

Background Scripture: Exodus 23

Print Passage: Exodus 23:1-12

L7 Impartial Actions



REFLECT



Joy is the captain of her high school drill team. To generate interest and recruit new members, the drill team is organizing a dance camp, hoping this event will get students excited about joining the drill team in the future. In the past, the drill team was criticized for not having a team that represented the entire school body. Most of the girls on the team are African-American, tall, and thin. The student population is 40 percent African-American, 30 percent Latinx, and 30 percent Native American. Joy and the drill team coach have the responsibility of ensuring that the new drill team squad is more inclusive and diverse.

Dana is one of the best dancers on the team. She has a lot of influence over the girls on the current drill team. Dana has made it known that she wants the team to stay like it is. Dana expressed her feelings to Joy. Dana said, "So, I don't see the point of having girls on the team that can't dance just so we can have a 'diverse team.' EVERYONE knows we're the best dancers in the school. It's not that I do not like the other girls, but Black Girl Magic is everything! You know what I mean?"

Joy responded, "I appreciate your opinion, Dana, but I don't agree with you. Girls from different cultures can be just as good of dancers if given the chance. It's only right

that we encourage everyone to participate in the dance camp and also encourage them to audition for the team if they want to."

Dana retorted, "Well, this may be my last year. I'm not going to be on a team with people who can't dance."

Joy replied, "I hope you stay on the team, Dana, but I'm not backing down from inviting all the girls in our school to participate."



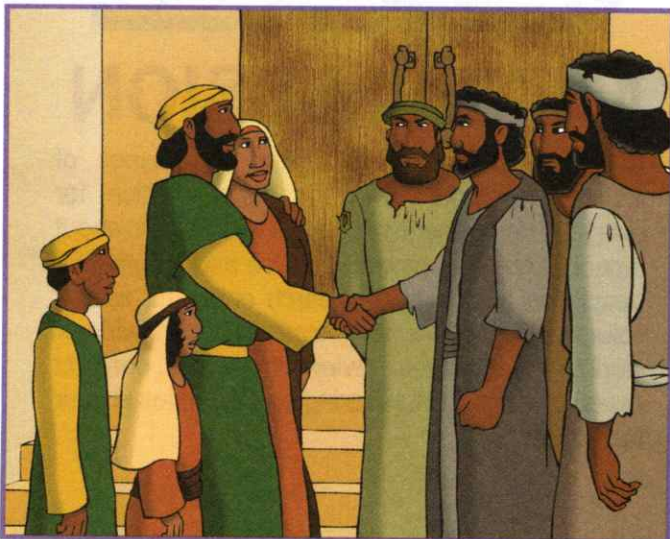
"Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit." (Exodus 23:2-3)



INSPECT

Exodus 23:1-12

1 “Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness. **2** Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, **3** and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit. **4** If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. **5** If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it. **6** Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. **7** Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty. **8** Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the innocent. **9** Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt. **10** For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, **11** but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. **12** Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.”



INTERSECT

EXODUS 21–23 IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE COVENANT CODE OR BOOK OF THE COVENANT, WHICH EXPANDS ON AND APPLIES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (EXODUS 20) TO PARTICULAR SITUATIONS. In today’s lesson, which is anchored in chapter 23, Moses announces a call for justice. Moses stresses the importance of treating others fairly. Moses discussed the harm that can occur when people spread false reports and gossip in their community. In addition to not spreading lies and gossip, Moses wanted the people to avoid doing these things as well: siding with people who are wrong; lying when acting as a witness of a crime or dispute; changing one’s testimony to benefit the rich and punish the poor; stealing a neighbor’s property; putting an innocent person to death; accepting bribes; and treating foreigners harshly. Throughout history, justice has often been perverted to favor the wealthy. Moses warned the people about this and emphasized the importance of treating everyone fairly.

God did not merely suggest how people are to interact with each other; God commanded that the Israelites treat others with fairness and kindness. God knows that unless hearts are submitted to doing things His way, human nature will seek self-pleasing outcomes. Christians are not to respond to situations with worldly behaviors. When believers apply God’s laws of fairness to everyone, we model God’s love and show others that we are different from the world.

Inside Out



Respond to the statements/questions below.

1. Describe a situation involving yourself or someone you know that demonstrates how false rumors can hurt a person and/or his or her reputation.
2. Do you think it is easy for most youth to withstand the pressure of their friends and let the fairness of God guide their judgment? Explain.
3. What can you do to increase your determination to follow God when you are tempted to treat others unfairly or differently because of their culture, socioeconomic status, gender, or some other distinguishing status?