



Daily Verse and Comment

Numbers 14:1-4

(1) So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. (2) And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! (3) Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" (4) So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

New King James Version

With their eyes on the problem instead of [God](#), the people become angry with God. They display their contempt for what He is doing by grumbling against Him, His purposes for them, and the leadership that He had given them, [Moses](#) and Aaron. When we concentrate on the problem and fail to refocus on God and His Kingdom, we soon develop contempt for those associated with our trials.

Contempt regularly manifests itself in bad feelings and wrong attitudes against the source of the problem and against God and the purposes He seeks to accomplish through the trial. Our contempt may come in the form of envy, jealousy, anger, bitterness, resentment, or depression. However it manifests itself, we begin to view the problem negatively rather than as an opportunity to [see God](#) at work in our lives. We may even feel contempt for God's methods. We doubt His [wisdom](#), purpose, and [goodness](#). We may say, "How could God do this to me? He must not really [love](#) me." Or, as the Israelites allege, "He simply brought us out here to kill us."

If unchecked, this attitude continues to spiral downward in some form of self-preservation via our own solutions. We will come up with some *contrivance* to solve the problem our way. Notice the Israelites' solution in [Numbers 14:3-](#)

[4](#): "'Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?' So they said to one another, 'Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.'" Their contempt for their situation causes them to take another step away from God, which is seeking a carnal solution in rebellion against His purposes. They will find their own way out of their mess.

Human beings constantly seek ways both to defend themselves and to escape their problems using their own human devices and cover-ups. They may run away to avoid the problem or seek to change their circumstances somehow. Within the church, people typically leave one church and join another. We are so clever at making excuses and rationalizing our situation in ways that seem so convincing and logical to us. The Israelites rationalized by saying, "Our wives and our little ones will suffer. Would they not fare better back in Egypt?"

A change of scenery is not the only "solution" we might take. We may also retaliate to get even or to protect our overly sensitive egos. Frequently, we will take to the road of criticism and run someone down, making ourselves look better by comparison at the other's expense.

When we resist God's leadership and seek to take matters into our own hands, we act just like [the world](#). Rather than using the problem as a tool to "grow in the grace and knowledge of . . . [Jesus Christ](#)" ([II Peter 3:18](#)), we conform to the world's approach to life. When faced with a problem, a trial, a burden, or something just plain difficult, it tests our [faith](#) and distracts us from a Godward focus. We are then faced with a choice: Where will we place our focus and trust? With God or with this world?

— Clyde Finklea

To learn more, see:

[Consequences of a Wrong Focus \(Part Two\)](#)

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