

Rebellion & Forgiveness

Exodus - week 12

May 17, 2026

As we journey through Exodus together, create space to listen, reflect, and grow. There is no pressure to have the “right” answers – only an invitation to be present. Trust the Holy Spirit to lead the conversation and to gently shape your heart along the way.

Open up together:

- Have you ever gotten impatient waiting for something important? What happened?
- What’s something people tend to create “their own version” of—food orders, playlists, furniture assembly instructions, vacations, etc.?

Read Together:

Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

Exodus 32:2-4

Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

Exodus 32:5-6

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Habakkuk 2:18

Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies?

For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.

Exodus 32:9-10

"I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

Exodus 32:11-14

But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. "Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

Exodus 32:18

Moses replied: "It is not the sound of victory, it is not the sound of defeat; it is the sound of singing that I hear."

Exodus 32:19-20

When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

Exodus 32:30-31

The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." So Moses went

back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

Reflect & Share:

- What stood out to you from the message?
- Did this message bring up any questions for you?
- The Israelites grew restless while Moses was gone. Why do you think waiting can make faith feel harder?
- The people made a golden calf because they wanted something visible and immediate. Why do we sometimes prefer what we can control over trusting what we cannot see?
- The message said idolatry is often "*reducing God to fit our desires*" rather than outright rejecting Him. What are some ways people can unintentionally do that today?
- Moses stood in the gap and interceded for the people. What does this show us about God's heart for restoration, even when people fail?
- Aaron blamed the people and avoided responsibility. Why is it often easier to excuse our failures than to honestly face them before God?
- The message challenged us to ask whether we've tried to shape God around our expectations. Have there been moments when God challenged an assumption you had about Him? What happened?
- This week, where might God be inviting you to trust Him rather than try to control the outcome?

Pray Together:

Take a quiet moment and ask God:

"Is there anything I'm holding onto instead of surrendering to You?"

Pray that God would gently reveal that area and give you the courage and trust to place it in His hands.