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.

45 So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel;

46 Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

The total is 603,550 men in this military census. That is not the whole population. Knowing who was counted keeps us from misunderstanding the number. The point of the list is to prepare people for a shared responsibility.

4. Some people served another way

Numbers 1:47-54

47 But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them.

48 For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying,

49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel:

50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.

51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

54 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

The Levites had a different assignment. They cared for, carried, and guarded the tabernacle, the sacred tent where God met with His people. Their work mattered even though they were not counted with the army. Different responsibilities can serve one purpose.

The severe warning in verse 51 belongs to Israel's holy sanctuary under the covenant given at Sinai. "Stranger" here means someone not authorized for that duty. It is not permission to harm visitors or people from another country. We must understand a command in its setting before applying its lesson.

5. How we belong through Jesus

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul tells believers how they belong to God's family: through faith in Christ Jesus. Being strong, important, or busy does not earn that place. These verses speak about belonging to Christ; Numbers 1 describes Israel's military census. They are different settings, so we should not treat the census as a church membership list.

1 Corinthians 12:12-22

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

Paul compares believers to parts of one body. A foot does not need to become a hand to matter. An eye cannot tell a hand, “I do not need you.” In the same way, we should not look down on someone because their gifts, age, or strength are different from ours.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

A caring father teaches his children to notice one another. If someone is hurting, we do not leave them alone. If someone receives good news, we rejoice with them. This is how belonging becomes visible: we give and receive care.

Talk it over together

1. Who was counted in Numbers 1? Why does being outside this count not make someone less important?

2. What was different about the Levites' work? What responsibility can you carry at home?

3. According to Galatians 3:26, how do we become children of God?

4. Who needs care or encouragement this week? How can we help together?

Practice it this week

Each person names one helpful task they can do. Choose tasks that fit each person’s age and ability. Then ask, “What help do you need from me?” Do the task without comparing yourself to someone else. Thank one person whose work often goes unnoticed.

A verse to carry with you

Galatians 3:26

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Our place in God’s family rests on faith in Jesus. From that place of belonging, we learn to serve.

Let’s pray together

Father, thank You for welcoming us through Jesus. Help us value each person, keep our promises, and care when someone is hurting. Teach us to ask for help and to offer it with love. Let our home and our friendships show the kindness of Your family. In Jesus’ name, amen.

I love you, my friends.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

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