

Stay Focused on God's Promises

(Numbers 13 & 14)

What does staying focused on God's promises mean?

Believing God's Promises (Numbers 13:27-33)

[“The land” refers to the land God had promised to Abraham, see Genesis 12:1, 2]

1. Describe the pessimistic nature of the scout's report. What were the effects of the report on the people of Israel?

(Numbers 13:30, 14:6-9)

2. How does the report of Caleb and Joshua compare to the others?
3. Based on the spies' reports (26-33), do you consider their fears as valid? Which report might you most likely hear and respond to? Why?
4. With their history of victories (quickly scan through Exodus 7-15) why and how do you think Israel should be able to “overcome the giants”? Why does God so often repeat in the OT, “remember what God has done” and how might that apply for us today?

Holding on to God's Promises (Num. 14:24; Joshua 14:6-10)

1. How long did Caleb have to “hold on to God's promise”? What do you think it means that Caleb followed God “wholeheartedly”?
2. Why do we often want or expect God's promises to be fulfilled on our timetable?
3. How does faith help us handle situations that might otherwise create panic in our lives? How can you maintain an optimistic attitude when God says “wait”?

Acting on God's Promises (Joshua 14:11-12)

1. Describe some characteristics of an optimistic person. Which of these characteristics do you see in Caleb?

2. How did his obedience affect his social life, what risks did he take (see Num. 14:10)? Our spiritual lives are strengthened by years of serving and trusting God. Who are some Caleb's of today that you might know?

4. If you could pick a quality of Caleb's life for yourself, which one would it be?

Enjoying the Fulfillment of God's Promises (Joshua 14:13-14)

1. How did God bless Caleb's faith?

2. God's purposes are to develop us spiritually and to glorify Himself. How did God glorify Himself through this experience?

3. What blessings have come to you because of obedience to God's will? To our church?

Here are several benefits/blessings gained by following God's promises:

(This week, take time to look them up and be encouraged!)

• Help in times of trouble	Exodus 23:22	• Wisdom	Matthew 7:24
• God's love and faithfulness	Deuteronomy 7:9	• Eternal life	John 6:47
• God's joy and guidance	Psalm 19:8	• God's Spirit	Acts 5:32
• Rest	Jeremiah 6:16	• Answers to prayer	1 John 3:21-22

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer today?

Are there some "GIANTS" roaming your neighborhood of life?

Is there a quality of Caleb's life you would want for yourself?

Practically, what would it mean for you to serve God "wholeheartedly" in the coming week/year?

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Promote the Faith

How can I share my experience of God's love more effectively?

Partner with Other Christians (Acts 18:1-4)

1. What teams have you been a part? What are some benefits of being part of a team?
2. What benefits might Paul have received from teaming with Priscilla and Aquilla? Priscilla and Aquila from teaming with Paul?
3. Name some ways Christians can “partner in ministry” with other Christians. How might you be part of a team in ministry (examples)?

Teach Others (Acts 18:18a, 19a, 24-26)

1. Apparently what Apollos knew about Jesus was accurate but he lacked a full understanding of the significance of His death and resurrection. Why do you think Priscilla and Aquila were anxious to teach him “the way of God “more adequately”?
2. Why do you suppose they invited Apollos to their home for this? Occasionally we may hear misinformed teachings expressed by a new believer, what are some principles to guide *how we* should react?
3. How can teaching others what they need to know to communicate the gospel effectively expand *our* witness?
4. What priority does teaching/equipping have at our church? (review our Purpose Statement)

Make Available What You Have (1Cor. 16:19)

1. From our reading today, identify some ways Aquila and Priscilla shared what God had given them?
2. “God never asks us to give Him what we do not have. He only asks us to give Him what we do have. When we do, He multiplies it.” In what ways has God multiplied what you have given Him?
3. Do you think we can experience growth towards Christlikeness if we do not give of ourselves and our resources? Why or why not?

Be Willing to Take Risks (Rom. 16:3-4)

1. What are some “risks” we take every day?
2. Aquila and Priscilla invested their lives for the sake of the gospel. Discuss some personal risks we may have to take in order to be obedient to God. As Aquila and Priscilla look back upon their ministry, what might they have gained? What might we have to gain by taking risks for the Gospel?

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

Do you have talents or skills you use at home or in the workplace that you can surrender to the Lord’s service?

How might you use your home to reach people for the Lord?

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Speak Helpful Words

(2 Kings 5:1-15)

How can I make a difference in someone else's life by what I say?

Speak Timely Words (2 Kings 5:1-3)

1. How might you define a “timely word”?
2. What was the slave girl’s relationship to Naaman?
3. Read Luke 6:27-28. What New Testament precepts are evident in the words of the slave girl? What do the slave girl’s words and actions tell us about her nature?
4. From what source did her strength come?

