

Immerse Day 51 :: April 12

The wilderness was never meant to be Israel's destination. God's intention was to bring them into the Promised Land of Canaan. The wilderness was intended as a temporary place – a place to move through, not to live in. The Book of Numbers is all about God's people in the wilderness – how they get there, how God deals with them in the wilderness, and how He brings them out of the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

The Book of Numbers gives us a big vision: Where is God taking us? What will it take to get there? What inward qualities must God develop in us and demand in us along the way? Promised Land people are very different from slave people. Israel emerged from Egypt a slave people, basically unsuited for the Promised Land. How would God transform them into a promised-land people?

As Moses met with the LORD in the tabernacle, God commanded him to take a census of the congregation of the children of Israel – but only counting all who are able to go to war. This was predominately a military census to see who could fight on Israel's behalf in taking the Promised Land. This was the first step in taking the Promised Land – an inventory to see where Israel was and where God wanted them to be. The order to count the potential soldiers was not meant to imply that Israel would take the land because of superior forces or merely the bravery of these men – they would receive the Promised Land by the hand of God. Nevertheless, they still had to fight and know what they had available to them going into battle.

We may fail in spiritual battles because we do not take an honest inventory about where we are spiritually. We may overestimate or underestimate our spiritual strength and resources. This count of Israel wouldn't let them do that.

Counting, or taking inventory, is also an essential step in organization and moving forward. In preparing to enter the Promised Land Israel had to be organized – God is an organized God and moves through organization even when we can't figure it out! God counts things. He counts the stars and has a name for each one. God even counts and knows the number of hairs on our heads!

Taking inventory is fine; even a necessary first step in taking hold of God's promises. But it must always be done understanding that some of the important factors – as the Levites were in Israel – cannot be counted. No inventory is totally complete, and God can work mightily through things that can't be counted.