

NUMBERS + DEUTERONOMY

WILDERNESS

FAITH

The Land: God Requires Obedient
Faith In The Face Of Fear
Numbers 13:17-31



God is shaping you
in the wilderness
for the life He's
calling you to.

Numbers 13:17-31

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, "Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, 18 and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, 19 and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, 20 and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. 22 They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. 24 That place was called the Valley of Eshcol,[a] because of the cluster that the people of Israel cut down from there.

Report of the Spies

25 At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. 26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan."

30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." 32 So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

Scripture Memory

Numbers 14:18a (ESV)

The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
forgiving iniquity and transgression...

Write it out:

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Understand the Context

The book of Numbers records Israel's journey from Mount Sinai to the edge of the Promised Land. God had already rescued them from slavery in Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and given them His law. Now it was time to enter the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Numbers 13, Moses sends twelve spies to scout out Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. Their mission wasn't to decide if Israel should go, but to confirm that God's promise was true. The spies saw the land's richness, but also its challenges: strong people, fortified cities, and giants.

Ten spies brought back a fearful report, while Joshua and Caleb trusted God and urged obedience. The people chose fear over faith, and that decision cost them forty years in the wilderness.

This story is more than history, it's about how God calls His people to trust Him even when life looks overwhelming.

Explore the Text

“Let’s look at a few key words:

“Spied out” (v. 17) – Hebrew: tur – not just spying but exploring carefully, looking with purpose. Their job was to confirm God’s faithfulness, not question it.

“Flowing with milk and honey” (v. 27) – a phrase showing abundance and blessing; God’s design was overflowing life.

“Nevertheless” (v. 28) – a word of doubt; the ten spies turned from God’s promise to fear.

“Caleb quieted” (v. 30) – Caleb silenced the people, urging them to focus on God, not their fears.

“We are well able” (v. 30) – Caleb’s confidence wasn’t in Israel’s strength but in God’s power.

Day 1: God's Promises Are Good

Passage: Numbers 13:17–20, 27

Devotional:

When the spies came back, they confirmed what God said: the land was beautiful, fruitful, and overflowing with life. God's promises are never empty. He doesn't call us to a dry, joyless life, but to abundant life (John 10:10).

Yet, many times we hesitate to obey because what God asks looks too hard. Maybe you wonder, If I live for Jesus, will I miss out? The truth is the opposite, when we trust God's promises, we step into His best.

Application:

God's promises for you include forgiveness (1 John 1:9), purpose (Jeremiah 29:11), and His presence (Matthew 28:20). He's not trying to rob you of fun—He's leading you to a better life than sin could ever offer.

Challenge:

Write down one promise of God that you need to cling to this week. Put it on a sticky note where you'll see it daily.

Day 2: Fear Distorts the Truth

Read: Numbers 11:10–12; Galatians 6:2

Devotional:

The spies saw the giants and walled cities, but instead of remembering God's power, they froze in fear. Notice how their report shifted from facts to exaggeration. Fear always exaggerates. It tells you your problem is bigger than God, your weakness is stronger than His grace.

Application:

Fear says, "I can't stand up for what's right. I'll lose friends. I'll fail." But faith says, "God is with me. He is bigger than my struggles." Fear doesn't deny reality. It just makes us forget who's in charge.

Challenge:

Identify one fear holding you back (peer pressure, failure, rejection). Pray Psalm 27:1 out loud this week every time that fear shows up.

Day 3: Faith Quietly Trusts

Read: Numbers 11:13–15; Psalm 34:17

Devotional:

When the people panicked, Caleb silenced the crowd and reminded them of God's power. He didn't need to argue or shout louder than everyone else. His confidence came from trusting God, not himself.

Faith is steady. Faith doesn't ignore problems, but it refuses to let fear control the story. Caleb's "quiet faith" stood in the middle of chaos and said, "God can handle this."

Application:

You don't always have to fight back with words. Sometimes the boldest move is simply living differently, praying at lunch, walking away from gossip, staying pure when the world pressures you otherwise. Faith is seen in small, quiet choices.

Challenge:

Choose one simple but visible act of faith to do this week. Something that quietly points people to God without needing to announce it.

Day 4: The Majority Isn't Always Right

Read: Numbers 11:16–17; Acts 2:1–4

Devotional:

Passage: Numbers 13:31

Ten spies said, “We can’t.” Only Joshua and Caleb said, “God can.” The crowd followed the majority, and it cost them the blessing of entering the land.

Just because “everyone’s doing it” doesn’t make it right. The majority often chooses comfort, compromise, or fear. Faithful obedience often looks lonely. Jesus Himself said the road to life is narrow, and few find it (Matthew 7:13–14).

Application:

At school or online, it’s tempting to go with the crowd—laugh at crude jokes, bend rules, chase popularity. But the crowd rarely walks toward God. Don’t let majority opinion rob you of God’s best.

Challenge:

Think of one way you’re tempted to follow the crowd. Ask God for courage to choose His way, even if it feels lonely.

Day 5: Obedient Faith Wins

Read: Numbers 11:16–17; Matthew 11:28–30

Devotional:

Joshua and Caleb said, “Do not be afraid. The Lord is with us.” Fear caused the people to miss out on God’s promise, but obedient faith eventually brought Joshua and Caleb into the land. Faith doesn’t mean life will be easy, but it means God will be faithful.

Application:

Your faith today shapes your tomorrow. Choosing to obey God now leads to blessing later freedom from regret, peace in your heart, stronger faith for the future. Fear will always shrink your world. Faith opens the door to God’s best.

Challenge:

Share one step of faith God is calling you to take with a friend, parent, or youth leader. Ask them to keep you accountable this week.

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