

In the Middle of Discouragement

Ready:

“So they spread discouraging reports about the land among the Israelites...”
-Numbers 13:32

Set

I walked into a room full of Division-I athletes, all on scholarship, who had been chosen to go to school at Mississippi State. I, on the other hand, had chosen to go to Mississippi State myself. I felt a lot like the Israelites did in Numbers 13. God had promised them the Promised Land, but they were going to have to conquer the land. Moses sent 12 leaders out, one from every tribe, to explore the land and come back with reports.

Ever since I was in third grade, I wanted to play Division-I basketball. It had been a dream of mine that God had put in my heart, but I thought twice about that dream once workouts started and the competition heated up. What was it that God wanted me to do again? Walk onto a Division-I basketball team in the Southeastern Conference? I began to doubt His promise to fulfill the dream in my heart.

The same thing happened to the Israelites once they saw the giants in the land of Canaan. They saw the different tribes that they were going to fight against and immediately forgot every promise God had ever made to them. They came back to the camp and said, “The land we explored will swallow up any who go to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. We felt like grasshoppers next to them, and that is what we looked like to them” (13:32-33).

Don’t we do the same thing sometimes? We rely on God’s promises one day and then, the next day, when there is some sort of obstacle or discouragement, we forget everything He ever promised us. But in the second part of the story, we read about two men who were a part of these 12 who did not forget God’s promises. Caleb and Joshua came back from the land with confidence. “But Caleb tried to encourage the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,’ he said. ‘We can certainly conquer it’” (13:30).

The people of Israel began to believe the discouraging reports from the other 10 and neglected everything Caleb was saying. God punished them for their unbelief and did not allow any of them to see the land, but he did not punish Caleb or Joshua. God said, “But my servant Caleb is different from the others. He has remained loyal to me, and I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will receive their full share of the land” (14:24).

You have a decision every day to be the one to spread discouragement and unbelief or to be

a Caleb. God blessed Caleb and His descendants, and He will bless you, too.

Have you wondered why things at work aren't getting better? Have you wondered why your teammates don't care? Have you wondered where God is in your situation? The answer is that God is always with you and has equipped you with what you need to "conquer the land boldly," (13:20) you just have to believe and not let the discouragement and unbelief around you affect your grasp on God's promises.

Go

1. In what areas of life are you discouraged?
2. Have you searched God's Word to see what He has to say about the situation?
3. What promises of His do you need to read and believe?

Workout

Psalm 18:25, 25:10

Romans 8:28

Philippians 4:4-7

Bible Reference:

Philippians 4



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