



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JUNE 10 2023

Scripture Story: Numbers 13; 14.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 34 and 36.

get over yourself!



Photo by Natalie Wegh

flashlight

"Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. The people did not wait to reflect; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 388).

keytext

"If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid. . . . Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us."

(Numbers 14:8, 9, NIV)

what do you think?

What scares you? Write “A” for Agree or “D” for Disagree next to each of the following statements.

- I think of myself as a brave person.
- I'm scared of lots of things.
- I think I handle fear well.
- Fear holds me back from doing some things I'd like to do.
- I'm afraid of new or unfamiliar situations.
- Trusting God helps me when I'm scared.

did you know?

The Israelite spies in this week's lesson experienced normal fear in the face of a very real threat. But they didn't have to remain at the mercy of fear. Fear is real, but so is God's power to help us overcome it. Besides, they already had God's promise to send terror and confusion among their enemies, to make them turn their backs and run, to send hornets to drive them out (Exodus 23:27, 28).

This was not cruel or unloving on the part of God. The Canaanites had learned about God while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived among them. God gave them 400 more years, while the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, to turn away from their abominable ways and toward Him. When they would not, God had to evict them from the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham's descendants. They would not have been safe neighbors for His people.

INTO THE STORY

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.’

“So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran.”

“When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, ‘Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad?’ ”

“They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land.

They gave Moses this account: ‘We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large.’ ”

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’

“But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’ ”

“That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!’ ”

“Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, ‘The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.’ ”

(Numbers 13:1, 2, 17-19, 26-28, 30, 31; 14:1, 2, 5-9, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think God told Moses to send out an exploration party to look over the land of Canaan?

What impressed most of the explorers about Canaan? What were they afraid of?

How was Caleb and Joshua's attitude to the new land different from the attitude of the other men?

Why do you think Caleb and Joshua reacted differently?

When you face fear in your life, are you more like Caleb and Joshua, or more like the other 10 spies?

What can you learn from this passage that might help you deal with frightening situations in your own life?

punch lines

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (**Isaiah 41:10, NIV**).

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Deuteronomy 31:6, NIV**).

"The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion" (**Proverbs 28:1, NIV**).

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong" (**1 Corinthians 16:13, NIV**).

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (**1 John 4:18, NIV**).

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (**2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV**).

further insight

"When we seem to doubt God's love and distrust His promises we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. . . .

". . . Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us,—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed,—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*,

pp. 118, 125.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 41:10.

The *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson asks some questions about fear. As you answer those questions, think about fear in your own life. Does fear hold you back? Does it push you forward? How do you cope with it?

Ask some of your family and friends what their worst fear is. Do you see some common threads? Do adults seem to fear different things than teenagers do? What's your worst fear?

Finish the sentences below:

When I'm afraid, I find it helps to _____.

I'd never be afraid if I knew that _____.

Even though I was afraid, I _____.

Sunday

Read the story of the 12 spies who went into Canaan (Numbers 13 and 14) and respond to the study questions given in your lesson. Why do you think this story is in the Bible? As you reflect on it, what do you think is the message God has for you today? What aspect of the story speaks to your life?

Monday

Read Numbers 14:8, 9.

Caleb and Joshua responded to the fears of the other spies by saying, "If God wants us in this land, then God will take care of all the obstacles."

Think about a situation in your life that scares you. How could this same attitude help you? Rewrite the *Key Text* in your own words in a way that speaks directly to your situation:

Tuesday

Read 2 Timothy 1:7.

Read the *Flashlight* section. When we allow fear and discouragement to overwhelm us, it's often because we've forgotten God's power and the great things He has done in the past. What experiences have you had in your life that you can look back on to give you faith and courage when times get tough?

If you don't feel you've really experienced God's power in your life, talk to some people—both adults and people your own age—who seem to have a strong faith in God. Ask what faith-building experiences they've had. How do those experiences help them when they face frightening situations?

Wednesday

All the Bible verses in the *Punch Lines* section of the lesson remind us that Christians don't have to be controlled by fear. Choose one of those verses that you find most encouraging. Copy it out on a card or bookmark and decorate it with drawings or stickers. Keep it someplace where you'll see it often and use it as a reminder that even though you may face difficult or challenging situations, you can have courage because God is always with you!

Thursday

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13.

The Israelites faced a real threat—a land filled with dangerous enemies. Yet 10 of the spies saw an obstacle, while two saw an opportunity. Caleb and Joshua didn't deny that there were enemies to be conquered in Canaan. But because of their faith, they saw the situation through a different perspective.

What situations in your life frighten you? How could faith change your perspective? Think about a particular fear that bothers you. If you were seeing this situation in a "Caleb and Joshua" way, how would you look at it? Use the space below to write how your attitude would change if you looked at your fear differently:

Friday

Read Psalm 111:10, Revelation 14:7, Luke 12:4, Proverbs 14:27.

There's nothing wrong with being afraid. It can be a normal, healthy reaction to a threatening situation. The problem comes when we let fear paralyze us and keep us from doing the right thing. Courage means overcoming that kind of fear, doing what's right even though we're afraid.

According to the Bible, there's a flip side to fear. Some kinds of fear are helpful. Numerous Bible texts tell us to "fear God," in terms of having awe and respect for His power. We should also fear the consequences of sin. Sometimes a healthy fear can hold us back from doing risky, dangerous, or self-destructive things. Think about how fear can play a positive role in your life. How can you distinguish between a healthy fear that keeps you safe, and fear that holds you back from the things you should be doing? Ask for God's guidance and discernment as you deal with fear in your life.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 34 and 36.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-company-books#.URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the *Conflict of the Ages* series each year.