

## One Step Back—One Step Forward Exodus 32-34

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*The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” Exodus 24:12 (English Standard Version)*

*These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, <sup>7</sup>or worship idols as some of them did. <sup>11</sup>These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.*  
1 Corinthians 10:6-7, 11 (New Living Translation)

**Big-Picture Truth:** God reacts to our disobedience and idolatry by making provision for our failure, while renewing His call for obedience.

What do we learn from God’s people? **In every unmet desire, there is the seed of idolatry.** (See Exodus 32:1-6)

“What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give... An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, ‘If I have that, then I’ll feel my life has meaning, then I’ll know I have value, then I’ll feel significant and secure.’ There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is *worship*.” Timothy Keller, Counterfeit Gods

What do we learn from Moses? **God accomplishes His purposes through the prayers of His people.**

“We are aware that the Lord knows the end from the beginning and that he has not only planned both the beginning and the end but also plotted the course in between. Now, while it is true that he does not change, there is at the heart of his changelessness a ‘mystery’, a ‘revealed secret’, that the sovereign, unchangeable God accomplishes his purposes through the prayers of his people.” J.A. Motyer, The Message of Exodus

## Moses' Pattern for Effective Prayer

- It's not about one's own glory.
- It matches the known will of God.
- It pleads on the basis of what God has already done.
- It's concerned about the Lord's Name.

What do we learn about God? **God calls His people to obey His Word, yet makes provision when they fail.**

*The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup>keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-7 (ESV)*