

# INTRODUCTION

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Congratulations! You have the privilege of serving as a guide for people as they journey through their personal Red Sea. Over the next several weeks you'll witness people moving from panic to praise in the midst of their challenges.

This leader's guide is a companion to The Red Sea Rules book and its study guide, designed to assist you as you lead your small group. Ideally, each person in your group should have a copy of the book and a study guide. If you're teaching couples, they may share a book if absolutely necessary, but if possible they should have their own study guide since space is provided for personal responses and journal entries. Please keep in mind these general suggestions for the entire journey:

- **Pray for your participants.** This journey is much more than question and answer sessions. It's a personal transformation for each member. You'll initially know some of the pain the participants are experiencing; more hardships will be revealed as the journey progresses. Pray that each person has the honesty and courage to complete the trip.
- **Prepare for each session.** At the risk of putting pressure on you, please realize as the leader of the group, much of the success of this journey depends on your personal preparation. Don't wait until the night before your meeting to begin preparation. Well in advance of the meeting, personally complete the questions in the study guide for each rule. Read all of the Scripture verses in each lesson as well as the corresponding chapter(s) in The Red Sea Rules. Then use this leader's guide to prepare for the actual meeting. *Don't try to cover all of the study guide questions in one meeting*; if you do, you'll be there for hours. Encourage members to complete all of the questions at home. As the leader, pick and choose which questions to bring up in the small group.
- **Preside over the meeting.** In any small group, but especially in this emotional journey through life's difficulties, members may drift toward two extremes: some will not "speak up" while others will not "shut up" (please pardon the bluntness, but it comes from many years of leading small groups). You'll need the wisdom of Solomon to guide members in meaningful, balanced discussion of each Red Sea Rule. Gently nudge people to either open up or reign in their contributions to the meeting. You have to be a servant leader—this is key. Don't let the group wander off into endless discussion about one question or one person's challenges. If this happens over the course of several weeks, people will stop attending. One final thought here: if someone is sharing sensitive information that's better suited for a one-on-one meeting or a gender-specific group, you may consider graciously making that suggestion.
- **Participate in the group.** While you're the leader of the group, you're also a fellow pilgrim on the same journey. Make sure to interject your own successes and struggles along the way. Your participation not only encourages others to do likewise, it also provides an example of how much or little to share in a small group.

## RED SEA RULES - LEADER'S GUIDE

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With these general suggestions in mind, let's now turn our attention to how this leader's guide is designed. For each Red Sea Rule you'll be given a corresponding leader's guide section, which consists of these elements:

- Goal of the lesson
- Suggested introduction or ice breaker
- Questions to focus on during the meeting
- Clarification of difficult concepts
- Encouragement

You'll notice that the study guide begins with an introductory chapter. You want to carefully read that Introduction several times because both you and the participants should take note of several items.

First, the Red Sea Rules come straight from Exodus 14 not from the author's imagination. Make sure you have read the Exodus 14 episode numerous times before your first meeting. Encourage the members to read it in its entirety each week of the journey.

Next, grasp and communicate the concept of the journey. The assumptions are that we have challenges in life and we usually initially react with fear or panic. The encouragement from Scripture, though, is that God wants us praising Him even in the midst of pain. To move from panic to praise, we have to take a 10-step journey one step at a time, with each step consisting of a Red Sea Rule. Constantly remind the members of their location on the journey and encourage the travelers all along the way.

Also, see each step as a mini-journey consisting of the Preview, Prepare, Proceed, and Ponder elements all described in the study guide. Repeatedly remind the group of the purposes of these various sections in each lesson.

Finally, with everything you have in you, encourage the participants to keep a daily journal of their journey. Space for writing is provided in the back of the study guide. Writing will help them clarify thoughts and emotions as well as provide a written testimony of God's goodness they can refer back to for years to come.

Now may the Lord bless you and keep you as you embark with fellow pilgrims on a personal journey through the Red Sea!

# RULE #1

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

**Goal:**

To lead participants to recognize God's sovereignty in their lives and to rest in that sovereignty.

**Introduction:**

Since this is the first meeting of *The Red Sea Rules* small group, you want to introduce yourself and allow others time to introduce themselves. Say something like:

*Let's take about 30 seconds each telling our name, occupation, and a hobby. To get the ball rolling I'll go first.*

By going first you give them a chance to think while providing an example of a 30 second introduction.

Now thank everyone for participating and introduce the concept of The Red Sea Rules journey.

Explain that the author, Robert J. Morgan, experienced a challenge in life, reacted with fear, read the Exodus 14 event, discovered biblical principles for responding to difficulties, and began his personal journey from panic to praise.

Quickly retell the Exodus 14 story (1–2 minutes). Comment that this historic event isn't just history, but a life lesson for the Israelites, Rob Morgan, and yes those of us in the group.

At this point explain that the goal of this small group is to experience the same transformation from panic to praise—from fear to faith. Reassure people that, although this will be an emotional study, they will not be pressured to speak in the group if they choose not to.

Encourage them, though, to complete the weekly assignments in the study guide so they can get the most out of the study and the group.

