

STUDY GUIDE

T H E
RED SEA
RULES

TAKE THE JOURNEY
FROM PANIC TO PRAISE

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING BOOK BY
ROBERT J. MORGAN

THE
RED SEA
RULES

STUDY GUIDE

TAKE THE JOURNEY FROM PANIC TO PRAISE

MORRIS PROCTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Take the Journey from Panic to Praise

Hello, my name is Morris Proctor. I'm a friend of Robert J. Morgan, author of the book, *The Red Sea Rules*.

I invite you to join me on a journey—a journey through the Red Sea.

Centuries ago, God's people, the Israelites, served as slaves to Egyptian authorities. To deliver them, God providentially directed His children out of Egypt to the edge of the Red Sea. Fearing loss of their work force, Egyptian armies pursued their runaway slaves. With waves of water crashing in front of them and teams of soldiers chasing behind them, the children of Israel found themselves between the sword and the sea. To them, their only two choices were submitting to slavery or succumbing to death in the sea. Fear and panic bellowed from the Israelites as they complained to their leader, Moses, "What have you done to us?" (Exodus 14:1–12).

Then God...

Then God parted the waters allowing His people to journey to victory through the Red Sea. When the last Israelite was safely on the other side, the walls of water collapsed onto the Egyptian militia. In mere moments, the Red Sea went from being Israel's destruction to Israel's deliverance (14:21–29).

Seeing the great power of God, the Israelites' fear turned to faith. Their panic became praise (14:31 — 15:20).

Please note, their transformation didn't just happen. They first followed the rules—The Red Sea Rules. They applied the principles. They took the steps in a journey.

The above episode isn't just an event from the past. It's an example for the present. Allow me to explain.

My close friend, Rob Morgan, experienced a difficult season of life several years ago. Engulfed with anxiety bordering on panic, he opened his Bible to Exodus 14. There he read the above account of the journey through the Red Sea. But rather than reading mere historic facts, Rob discovered dynamic principles: **The Red Sea Rules**. He saw 10 God-given strategies for difficult times. Being a practitioner before a

preacher, he applied these ten strategies to his own difficult times. He too experienced victory.

This ten-step journey through the Red Sea took God’s people in the past and Rob in the present, from fear to faith—from panic to praise. And the really good news is, you and I can also experience this same transformation in our difficult times.

So I ask you, will you join me on a journey through the Red Sea, moving from panic to praise?

In all likelihood we’ve never met, but I know one thing about you: you’re either encountering or soon will encounter a problem, a challenge, a difficulty in life.

Jesus cautioned us in John 16:33 “here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows” (NLT).

James prepared us in James 1:2, by saying, “when [not if] you meet trials of various kinds” (ESV).

You and I frequently come face to face with our own Red Sea. It just has a different name:

- *Strained Relationship Sea*
- *Financial Stress Sea*
- *Prodigal Child (or Parent) Sea*
- *Failing Health Sea*
- *Problems at Work Sea*
- “Insert Your Problem Here” Sea

Regardless of what we call it, we face times that seem to overwhelm us. We see no way out. We want to give up, give out, and give in. Fear freezes us. Panic paralyzes us.

There’s an alternative, though. It’s the ten-step journey through our Red Sea.

Each of the ten Red Sea Rules becomes a step in our journey:

1. Realize that God means for you to be where you are.
2. Be more concerned for God’s glory than your relief.

3. Acknowledge your enemy, but keep your eyes on the Lord.
4. Pray!
5. Stay calm and confident, and give God time to work.
6. When unsure, just take the next logical step by faith.
7. Envision God's enveloping presence.
8. Trust God to deliver in His own unique way.
9. View your current crisis as a faith builder for the future.
10. Don't forget to praise Him.

Please view each lesson as a mini-journey unto itself, with all ten combining for the complete excursion, crossing, or itinerary. To understand the structure of each lesson, think through four stages of taking a trip.

For each step I'll guide you through a four-part lesson:



PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

When taking a trip, we begin by **previewing** our trip. We determine where we're going. The beach? The mountains? The desert? We then map it. We chart our course. We read the brochures deciding what we'll see. Likewise, as we **preview** each step of our Red Sea journey, we'll focus on the biblical text, discovering the actual step the children of Israel took. And of course, the same step we're about to take.



PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

Having previewed our trip, we must now **prepare** for our trip. Do we need to pack sandals or boots? Surf boards or snow boards? It would be bad to arrive in Florida only to discover we brought parkas and mittens. In like manner, before we take a step in our Red Sea journey, we must **prepare**. Difficulties are hard enough without increasing the pain due to our lack of preparation. During each step's **preparation**, you'll have the opportunity to do some soul searching, readying yourself for the actual step in the journey.



PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

After previewing and preparing for the trip, we finally **proceed** on the journey. We really get to swim, surf, or ski. This of course is where each lesson leads: **proceed** on the journey. We actually have to take a step of faith and apply the Red Sea Rule. We have to live out the principle. In each lesson you'll have the opportunity to prayerfully commit to take the next step of the journey.



PONDER THE JOURNEY

Unfortunately, our greatest journeys are quickly forgotten. With each step, we need to **ponder** the journey—to mentally process and physically record events, thoughts, and emotions. At the end of this guide, blank space is provided where you can **ponder** the journey and journal the story of your own Red Sea experience.