Use Reassuring Words (2 Kings 5: 4-8)

1. How do Elisha’s words provide a message of hope to the king of Israel? To Naaman? Where did Elisha find his source of confidence?
2. What is comforting about the fact that God does not care about the social, monetary, political, etc. status of those He wants to demonstrate His love and grace?
3. What words of reassurance have helped you in the past? (state examples)
4. Do you find speaking reassuring words difficult or easy? Why?

Offer Instructive Words (2 Kings 5:9-12)

1. Identify some possible reasons why Naaman was so “ticked off”!

2. Why is hearing the truth sometimes difficult?
3. Do you think we as Christians have the rite/authority to offer instruction to others? Why or why not?
4. What are some helpful principles to consider and apply *prior* to offering someone advice?

Give Encouraging Words (2 Kings 5:13-14)

1. Describe how the words of verse 13 were encouraging. Consider their relationship to Naaman, what might the servants actions say about their character?

Express Grateful Words (2 Kings 5:15)

1. What were Naaman's two responses after his healing? Which is the greater miracle, Naaman's healing or his testimony of belief in God? What would you say was Elisha's motive in helping Naaman?
2. What is comforting about the fact that God does not care about our social, monetary, political, or denominational status?

Care and Prayer: How might we help one another through prayer today?

Who is someone who has been helpful through their words in your life? [Take time to thank them this week]

Is there someone God would have you “speak helpful words” to this week?

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Tackle Tough Situation

(Paul, Titus and the Church in Corinth)

How can I best tackle tough situations in biblical ways?

[Background: Paul, and later Titus, addressed several problems. First, the young church in Corinth was divided about lifestyle issues. Second, false teachers didn't like some of the teachings of Jesus and they sought to discredit Paul by spreading rumors about him. And a third problem Paul and Titus saw opportunity to resolve was the ongoing division between Jewish and Gentile Christians. As we move into today's text, we see that the action they took resulted in a changed hearts and reconciled relationships! How they dealt with difficult situations gives us an example of how ***we can make a difference*** when we face problems.]

Face Problems Head-On (2 Cor. 7:6-9, 13b-15)

1. (Just for fun!) When faced difficult situations, I respond like:
 - A. an ostrich, denial, sticking my head in the sand
 - B. an eagle, take flight as quickly as possible
 - C. an opossum, commit emotional suicide
 - D. a tiger, turn to attack
 - E. a grizzly, seek to kill!
 - F. a Kualal bear, overlook
 - G. a mountain sheep, hammer out some arbitration
 - H. a donkey, no budge
 - I. a contented cow, let's negotiate
 - J. other _____
2. Name some potential consequences of avoiding a problem?
3. In these verses, Titus meets up with Paul shortly after dealing 'head-on' with the problems in Corinth. How do the Corinthian Christians feel about Paul now? How is Paul feeling? Titus?
4. What might we learn about conflict resolution among Christians from Paul's example?
5. What do we learn about God? What has He done? What is His desire?

Take the Initiative (2 Cor. 8:6, 16-17, 23)

[Background: The Gentile churches, one of which was the church in Corinth, had been collecting money to assist the impoverished Jewish church in Jerusalem. However, the Corinthian church stopped collecting while the others had already finished their collection. Now that reconciliation has occurred between Paul and the church in Corinth, he again enlists and sends Titus to encourage the church in Corinth to finish the collection ("this act of grace") they had begun. Paul took the initiative to "make a difference" by addressing the ongoing problem of division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul's desire was to bring healing between them. The Corinthian Christians need to experience the "grace of giving" (8:7) as much as the Jerusalem Christians needed the help.]

1. Why is taking the initiative sometimes difficult? What are some reasons why we hesitate to take the initiative to solve problems that involve ourselves? Other people's problems?
2. What qualities do we discover about Titus in verses 16-17? How might these characteristics "make a difference" in motivating the church in Corinth to respond?

Complete Unfinished Tasks (Titus 1:5, 10-11; 2:15; 3:14)

[Background: When Paul needed to deal with problems in the church in Corinth, Titus gets the call. When dealing with the offering for the poor once again Paul turned to his trusted friend Titus. Later, Paul needed someone to pastor the churches on the island of Crete. Again, he knew exactly who he could count on to be their shepherd. In Paul's letter to Titus, Paul provides clues as to the nature of the unfinished business to which Titus must give his attention.]

1. "The work of the church is never finished. We never wake up to discover all tasks finished, all ministries fulfilled, all instruction finished, all the training completed." How does that reality make you feel? Exhausted? Challenged? Other ? Why?
2. Discuss the possible benefits and results of Paul and Titus's perseverance and trust in God to make a difference while working through some difficult situations?

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

Do you know someone who is facing a difficult situation? What can you do to comfort them?

Do you need God's wisdom and power to tackle a difficult situation?

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