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

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 30

Keep God at the Center

Numbers · Lesson 2 · Chapter 2

Learning to Walk with Our Father. Learn why Israel camped around God’s dwelling and how Jesus teaches us to stay close to Him.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

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Let’s begin together

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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 listen before we rush ahead. Teach us to keep You at the center of our choices and to walk with patience and love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

In our first lesson, we learned about belonging and responsibility. Now God shows Israel where to camp and how to travel. The tabernacle is the sacred tent where God meets with His people. The tribes camp around it. They have different places, but they share one center.

A caring father helps his family move together. He explains the plan so no one has to guess where to go. In this chapter, order helps the people camp and travel as God commanded. We will first understand their camp, then listen to Jesus about our life with Him.

Main truth: A life centered on God grows as we stay close to Jesus, listen to His words, and love one another.

1. One center for the whole camp

Numbers 2:1-2

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

A “standard” is a banner that marks a group’s place. Each family group had a place around the tabernacle, at a respectful distance. God’s dwelling was central to their life together. This camp plan was given to ancient Israel; it is not a rule for arranging the rooms in our homes.

2. Leading means responsibility

Numbers 2:3-9

3 And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah.

4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

5 And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar.

6 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

7 Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun.

8 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah were an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth.

Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun camped on the east and traveled first. Being first did not make them more valuable than the others. It gave them a job to do. When you lead a game, a project, or a family task, use that place to help people, not to push them around.

3. God mattered on the journey

Numbers 2:10-16

10 On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur.

11 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred.

12 And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

15 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty.

16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben were an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.

Reuben, Simeon, and Gad camped on the south. They traveled second. They did not have to compete for the first position to do something important. Cooperation includes being willing to wait and to do our part at the right time.

Numbers 2:17

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

The tabernacle traveled with the Levites in the middle of the camp. God's dwelling mattered while the people rested and while they moved. For us, learning to walk with our Father reaches beyond a meeting or a Sunday service. It touches our words, choices, work, and friendships.

4. Every place had a purpose

Numbers 2:18-24

18 On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud.

19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty thousand and five hundred.

20 And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni.

23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank.

Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin camped on the west and traveled third. Someone can do faithful work without being the most noticed person. At home, setting the table or putting things away helps everyone, even when no one applauds.

Numbers 2:25-31

25 The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

27 And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran.

28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan.

30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards.

Dan, Asher, and Naphtali camped on the north and traveled last. Last did not mean forgotten. The whole camp needed to follow the plan together. We can learn patience without treating people in later or quieter roles as less important.

Numbers 2:32-34

32 These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

The chapter ends with Israel doing what God commanded. The total refers to the same military census we read in chapter 1. The Levites had their separate task. These details show a people learning to listen and move together.

5. Stay connected to Jesus

John 15:1-5

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Jesus calls Himself the vine and His disciples the branches. A branch cannot produce grapes by itself. It needs the life that comes from the vine. “Abide” means remain or stay. We depend on Jesus as we trust Him, listen to Him, and follow His teaching.

John 15:9-12

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Jesus explains what staying close to Him looks like: remain in His love, obey His commands, and love one another. Keeping God at the center is more than placing a Bible on a table. It means letting His words guide what we do with the person sitting across that table.

Colossians 3:12-17

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And what soever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Paul gives us everyday examples: kindness, patience, forgiveness, gratitude, and love. Keeping Christ at the center can look like apologizing after a harsh answer, listening before interrupting, or giving thanks before complaining. These are small choices with real effects on a family.

Talk it over together

1. What was at the center of Israel's camp? Why did every group need to follow the plan?

2. When is it hard for you to wait or let someone else go first?

3. What does the picture of a vine and its branches teach us about Jesus?

4. Which action in Colossians 3 would help our home or friendships today?

Practice it this week

Before one shared meal or activity, pause together. Read John 15:12 aloud, thank God for one good thing, and ask how you can show love that day. Choose one action: listen patiently, forgive, help, or speak kindly. At the end of the day, talk about what you learned.

A verse to carry with you

John 15:5

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

We grow in a life of love by staying connected to Jesus.

Let’s pray together

Father, help us make room to hear Your Word. Keep us close to Jesus when the day is busy or difficult. Teach us to wait, listen, forgive, and serve. May our choices show that Your love guides our home and our friendships. 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.

Bible edition and text