All of this is more of an introduction to lay the groundwork to the study. The “official” journey begins now. You want to say something like:

*As we embark on this journey it's important for us to take an honest look at where we currently are. Are we facing any challenges in life? Family? Work? School? Health? Work? What specifically is the challenge you're facing?*

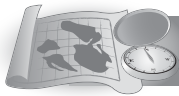
*Secondly, how are we responding to that challenge? Fear? Worry? Panic?*

If you feel comfortable doing so, take just a moment and tell the group: I'll get us started.

Again, by going first you give the members time to gather their thoughts while providing an example of brevity.

After several speak interject:

*Even though we may be worried or fearful, God wants to take us to a place of faith and praise. To get there, we have to take the first step—to realize God means for us to be where we are. That's the first rule. Let's look at this first rule and step in our journey.*



### PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Read or have someone read Exodus 14:1–2.

Ask and let people answer the question: who directed the children of Israel to camp by the sea?



### PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

Reinforce that God did indeed lead them to the Red Sea.

Ask: *does God let His people experience difficulties?*

Summarize some of the biblical examples Rob describes on page 9 in the book.

Have someone read these verses John 16:33, James 1:2, and 1 Peter 4:12 and then ask the group what these verse teach about life's problems.

Present to the group this scenario: *If we're Godly and suffer that's one thing, but what if our own bad choices cause the problems. Then what?*

Summarize for the group Peter's choices in Luke 22:54–62 as well as the outcome according to Luke 22:31–32, John 21:15–17 and Acts 2:14, 37–41.

What does Romans 8:28 teach about life's problems and God's sovereignty?

Ask the group if the Romans 8:28 promise is hard to embrace for their specific struggles. Why or why not?

Remember to keep bringing everyone back to their own difficulties. This is not just a study about the Israelites, but more importantly an encounter with God in our personal lives.



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

Explain to the group that theologians have debated for years the apparent contradiction between people's free will and God's sovereignty, so the group in one meeting will not solve the dilemma. The focus of the first step though is trusting in God's sovereignty. This first step is the most difficult and the most important because all of the others steps flow from believing God is in charge.

Ask how trusting in God's sovereignty would affect their fear, worry, panic, etc.

Ask if they're willing to take whatever faith they have, however weak or small it may be, place it in God, and allow Him the opportunity to prove His goodness?



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Encourage the group to use the journal space in their study guides. This first step is a "biggie" and many times can't be taken in the environment of a small group. Ask them to get alone with God and prayerfully consider His sovereignty and their surrender to it.

## RULE #2

*Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to shift from a self-centered to a God-centered approach to their problems by asking the question, *How can God be glorified through this situation?*

### **Introduction:**

In this second meeting you may have new attendees, so allow a brief time for introductions. Then quickly review the nature of *The Red Sea Rules* study.

For the benefit of the new ones, remind everyone that:

*As we go through our study we all have in our mind at least one challenge that we're currently facing in life. We want our time to be practical, not theoretical, so we need to focus on a real problem. Do you have your difficulty in mind? I want to ask you, are you now asking or have you recently asked the question: Why me? Why is this happening to me?*

If you as the leader are asking that question, feel free to interject your personal challenge here or use the one from the young man on page 7 of the book. The key is to give at least one example of asking why before asking the group to share. They need time to process their answer and get the courage to speak. Having given an example, now ask:

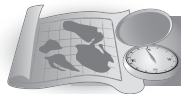
*Would someone like to tell us about your "why me" question?*

Wrap up this discussion with a conclusion like:

*I think we can all agree that asking "why me" is natural and understandable. From a biblical standpoint, though, is it the best question to ask? Tonight we're going to investigate a different question to ask in the midst of adversity: How can God be glorified through my situation? This is the second rule or second step on our journey through our Red Sea as we journey from panic to praise: Be more concerned for God's glory than for your relief. Let's return to the biblical Red Sea event.*

You're now ready to shift the emphasis from the people in the Bible to the people in the meeting and drive home Rule #2.

Let's stop here for a moment and do some soul searching. Right now in our difficulty are we using a lot of personal pronouns like I and me? What are we looking for in our pain? Answers. Relief. Would someone like to share your personal pronoun story?



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Quickly retell the story.

Tonight let's focus on Exodus 14:3–4, 10–12.

According to Exodus 14:3–4 why did God lead His people to the edge of the sea?

God intended to *get glory* or *gain honor* from the Red Sea experience. What does this mean?

After discussion you may want to summarize glory as the sum total of who God is. God's love plus power plus grace plus whatever else is true about Him equals His glory. When His characteristics are displayed in or through some event or person He is being glorified. When we praise Him for who He is we are glorifying Him.

Is God's desire to *get glory* or *gain honor* motivated by neediness, narcissism, or egomania on His part? Why or why not?

If this question is asked, please limit the discussion because it could dominate your time together. If you sense the discussion becoming too lengthy, it may help to offer a summary similar to this:

*For your benefit, God is complete in and of Himself. He needs nothing or no one to complete Him. Why then does He want to be known or glorified? For our benefit. We're created to need God for our completion. Our sins have separated us from Him. When He's glorified or made known people gravitate to Him for their own completion. So God's glory being manifested becomes a benefit to humanity. This of course is a very brief summary of a deep question.*

Based on Exodus 14:11–12 who or what were the Israelites most focused on? Remind people of the numerous occurrences of the pronoun we in this passage.