Along the way, please keep in mind some helpful hints:

- Make sure to carefully read all of the Scripture references in each lesson. Our transformation from panic to praise occurs when we apply biblical, rather than self-help principles.
- Also, try to honestly answer each question. Some questions and answers may be uncomfortable or even painful. True transformation comes, however, only when we're honest with ourselves and our Lord.
- In addition, please don't rush the journey. You may spend extended time on one step. Just because we fill in the blanks doesn't mean we've taken the step. Allow the Lord time to process each step within you.
- Finally, remember the journey through the Red Sea is not a one-time trip. We'll repeat and relive these ten steps for each challenge we face in life. Hopefully, as we mature in Christ, the journey will get more familiar and a bit easier, but it will be a repeated journey nonetheless.

Ready to join me in taking the ten-step journey through the Red Sea?

Let's start here:

What Red Sea are you currently facing?

What are your reactions in the midst of this difficulty? Fear? Anger? Panic? Depression?

Will you take whatever faith you have, even if it's small as a mustard seed, and place it in a God who wants to guide you through your Red Sea (Luke 17:5-6)?

If you're ready, by faith, to take a journey through your Red Sea then carefully read Exodus 14 at least twice and pray the following prayer:

Heavenly Father.

You see better than I the challenge I'm currently facing. You also clearly see my condition. On good days I have hope. On bad days I'm hopeless. Right now I don't have great faith, but I know You're a great God. You took Your children in the past from panic to praise. Will You do the same for me? By Your grace and power I'm embarking on this journey through my Red Sea. Lord I believe; help my unbelief. Make me into a trusting, praising child of Yours.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



RULE #1

Realize that God means for you to be where you are.

The older I get, the more convinced I am that life is hard! Just today as I was writing this lesson:

- My son informed me he has to have another shoulder surgery (third one in three years)
- My cousin ran his car through a telephone pole
- My friend called telling me he's bankrupt

Yes, life is tough. Red Seas come in all shapes and sizes. I don't need to tell you that, though. You have your own Red Sea.

Again for clarity, what's the Red Sea you're focusing on for this journey?

I don't know about you, but when I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place, hemmed in between the sword and the sea, I want to know WHY.

Why is life so hard? Why do problems persist? Why do we encounter these Red Seas?

We'll probably never know all of the reasons, but as we start our trek through the Red Sea, we begin with Step #1 which is:

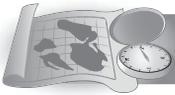
Realize that God means for you to be where you are.

Yes, you read that correctly. God isn't surprised by the challenges in our lives. Rob writes on page 7:

Our whole perspective changes when, finding ourselves in a hard place, we realize the Lord has either placed us there or allowed us to be there, perhaps for reasons presently known only to Himself.

What's your initial reaction to Rob's statement?

Let's explore this first step in more detail.



PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Read pages 1–16 in *The Red Sea Rules*.

Read carefully Exodus 14:1–2.

Who directed the children of Israel to camp by the sea?

Rewrite Exodus 14:1–2 in your own words.

In all seriousness, was God aware of the depths of the sea? The approaching Egyptian armies? The predicament His people would face because of His directions? Explain.

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Did God make a mistake when He deliberately led His people into a cul-de-sac between hostile hills, to the edge of a sea too deep to be forded and too wide to be crossed? Explain.

Rewrite Rule #1 in your own words; use personal pronouns (I, me, my, etc.).



PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

So we see from Exodus 14:1–2, God led His people to the shore of the Red Sea. Perhaps that challenge was just for them. Surely it's not the norm for God's people to face hardship? If we're to be prepared for our struggles we must know the answer.

Reread page 9 where Rob lists people from the Bible who encountered trials. Was this Red Sea event a single biblical occurrence of God permitting problems in people's lives or does Scripture contain other examples? List any others you can think of.

What do John 16:33, James, 1:2, and 1 Peter 4:12 teach about difficulties in life?

What do Genesis 50:15–21, Job 1:6–12, and Isaiah 6:1 teach about the relationship between the sovereignty of God and the sufferings of people?

In light of the above verses, if Rob wanted to add you and your Red Sea to page 9, what would he write?

Sometimes, however, our problems result from our own bad choices. What then? Read Psalm 103:12, Proverbs 28:13, and 1 John 1:8–9 and record your findings about forgiveness and fellowship with God.

Read about Peter’s bad choices in Luke 22:54–62. According to Luke 22:31–32, John 21:15–17, and Acts 2:14, 37–41 was God able to lead Peter through his Bad Choices Sea? Explain.

In Romans 8:28 what does the phrase “all things” include? Exclude?

If your Red Sea resulted from your own bad choices, what have you learned from the above verses?



PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

We clearly see from the Bible that God is neither worried nor weakened when His children, including you and me, encounter troubles and trials. Knowing that God is in control of our lives regardless of what befalls us is not only the first step of our journey, but arguably the most important. Subsequent steps that include faith, prayer, and praise are virtually impossible to take unless we believe in an all-powerful, loving God.

Be honest, how have you been initially reacting to your Red Sea? Circle the emotions that apply:

- anxiousness nervousness fear regret uncertainty frustration
panic depression sadness despondency anger

How can embracing Rule #1 affect your response?



PONDER THE JOURNEY

In light of Rule #1, record a journal entry that includes reactions and your intended response to what you've learned. Blank journal pages are provided for Step #1 beginning on Page 65 in the back of this study guide.

Heavenly Father,

Through my mistakes, the choices of others, and Your providence, I am where I am. I'm facing this challenge. I confess I'm full of fear, worry, and panic. But I don't want to be in this emotional, spiritual chaotic state. I want to praise You in all things and at all times. To get there I must realize that You mean for me to be where I am. I recognize Your sovereignty. I praise You for being a God who never sleeps or grows weary. You're fully aware of my circumstances. I choose to trust You.

In Jesus' name, Amen

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJV)

Romans 8:28
