**Exodus Lesson 1 (2017)**

**ISRAEL’S OPPRESSION**

(Evil Plans, Courageous Resistance)

Exodus 1:1-22

 “Oppression” is a nasty word, but it makes headlines because it’s the reason for much of the conflict today. Scenes out of this chapter fit totalitarian societies. Only the methods of oppression change. God’s people’ were not spared in 1700 B.C., and they are not always spared now. But in this study you will find a bright spot of courageous resistance.

**Open it:**

1. When have you ever been asked to do something you knew was wrong? What are the risks involved in standing up for your convictions?

**Explore it:**

1. Read verses 1-7. What were the names of the family members who went to Egypt? (1-5) What happened to the people of Joseph’s generation? How is the population growth of the Israelites described?

1. Read verses 8-14. Who came to power in Egypt? What was the king’s fear about the growth of Israel? (9-10) What did the king do to the Israelites? (11) How do you think Pharaoh’s fear led him to make bad decisions? Why did Pharaoh’s strategy backfire? (12a) What working conditions did the Israelites have? (12b-14)
2. Read verses 15-19. Who were the Hebrew midwives to whom the king spoke? (15) What did the king tell the midwives to do? (16) Why did the midwives refuse to obey the king’s order? (17) What is the difference between fearing God and fearing people? What explanation did the midwives give for disobeying the king?
3. Read verses 20-22. How did God respond to the midwives’ obedience? (20-21) What order did Pharaoh issue to all the people of Egypt? (22)

**Apply it:**

1. How does your fear of God motivate right moral conduct and give you the courage to withstand the temptation to do evil? What is one way you can take a stand for God? What do you want to say or do the next time you are asked to compromise an important moral principle?