

Keep God at the Center

In Numbers 2, God lays out how the Israelites are supposed to set up their camp, with the tabernacle—their meeting place with Him—right in the middle. Verse 2 says, *“Every man of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the banner of his father’s house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting.”* Picture it: this massive group of people traveling through the wilderness, all centered around one thing—God’s presence.

During the day, a cloud hovered over the tabernacle. At night, a pillar of fire lit it up. So every single morning, when someone walked out of their tent, the first thing they saw was this visible sign of God’s presence. It was a reminder: God was with them. He wasn’t just tagging along—He was right in the middle of everything. God was making a statement: *I belong at the center of your lives.*

Now think about your own life. What’s at the center? Is it your goals, your relationships, your job—or is it God? What are your daily reminders that keep your focus on Him?

What Happens When God Is First

When God is at the center of a nation, a family, or even just one person’s life, things align the way they’re meant to. We see this over and over in history. Take Israel, for example: as long as they kept God first, they thrived. But when they started ignoring Him, things unraveled.

Even in America’s early history, God played a central role. “In God We Trust” wasn’t just a slogan—it was a mindset. The Bible was the foundation of early education, used to teach kids how to read and think. Fast forward to now, and things are drastically different. It feels like we’ve shoved God out of the picture. The Bible isn’t welcome in schools, and people seem to trust money, power, or politics more than they trust God. It’s no coincidence that the more we push God out, the more chaos we see in our culture.

But this isn’t just about nations—it’s personal. When God isn’t the center of your life, things feel off. You can chase after success, relationships, or material things, but none of it will truly satisfy. Only God can give your life purpose and direction.

A Symbolic Setup

The way the Israelites’ camp was organized wasn’t random—it had a deeper meaning. Each tribe camped around the tabernacle, grouped by family, with their own banners. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were on the east with a green banner featuring a lion. Reuben, Simeon, and Gad camped on the south with a red banner showing a man’s face. Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were on the west with a gold banner featuring a calf, while Dan, Asher, and Naphtali were on the north with a red-and-white banner showing an eagle.

These symbols—the lion, man, calf, and eagle—also show up in Ezekiel and Revelation as the faces of the cherubim, God’s heavenly beings. Even in how they camped, the Israelites were surrounded

by reminders of God's presence and protection. Their entire setup was designed to reflect a spiritual truth: God is at the center, and His presence surrounds and sustains His people.

How to Put God at the Center

The setup of the Israelite camp gives us a clear takeaway: life works best when God is at the center. For them, it was the tabernacle; for us, it's Jesus. He wants to be the center of your life—your decisions, your relationships, your dreams. But how do you make that happen?

Here are a few practical steps:

- **Start your day with Him.** What's the first thing you do when you wake up? Instead of grabbing your phone, spend a few minutes praying or reading the Bible.
- **Make space for God.** Think about your daily schedule. Are you carving out time to connect with Him, or is He getting pushed aside?
- **Focus on God's presence.** Throughout your day, remind yourself that He's with you. Talk to Him about your decisions, your struggles, and your plans.

If you've been feeling distant from God, remember this: He hasn't gone anywhere. Just like the tabernacle was always at the center of Israel's camp, God is always ready to meet with you. The moment you turn back to Him, you'll realize He's been waiting for you all along.

When you let God take His rightful place at the center, everything else starts to fall into place. So, what's holding you back? Take a step today to make Him the priority in your life. You won't regret it.