Is this self-focus understandable in the midst of pain?

According to Exodus 15:1–3 did that focus shift? If so why?



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

*The contrast between self focus and God focus is seen in other passages of Scripture as well. Let's look at some in John. 9:1-3, 11:1-4, 17-27, 12:27-28.*

You will not have time to look at all of these. Before the meeting, select the one(s) you want to use and be very familiar with the events. Make sure the class sees that in all of the examples there was a self-focus during difficulty but a desired shift to God-focus.

*Let's turn to and read Psalm 115:1. I'd like for several of us to paraphrase this verse out loud.*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

You're now ready to shift the emphasis from the people in the Bible to the people in the meeting and drive home Rule #2.

*Let's stop here for a moment and do some soul searching. Right now in our difficulty are we using a lot of personal pronouns like I and me? What are we looking for in our pain? Answers. Relief. Would someone like to share your personal pronoun story?*

*What kind of shift in focus does God want us to experience? Ideally we want to go from give me relief to God be glorified. Has someone already made this shift to God's glory? If so would you tell us how this came about?*

*I know this is not an easy transition from self to God, but it is wholly necessary on our journey. Are you willing to, by faith, say: God be gloried in my situation even though all my questions may not be answered and I may not get the type of relief I initially wanted?*



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Encourage the group to continue to use the journal space provided in their study guide. This second step is equally as important as the first. Our focus is being transformed from self to God and self doesn't step aside easily. Encourage people to get alone with God and wrestle through these first two steps. Tell them it's OK to cry, yell, etc. Wrestling is not pretty. Many times journaling can help clarify what's going on inside of us.



## RULE #3

*Acknowledge your enemy, but keep your eyes on the Lord.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to realize Satan may indeed be involved in their difficulties, but to continue to trust God regardless.

### **Introduction:**

**So that you won't miss this encouragement I place it right at the top:** Please consult with one of the church leaders for advice on how to handle the topic of the devil, which is the subject of Rule # 3.

As the group gathers again if you have new people make necessary introductions. If there are new attendees briefly review the purpose of *The Red Sea Rules* study and recap the first two weeks. Use this recap time to encourage participants on their journey and acknowledge their courage for facing difficulties head on.

As you transition into the third step, say something to this effect:

*As we begin exploring our third step I want us to play a little word association: What comes to your mind when you hear word the Satan or devil?*

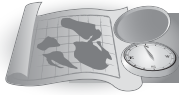
Be ready for most any type of answer. Then move into the heart of the lesson with statements like:

*Well in this lesson we're going to see some of what the Bible says about Satan. Rob Morgan states:*

*If you're in a tough situation right now, suffering pain, worry, anguish, or illness, the devil is undoubtedly behind it to a greater or lesser degree.*

*Let's assume for the sake of argument we're experiencing some level of satanic activity in the midst of our problems. How should we respond to it? That's our third step in the journey which is Rule # 3:*

***Acknowledge your enemy, but keep your eyes on the Lord.***



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Quickly retell the story.

*Tonight let's focus on Exodus 14:5–9.*

After the Israelites left Egypt, getting their first taste of freedom, what did Pharaoh do (Exodus 14:6–7)?

Describe the forces with which Pharaoh tracked the Israelites (Exodus 14:6–9)?

*So we see that based on a leader's orders, armies pursued the Israelites. On page 31 of the book, Rob suggests there are parallels between Pharaoh and Satan. For our discussion of the third rule we'll assume this comparison is correct.*

How did the Israelites react when they saw the Egyptian armies (Exodus 14:10)?

What was Moses' advice for the fearful pilgrims (Exodus 14:13–14)?

*You can see that Moses didn't tell the people to pretend they didn't have an enemy. That would be denial. They did, in fact, have an enemy. Moses told them to focus on God. That is faith.*



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

*Do we as God's people really have an enemy who wants to destroy us? Let's see what the Bible says:*

What do these verses teach us about our enemy: 1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10, and Ephesians 6:13–18?

You may want to ask different people to read the above verses out loud.

The primary human author of the New Testament, Paul, didn't hesitate to label satanic activity in his life. He recognized the enemy as a real spiritual being who, along with organized forces (fallen angels), attempted to disrupt his and life and ministry.

Numerous verses are listed on page 18 of the study guide. Read through them, picking several that you'd like to discuss in the meeting. Again, ask different people to read the passage aloud and then ask the group what the enemy was doing in each.

The goal of the above verses is for people to see that satanic activity isn't always or normally what's pictured in movies: demon possession, fits, foaming at the mouth, etc. Influence from the enemy occurs in normal everyday life.

What can you learn about attacks from the enemy in Job 1:6–12?

According to Genesis 3:15, John 12:31, Colossians 2:15 and Hebrews 2:14, what is the most important truth to remember about Satan?

Reinforce the truth that even though we're in a spiritual battle, Jesus has defeated our enemy who is awaiting his final judgment.

In light of the cross, what should our posture be toward Satan? Consider Ephesians 6:11, James 4:7, and 1 Peter 5:8–9.

