

**Week of November 13, 2011**  
***“Stand for the Lord”***

**Passage Outline**

1. **Intercede on Behalf of Others** (Ex. 32:7-14)
2. **Confront the Sin** (Ex. 32:15-20)
3. **Call for a Return to God** (Ex. 32:25-26)

**What This Lesson Is About?**

We will examine how Moses interceded for the Israelites when they committed idolatry and his passion for the Lord’s holiness.

**How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life?**

This lesson can help you pray lovingly for those involved in sin and yet take a stand against their sin.



**1. Intercede on Behalf of Others - Exodus 32:7-14**

- a. Setting the Scene for this story:
  - i. Moses had been up on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights receiving the commandments from God. The Israelites didn’t know what had happened to him.
  - ii. Moses had been their visible contact with an invisible God. What should they do? They ordered Aaron to make a substitute, a golden calf.
- b. Animal gods were common in Near Eastern mythology:
  - i. Gods were often visualized as standing or riding on the back of a bull or calf.
  - ii. Small bull or calf figurines of bronze and other metals have been found at Hazor, Ashkelon and other archaeological sites.
  - iii. Even the Bronze Snake had become an idol according to **2 Kings 18:4** “Hezekial broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it.”
- c. Go down at once, for **your** people **you** brought up from the land of Egypt have acted corruptly.
  - i. O, so now they are **MY** people?
  - ii. Remember, I had told You I really did not want this job in the first place.
- d. The Israelites had sinned in four ways and earned the title “stiff-necked people.”
  - i. They had “bowed down to it” meaning they worshiped it;
  - ii. They “sacrificed to it” meaning they believed that it could bless or curse them;
  - iii. They declared “this is your God” - broke the first and second commandments; and
  - iv. They claimed “it was the god who brought them up from the land of Egypt” meaning they attributed God’s mighty saving acts to an idol;
- e. God issued Moses a four-part test:
  - i. If you leave Me alone – like Moses could stop God?
  - ii. My anger will burn against Israel – God wanted to burn the people off the face of the earth.

- iii. I can destroy them – Yes, God could!
- iv. Then I will make you into a great nation – How would Moses like joining the patriarch lineup of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses?
- f. What would Moses do? To his own credit, Moses decided to intercede on Israel’s behalf and offered three arguments why God should not destroy Israel:
  - i. Moses appealed to God’s past action: Destroying Israel at this point would nullify the miraculous expression of God’s divine power;
  - ii. Moses appealed to God’s consistent character: The Egyptians would say with great delight that Yahweh was fickle: God only brought the people out of slavery only to kill them in the desert
  - iii. Moses appealed to God’s promises: God had promised the patriarchs offspring and land.
- g. This story reveals God’s willingness to respond to the prayer of a humble servant who prays out of a desire to see God’s will accomplished and not some selfish goals.

### **Spiritual Exercise #1**

Do you intercede on behalf of your family? In the space below, list three prayer requests that you can take to God for your spouse, children, or other family members.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **2. Confront the Sin - Ex. 32:15, 19-20**

- a. Three points should be understood about Moses’ response:
  - i. This was not the result of a rash, impetuous, fit of rage. It was righteous anger, similar to what God had experienced earlier;
  - ii. Breaking the tablets was an important symbolic act to signify the breaking of the covenant with God;
  - iii. Moses broke the tablets at the same place the Israelites had ratified the covenant earlier;
- b. He seized the calf the Israelites had made, burned the image up, and ground it to powder. This three-fold action of burning, grinding, and scattering indicated the total destruction of an idol.
- c. Believers are called to in a similar way. We are to hate sin, confront sin, and confess sin before a merciful God. Only in this way is sin completely destroyed.

## Spiritual Exercise #2

Have you ever been confronted in love when you were falling short?

\_\_\_ Yes; \_\_\_ No; \_\_\_ No, but I wish someone had done so!

If yes, note your response to the confrontation below, circling all that apply:

Anger      Indifference      Gratitude      Repentance      Embarrassment

### 3. Call for a Return to God - Ex. 32:25-26

- a. Moses understood the real implications of worshiping the golden calf and what needed to happen to restore the covenant.
  - i. The people were out of control meaning the Israelites had lapsed into immoral rituals in worshiping the golden calf.
  - ii. They had become weak before their enemies meaning that Israel had become an easy target for an enemy, and an embarrassing fighting force.
  - iii. Bottom line: Moses had to do something to bring the people back into control and to provide moral restraints. He did so by calling for a return to God.
- b. "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me."
  - i. Moses' appeal was far more serious than just joining a cause or a side.
  - ii. Moses sought people who recognized that they literally belonged to the Lord.
  - iii. He called Israel to rejoin the covenant with God;
  - iv. And those who responded were to confront the people who refused.
  - v. About 3,000 people did not join Moses and so were killed.

## Spiritual Exercise #3

Although God gives us courage, no one said it would be easy to lovingly confront others about their sin. Indicate how difficult it would be for you to confront each person listed below on a scale of "1" (piece of cake) to "10" (very difficult). Circle any person you may need to approach right away.

\_\_\_ Son/Daughter

\_\_\_ Spouse

\_\_\_ Sibling

\_\_\_ Parent

\_\_\_ Church member

\_\_\_ Co-worker

\_\_\_ Close friend

\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Biblical Truths of This Lesson**

1. God will give us the courage to stand for Biblical convictions.
2. Believers need to pray on behalf of others.
3. Even if the entire world endorses sinful behavior, believers must stand our ground on righteousness.
4. Believers are called to hate sin and evil and confront people in love, grace, and mercy.
5. When one person takes a public stand for what is right, others often find motivation to do the same.
6. Believers proclaim and serve as ministers of reconciliation, to call people to return to God.