

PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 1

The point: We struggle in our faith when we start looking at our strength instead of God's.

Consider your own life: When have you tried to accomplish something without God's help? How did that situation work out? How do you think it would have gone differently if you had sought God's will and help in the situation?

Read Numbers 13:1-2,26-33.

Summarize God's command to the Israelites in verse 2.

Underline the phrase "I am giving." What did God's promise indicate about the land He asked them to "scout out" (v. 2)?

List the excuses the men gave for not occupying the land (vv. 28,31-33).

Describe Caleb's response in verse 30. How was his response different from the rest of the men?

Respond

Consider this: When you face challenges in life, are you tempted to focus on your own weaknesses? What do you think would happen if you began to focus on God's strength and ability to get you through the situation instead?

In your journal, list circumstances in your life in which you feel like you're facing impossible odds. Pray over each situation, asking God to help you overcome obstacles to do what He has called you to do.

Israel's military never empowered itself—it's power came from God's hands. In what ways are you tempted to credit yourself with the power to change circumstances? Confess to God any ways you may struggle with this and ask Him to help you acknowledge and fully rely on His strength.

PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 2

The point: We often forget God's past power and promise.

Before you begin reading today, review yesterday's devotion. The scouts described the promised land as a rich land and as a land filled with giants.

Read Numbers 14:1-10.

What was the Israelites' initial reaction to the news from the Scouts (v. 1-2)?

What misconceptions of God's plan did the people hold?

What was the people's proposed solution to the problem of a promised land inhabited by giants?

Describe the reactions of Moses and Aaron, and Joshua and Caleb.

Moses and Aaron (v. 5)

Joshua and Caleb (v. 6)

Summarize the way Joshua and Caleb encouraged the Israelites in verses 7-9.

How did God respond to His people?

Respond

On a sticky note, jot these down: Don't fear. Don't rebel. Trust God's promise. He will see you through. Place the note somewhere you'll see it every day.

Respond to the following using the headings "Temptations" and "Solutions:"

- In what recent situation were you tempted to fear? How could you turn to God in trust instead?
- In what situations are you tempted to rebel against God? What are some ways you could guard against this?
- In what situations are you tempted to go your own way instead of trusting God?

PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 3

The point: Sometimes believers forget God's promises and become discouraged.

The Israelites were afraid when they heard the spies' report, despite the fact that God had promised them the land.

Read Numbers 14:11-12.

Briefly summarize God's response to His people in verse 11. What does this show you about His character?

According to these verses, in what major way had Israel rebelled against God?

This is a terrifying statement—that God would destroy His people and use Moses' children to build an entirely new covenant people.

Reread the second part of verse 12. What did God's words in verse 12b tell you about His love for His people despite their rebellion?

Even though the people rebelled, God would keep His promise. God promised long before that His people would possess this land (Ex. 3:17). If they would not believe the promise and do as God told them, then God would raise up a people that would. God will always keep His promises.

Respond

Reflect on what you truly believe about God in difficult circumstances. Why do you think it's hard to trust Him during those times? How could you change your attitude?

Ask God to give you the courage to trust His promises even when you cannot see the outcome.

For further study on God's promises to believers, read Isaiah 40:29-31; Matthew 11:28-29; and Philippians 4:19.

PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 4

The point: We need a faithful representative to plead for us.

Read Numbers 14:13-20.

List a few of Moses' reasons for asking God not to wipe out His people.

In verse 18, how did Moses appeal to God's character?

Jot down Moses' final plea to the Lord in your own words.

What was God's response to Moses (v. 20)? Why do you think He responded this way? Why is this important?

Respond

Moses was both an advocate and an intercessor for the Israelites; however, Moses' intercession was only temporary. God's people needed a permanent advocate, so God sent His Son to be our eternal advocate.

Jesus intercedes for us; He is the ultimate faithful representative. However, as His people, we can also intercede for others through prayer. Spend some time praying for people you know who don't know Jesus as Savior or who may be experiencing a difficult situation.

For further study on Jesus as our representative, read Hebrews 1-4.

PERSONAL STUDY: DAY 5

The point: We reflect God in how we relate to Him and others.

Read Numbers 21:4-9.

God gave the Hebrews freedom from slavery, food they could gather each day, and water—everything they needed. How did the people respond? What were their complaints?

Verse 5 says the people complained against _____ and _____.

What did God send when the people complained? Why?

Reread verse 7. How did the people react to the Lord's discipline?

When God punished the people, they went to Moses. What did they request? What did Moses do?

In verse 8, circle what God told Moses to do and underline what God said the outcome would be. The snake was the punishment for their sin. However, God used another snake to bring healing. Explain verses 8 and 9 in your own words.

Respond

It can be difficult for believers and non-believers alike to hear about the punishment God delivered for sin. However, because of His commitment to redeeming and restoring His people, God must punish and eliminate sin. These events should remind us that sin is costly, but God provided a way for healing and redemption through Jesus Christ.

Consider your own life. Do you have a tendency to complain about the things you have or don't have? Are you ever tempted to blame God for those things?

Take a minute to confess to God any discontent in your own life. Ask Him to help you be content in His love and with His plan for your life in every situation.