Remind people that we're told to resist the enemy. We don't deny his presence but neither do we ascribe more power to him than is warranted. Again our focus is to remain on the Lord.



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

Now you want to shift gears, allowing people to discuss their own Red Sea.

*Do you believe in your personal struggle that you're experiencing any influence from the devil? Why or why not?*

*As you face your difficulties whether they're coming from Satan or not what should be your response?*

Regardless of the types of answers given, remind people to keep their focus on the victorious Lord Jesus Christ.



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Once again encourage the group to continue journaling every day. Remind them they're on a journey and just because they complete every question in the study guide doesn't mean they've taken the next step. Exhort them to "work out their salvation" (Philippians 2:12–13) a day at a time. Also please show them that the first three steps are encouraging us to move our focus from our problems to our God. Someone once said:

*Our issue is not that our problems are too big, but that [we assume] our God is too small.*

## RULE #4

*Pray.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to consistently pray during their Red Sea trial.

### **Introduction:**

Having investigated three rules, as you begin the fourth step, take a few minutes to check in with people asking how they're doing on the journey, how is the journaling going, etc. As the leader, you want to be as mindful as possible regarding the progress of each member of the group. You may also want to facilitate contact during the week between members so they can encourage each other. Remember, some things are better discussed in one-on-one settings rather than the group environment.

As you officially begin the next step, open with something like:

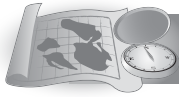
*I have noticed that the vast majority of people in pain all do one thing: pray. Even people who don't pray, pray. For example...*

At this point use an example of someone praying or use the story on page 21 in the study guide. Then ask the group,

*Have you been praying during you red Sea experience? If so what's a typical prayer for you? If not, why not?*

Following the discussion, transition to the Bible with a statement like,

*As we continue our journey we want to investigate this subject of prayer, which is the fourth rule and our fourth step that Rob describes simply as **Pray!***



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Quickly retell the story.

*Tonight let's focus on Exodus 14:10.*

*Let's break down this verse according to three actions of the Israelites. They:*

- *Lifted their eyes (saw)*
- *Feared greatly*
- *Cried out to the Lord*

At this point just spend a few minutes discussing these three verbs by asking simple questions like:

*What did they see?*

*Why were they afraid?*

*What do think was crying to the Lord looked like and what was the content of their cries?*

*Do you think their prayers were perfect, coming from great faith?*

Some people may think the Israelites had great faith, but Exodus 14:11–12 seems to indicate otherwise. Even though their prayers may have lacked great faith, God still heard their cries (Nehemiah 9:9–11). Time may not allow you to fully develop this topic, but I wanted to remind you of these passages because some people may think they and their prayers must be perfect before God hears them. The example of the “imperfect” prayers of the Israelites should encourage people. Really try to drive home this point!



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

*In his book, Rob makes a distinction between quiet-time prayers and crisis time prayers. Using Matthew 6:6 and Joshua 24:7, how would you describe these two types of prayer?*

*According to Luke 11:1-4 what characterizes quiet-time prayer?*

On page 24 of the study guide you'll see verses containing examples of crisis-time prayers. Pick out a couple of these to discuss in the meeting with a question like:

*Do we find examples of crisis-time prayers in the Bible?*

Peter's crisis-time prayer in Matthew 14:30 is a great parallel to Exodus 14:10. Definitely use this verse with a question like:

*Let's look at a specific crisis-time prayer in Matthew 14:30. Do you see any similarities with this verse and Exodus 14:10?*

Follow up the above question with this:

*What does 1 Peter 5:6–7 teach about prayer?*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

After a good discussion about prayer, summarize the points with something like the paragraph on page 25 in the study guide:

*The Bible teaches by both precept and practice two broad types of praying: quiet time praying to enhance fellowship with God and crisis-time praying to receive help from God. If you're new to the faith, you may not be familiar with the phrase "quiet time", which refers to a daily devotional time set aside for worship and fellowship with the Lord through prayer and Scripture reading.*

You want to now apply this rule to the group:

*It's now time for others to evaluate our prayer life in the midst of our Red Sea. How is your quiet-time pray going? Is it consistent? Difficult? Nonexistent?*

*Why is it important that we continue consistent quiet-time prayer in the midst of our pain?*

*What about your crisis-time prayer? If we've never prayed before do you think it's OK to begin with crisis-time prayer? What's the content of your crisis-time prayer?*

*By the grace of God, are you willing to commit to consistently apply Rule #4: Pray!?*



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

As you encourage participants to think about their journey by journaling, remind them it's a great practice to write out their prayers. In Psalm 5:3, the writer says he will direct his prayers to God. The word *direct* means *to order or prepare*. Writing out prayer is a great way to arrange or prepare prayers before the Lord. Is also a great way to keep up with what we are praying so we can also record answers to those prayers.

## RULE #5

*Stay calm and confident, and give God time to work.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to calm down and focus on God during their difficulties.

### **Introduction:**

As you begin the meeting you may want to take a few minutes to remind attendees you're coming to the half-way point in the journey. Check on their progress: journaling, emotions, etc. Allow people the opportunity to share a few minutes regarding any breakthroughs they've experienced.

As transition into the next step, ask an opening question like:

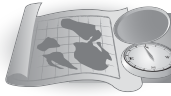
*Do you know what obsessing is? For our purposes, I refer to it as focusing at the same time on everything and anything that is or could potentially go wrong in our lives. For example...*

At this point you can recount the story on page 27 of the study guide or insert one of your own. The key is to begin with an example of someone "drowning in problems". Follow up the story with another question:

*What type of emotional response may follow obsessing?*

Allow a few moments for answers. Then interject:

*Yes. That's correct. Worry, fear, panic, even hyperventilating could occur. As we continue on our journey we address this very issue as we take the next step which is observing Rule #5: **Stay calm and confident, and give God time to work.***



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Quickly retell the story.

*Rule 5 is based on Exodus 14:13–14.*

What three instructions did Moses give the people of God in Exodus 14:13?

Using your sanctified imagination describe what you think the Israelites were doing that prompted Moses' instructions?

In light of the situation, was their fearful reaction understandable? Why or why not?

Moses proclaimed phrases such as, *See the salvation of the Lord, He will work for you today, and The Lord will fight for you.* What was he trying to get the Israelites to comprehend?

The point you want to get across here is that at the Red Sea there was a lot going on and people were “obsessing” about all of it. This produced fear, panic, hysteria, etc. Moses was trying to get them to take a depth breath and calm down. God was not asleep or unaware of their circumstances. He was in control, so they needed to give Him the opportunity to work on their behalf.



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

On page 52, Rob states how many times the phrases *fear not* and *do not be afraid* occur in the Bible: 107 in the New Testament and 42 in the Old Testament.

*Why do you think God includes the phraseology so many times?*

Many times attached to the emotion of fear is the tendency to fix a problem. Control it! Rob encourages us, however, to *give God time to work* based on phrases such as *see the salvation of the Lord, he will work for you, the Lord will fight for you, and be silent.*

According to Genesis 15:1–6 and 16:1–4, do you believe Abraham was trying to control a situation? Why or why not?

Make sure you're very familiar with this Genesis event, which can be summarized as follows:

*God promised Abraham and his wife a son through whom He would bless the world. Sarah, his wife, didn't get pregnant during their timetable, so she encouraged Abraham to conceive a son with her maid Hagar.*



The truth you want to emphasize is we tend to develop a scenario regarding how and when God should act. If he doesn't, we want to take charge. Another biblical example you may want to examine if time permits is Peter:

*Do you believe Peter's action in John 18:4–11 was an attempt to fix a problem? Why or why not?*

Rob likens *giving God time to work* to the biblical concept of *waiting on God*.

Read these verses and then in your own words explain the concept of *waiting on God*: Psalm 27:14; 33:20; 37:7–8; 38:15; 39:7.

How do we move from *controlling* to *waiting*?

Encourage people in this move from controlling to waiting. This is a moment by moment struggle that requires constant fellowship with God through the Word and prayer. It is an act of faith to wait on God.



You want to now apply this rule to the group:

With 1 being *fearful* and 10 being *standing firm*, where are you on the scale with your Red Sea?

With 1 being *trying to control the situation* and 10 being *waiting on God*, where are you on the scale with your Red Sea?

Are you willing, with God's help, to relinquish control of your situation, allowing God to work how and when he wants?



Remind participants of the importance of journaling. Exhort them when they feel fear and control rising up to instead record their thoughts. This habit of writing is a great way to release fear without acting on it.

## RULE #6

*When unsure, just take the next logical step by faith.*

### **Goal:**

To lead participants to take a constructive action step prompted by faith in God's leading, not fear of God's absence...

### **Introduction:**

As the group assembles check in with the participants regarding their progress especially inquiring about their fear and panic levels. A major emphasis in the first half of the journey is to calm the nerves by focusing on the sovereignty of God.

As you transition into Rule 6, ask an ice breaker question such as:

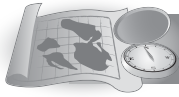
*What does the cliché "paralysis of analysis" mean? How can it influence our Red Sea journey?*

At this point you want to review the first five Red Sea Rules noting the focus of staying calm and seeing the sovereignty of God. If we're not careful we may think that means we never "do" anything along the way. Point out the Rule 6, the next step, calls on some action from us. Then ask:

*In your journey thus far, have you sensed God wants you to take some action step? If so, how have you responded to that nudging?*

Allow some time for answers then move into the study with a statement like:

*As we discover in Rule 6, **When unsure, just take the next logical step by faith.** We may very well be called on to **do** something. So let's discuss when it's appropriate to act.*



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Once again retell the Red Sea story.

*Rule 6 is based on Exodus 14:15.*

*According to Exodus 14:15, what did God tell Moses to instruct the Israelites to do?*

Point out that the same Hebrew word translated *go forward* is also translated throughout the Old Testament as *journeyed, moved, set out, left, and departed*. Emphasize that God was telling the Israelites to act, move, and do something.

Previously God told them to be *silent* (Exodus 14:14). Now He commanded them to *go forward* (Exodus 14:15).

Ask the group if there is a contradiction here.

Here's how these seemingly contradictory commands relate. When the people first encountered the Red Sea and the approaching armies they understandably experienced fear and panic out of which they recklessly reacted. God wanted them to calm down and not foolishly react out of fear. Having calmed down He wanted them to hear His voice and respond out of faith. It's OK to act when God says to, but it's not OK to react to fear just because we "need" to control or fix the situation.



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

As the study guide points out: *We must avoid two extremes as we journey through our Red Sea: reacting impulsively out of fear and refusing to move even if God shows the way.*

The Scripture teaches God is personally active in our lives revealing His plan for us. The study guide lists verses that show how God might communicate His will for us:

- Luke 4:4, 8, 12 indicate the Scriptures contain His will.
- Acts 16:6-7 shows the Holy Spirit directs our lives.
- Proverbs 15:22 teaches friends and advisors can be helpful.
- Acts 18:1-3, 6-8 demonstrate that open and closed doors can reveal God's plan.

Time permitting read and discuss these examples. Ask the group members:

*Have you recently seen the examples in these verses present in your life? What have you sensed God saying to you?*

Remind your group that God isn't playing hide and seek with His will. He wants us to know Him and His plan for us. Then explain and ask:

*According to verses like Luke 11:3 and 2 Corinthians 4:16 God appears to direct us day by day. Why do think God gives us daily doses rather than all of His will for our lives at once?*

Explain that God desires and we need constant, daily fellowship with Him. If we knew His entire plan at once we may take it and run. It's in that daily dependent relationship with Him that we discern His will and receive His power for living.

Ask the group:

*How is your DAILY relationship with God going?*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

As you wrap up the discussion you want to again drive home the point that God may very well want us to do something right now in our journey. If so, we need to obey.

*Again as I asked earlier, do you sense God wanting you to DO something right now in your journey? If so what is it? More importantly are you obeying? If not, what's stopping you from obeying?*



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Each session, remind the members to journal in their study guide. A daily journal is a good encouragement to maintaining daily fellowship with God. If they're "dry" for a day or two, encourage them to record that in the journal. The journal is to be an accurate account of our pilgrimage. If "nothing" is happening, we still need to account for these "silent" periods.

## RULE #7

*Envision God's enveloping presence.*

### **Goal:**

To lead students to implement steps that help them practice the presence of God.

### **Introduction:**

As your group members gather for the meeting, begin by asking what, if any, actions steps of faith they took since your last gathering. If they did take such steps, ask what impact the steps have had on their journey.

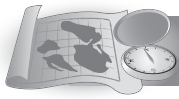
As you move into Rule 7, recount the story that's on page 41 of the study guide. Then ask:

*Have you experienced similar comments from people? How would you answer the question as to the expected differences and similarities between Christians and non-Christians as they face life's challenges?*

Then make a transition statement similar to this:

*One truth should characterize us Christians as we experience difficulties. We should manifest Rule #7 which is:*

*Envision God's enveloping presence.*



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Have people turn to Exodus 14. Recount the Red Sea story and emphasize the scene of verses 19-20 which are the basis for Rule #7.

Ask the attendees to describe what they think verses 19-20 looked like as they transpired.

Then make a concluding statement such as:

*Regardless of how the scene actually appeared, God was sharing His presence with His children and He wants to do the same for us. God wants us to know we're not alone as we face life's problems. He is with us.*



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

On page 42 of the study guide are numerous verses from the Psalms about the promise of God's presence with us. Before your meeting write out several of these on index cards. Ask different members to read them. Before they are read ask people to listen for a promise in each verse. After all are read, ask questions like:

*Collectively what are these verses teaching?*

*Do you believe God is with you right now during your journey? Why or why not?*

*Describe a time when you sensed God's presence with you.*

*How does God's presence affect your personal Red Sea journey?*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

In his book Rob offers four suggestions for practicing the presence of God. Read each one individually pausing after each one for discussion. Ask the group how to implement each one. Make sure the group is being very specific. In other words: How can we visualize God's presence in our mind? What type of prayers should we pray to access God's nearness? How do we reflect God presence in our demeanor?

- Affirm God's nearness in your heart.
- Visualize God's presence in your mind.
- Access God's nearness through prayer.
- Reflect God's presence in your demeanor.



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

Rule 7 is very "spiritual" and subjective. For example, we can't measure whether we sense God's presence the way we can measure an action step. It's very important that members journal on a consistent basis. Recording thoughts, insights, and prayers is an excellent way to rest in God's presence. Many times putting emotional and spiritual impressions on paper helps to solidify them in our Red Sea experience. Please end the meeting by strongly encouraging people to be consistent with their daily journal.

## RULE #8

*Trust God to deliver in His own unique way.*

### **Goal:**

To lead students to trust and expect God to act on their behalf in the midst of their challenges.

### **Introduction:**

As your group members settle in for the meeting ask for specific testimonies of how they experienced the presence of God since the last gathering.

Having allowed ample time for sharing, recap the journey reminding the group of the previous seven rules / steps. Then ask this question:

Do you see a predominant theme running through the first seven rules?

*Emphasize that Rob stresses in the book to trust God regardless of whether He responds as we would like or not. It's natural, though, to want God to DO something.*

Now ask the question that appears in the study guide:

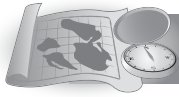
*On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no faith and 10 being great faith, how confident are you God is going to act in the midst of your Red Sea? Explain your answer.*

Summarize the discussion with a statement like:

*Increasing our faith and expectation for God to act is the subject of our next rule / step, which is:*

*Trust God to deliver in His own unique way.*





## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Quickly retell the story of Exodus 14 and emphasize verses 21-29, the basis of Rule 8. Ask the attendees if they learned anything differently from verses 21-29 than from what they've probably seen in the movie, *The Ten Commandments* with Charlton Heston.

Ask the question from the study guide:

*Let's assume after Moses calmed them down, the Israelites believed God would deliver them. Do you think they imagined the "parting of the sea method of deliverance"? Why or why not?*

Have the members express Rule 8 in their own words.



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

The promises and experiences related to Rule 8 at times appear contradictory. Expect lively (even intense) discussion from your participants.

The Bible repeats a promise or truth about God's deliverance of His children. Have different members read these verses:

*Deuteronomy 23:14; Psalm 34:19; Psalm 50:15; 2 Timothy 4:18*

Ask the group to summarize the promise of the above verses.

In his book, Rob discusses three ways of deliverance: miraculous, providential, and mysterious. Make sure to reread Rob's definition and examples of each and summarize Rob's teaching for the group. Then ask:

*Can you think of a time when God acted on your behalf in any of these three ways? Please be specific.*

In preparation for the next discussion, make sure you thoroughly and prayerfully read Hebrews 11:35-40, Matthew 14:1-12, and Acts 7:54-60. If people haven't already mentioned, please interject something like:

*We have the promise of God's deliverance but let's also look at the biblical examples of John the Baptist, Stephen, and the people of Hebrews 11:35-40. How do we reconcile these examples with God's promise?*

*Thinking about today, is every Christian healed? Saved from financial ruin? Privileged to see wayward children come home?*

*How do we reconcile these examples with God's promise?*

*There's no easy answer here. For whatever reasons (many of which are known only to God), God chooses to act in ways that seem contradictory to us. In the midst of our pain, though, He does want us to trust Him. His definition for specific situation may indeed be different than ours.*



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

Be sensitive here. Some in the group may have started the study with the belief that God will always act on their behalf just as they want. This may be the first realization that God's ways may indeed be different than theirs. Ask:

*How can you recognize or prepare yourself for the unique way God chooses to deliver you?*

*How can Job 1:20-22 and Daniel 3:16-17 help prepare you for how God chooses to work on your behalf?*



## PONDER THE JOURNEY

It's absolutely imperative people journal about Rule 8. If there have been great differences between their expectations and God's actions, this can actually intensify the journey. People may have mistakenly thought if they just proceed nicely in the journey, fill in all the blanks of the study guide, and participate in the discussion then God will "fix" everything. The problem is God's "fix" may not be their "fix." Encourage your group to spend time alone with God praying and journaling and hopefully getting to the point where they can say regardless of what happens, blessed be the name of the Lord.

## RULE #9

*View your current crisis as a faith builder for the future.*

### **Goal:**

To lead students to view their current journey as preparation for even greater challenges in the future.

### **Introduction:**

As your group gathers, take a few moments to process any leftover question regarding Rule 8. Ask questions such as:

*How are you dealing with the reality that God may not “fix” your situation the way you would like?*

*Has it been difficult to place your trust in God when He may not come though the way you initially hoped?*

*Do you have any struggles with God who promises “deliverance” but then allows His children to walk through the tough times without changing the circumstances?*

Offer encouragement especially to those who still may be wavering in their faith. Then insert a transition sentence such as:

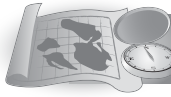
*Even though we don't understand everything about God's ways, one thing is very clear: He wants to develop our faith not only for our current journey, but also for the journeys that lie in the future.*

Now recount the lesson that Rob taught Morris as recorded on page 53 in the study guide followed by this question:

*What's your response to the fact that your current challenge is probably a faith-builder for a future test in your life? Fear? Discouragement?*

*Coming to grips with this present faith-builder for future challenges is our next rule in the journey:*

***View your current crisis as a faith builder for the future.***



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Rule 9 is based on Exodus 14:30-31 which you want to read several times after quickly summarizing the Red Sea event once again.

You now want to guide your group through a discussion of verse 31:

*What two responses did Israel have toward God after crossing the Red Sea? (fear and faith)*

*What does it mean to fear the Lord?*

Fear means to respect God and hold Him in awe based on who He is and what He can do. Once we see Him, though, as He is there's certainly to be an element of Godly "terror" in us.

Faith of course means to trust God because of who He is and what He's promised.

*What's the relationship between fear and faith?*

Fear or respect begins by seeing who God is. Notice in verse 30 the Israelites "saw" what God did. Once God is clearly seen, faith or trust is an appropriate response.

Please underscore that recognizing God for who He is and what He can do is the foundation of great faith.

Read the statement from page 54 of the study guide and ask the group how it relates to the crossing of the Red Sea.

*Faith is only as valuable as the object in which it's placed. Walking with great faith on thin ice leaves you cold and wet. Walking with weak faith on thick ice leaves you safe and dry.*

Seeing the power of God (thick ice) the Israelites should have been able to take whatever faith they had and use it for the future.

Did they?

*According to Exodus 15:22-24, did God's people exercise great faith during their next test?*

Why do you think they didn't?

Explain that our focus (our God or our problems) greatly influences our faith. God wants people to focus on Him and continue to grow in faith.



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

Based on 2 Corinthians 1:8–9, what's one of the reasons God allows trials into our lives?

Notice in the above passage, the principle that present circumstances are intended to be preparation for future experiences.

Read the account of Jesus calming the storm in Matthew 8:23–27 then ask the following questions:

*What was the disciples' reaction when they saw the storm?*

*In Matthew 8:3, 13, 16, what had the disciples witnessed Jesus do prior to getting in the boat?*

*How do you reconcile what they previously witnessed with their lack of faith?*

Help your participants to understand that present challenges do not automatically insure faith for the future. The disciples and we can easily get focused on problems and forget what the Lord has shown us previously. What should be a faith building lesson becomes a lesson to be repeated and learned once again.



## PROCEED ON THE JOURNEY

Ask the members:

*What have you learned about God and yourself thus far in the journey?*

*How will these truths help you face future challenges?*

You also want to discuss what practical steps can be taken now to solidify the present faith-building time so that it doesn't get lost or forgotten. Allow the participants to offer suggestions, which may include:

- *Keeping and rereading the detailed account of their Red Sea journey*
- *Sharing the faith building experience with a friend and asking that friend to constantly remind you of God's goodness*
- *Being alert to hurting friends and sharing God's faithfulness in your life with them*



### PONDER THE JOURNEY

It's absolutely imperative people journal about Rule 8. If there have been great differences between their expectations and God's actions, this can actually intensify the journey. People may have mistakenly thought if they just proceed nicely in the journey, fill in all the blanks of the study guide, and participate in the discussion then God will "fix" everything. The problem is God's "fix" may not be their "fix." Encourage your group to spend time alone with God praying and journaling and hopefully getting to the point where they can say regardless of what happens, blessed be the name of the Lord.

## RULE #10

*Don't forget to praise Him.*

### **Goal:**

To lead students to praise God regardless of their circumstances.

### **Introduction:**

The gathering time may be bittersweet. It's the discussion of the last rule, but it's also a time to rejoice for completing the journey. Be careful that time doesn't get away, but ask open ended questions like:

*How have you changed since beginning the Red Sea journey?*

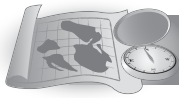
*What's the most significant truth you've learned about God and yourself during this journey?*

Make sure to thank and congratulate people for their endurance during the study and more importantly through their tough times.

As you transition into the primary discussion insert a statement like:

*As we near the close of our study together and rejoice for the progress that has been made, we don't want to falter now. There's still one important step to cover, which is Rule 10:*

***Don't forget to praise Him.***



## PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

Rule 10 is based on Exodus 15:1-21 which describes a praise service taking place after the crossing of the Red Sea. Once again summarize the event culminating with the outburst of praise. Be prepared to read a few verses from chapter 15, which highlight the Israelites praise toward God.

Then ask:

*What do the words sing, praise, and exalt in verses 1-2 mean?*

*Sing*, of course, means to sing praises to God. *Praise* here means to beautify or glorify referring to clearly seeing and acknowledging the character of God. *Exalt* means to lift God up to the highest place both in our worship and lifestyle.

Pages 60-61 explain that the Israelites praised God both for His character and actions. With an open Bible, have the group survey chapter 15 picking out some of God's characteristics and actions for which His children praised Him.



## PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY

Use this text and question based on page 62 in the study guide:

*God is deserving of praise at all times, but in our journey we're specifically focusing on praise during times of testing. Such praise should occur before the deliverance, during the crisis, and after the crisis.*

*What do Acts 16:25-32, Job 1:21-22, and Luke 17:11-19 teach us about when praise occurred?*

*What others praise truths do you see in these verses?*

In preparation make sure you have read the above passages and understand the events taking place in them. Be able to summarize the stories if you don't have time to read them. Please emphasize that Job specifically was praising God even before God acted favorably in his situation. He praised God because God is worthy whether He acts according to our expectations or not.



Interject into the discussion that experience shows that tough times can influence people to praise God more or less. Then ask questions like:

*In your current journey have you wanted to praise God more or less?*

*Why do some people praise God while others curse God during the challenges of life?*



On pages 109–110, Rob offers several suggestions for developing a habit of praise. Ask the members for specific actions steps on how to implement these in their lives:

- Begin the day with praise
- Use your car-time for praise
- Incorporate praise into the daily quiet-time
- Praise God in the assembly of a church
- Develop a perspective of praise



Encourage the participants to record in their journal specific reasons to praise God. Ask them also to formulate praise-prayers based on the reasons.

As the meeting closes, by all means take another opportunity to reflect on the journey together. Remind everyone that this is just the beginning. Just as one Red Sea journey ends another one begins. Ask them to constantly reread their journals to build faith for the next Red Sea.