



Moses' Leadership

This lesson is going to examine Moses' leadership as relates to the 12 spies and God's communication to him. We have all read about the 12 spies and how 10 of them returned a bad report to the children of Israel. If I told you that Moses set up the 10 Spies for failure, you wouldn't believe it.

Is God's Word sufficient to (for) you? Do you have to prove things out after God has told you something? Moses was not fully persuaded by what God had told him. If he truly believed the Lord and the promise from Him, he would not have instructed the spies to focus on the negative part of their spying assignment.

Are you being led by sight or by The Word of God? Do you need extra evidence to verify or validate what God has clearly spoken to you?

1. What has God told to you as an individual or as a leader?
 - A. God spoke or had spoken to Moses on multiple times and revealed how the land they were to take was one that flows with milk and honey. The Lord repeated Himself on multiple occasions so that Moses could not miss it.
 - a) Exodus 13:5 "And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month."
 - b) Exodus 3:8 "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."
 - i) Good and a large land
 - ii) Land that flowed with milk and honey

- iii) Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites
 - iv) The Lord shall bring thee. God was going to do this.
 - c) Exodus 33:2-3, "And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way."
 - i) The Lord was going to send an angel before them and drive the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites and Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites out.
 - d) Leviticus 20:24 "But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people."
- B. Deuteronomy 1:22 "And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come."
 - a) In this passage of Scripture, Moses is speaking and recounting how everything transpired.
 - i) The people came to him and said they wanted to send men to search the land and get word of what way or path they were to go up and what cities they were to enter into.
 - ii) I believe this desire to spy out the land was an invention of the people, not the Lord and was out of unbelief. They wanted this, not the Lord. The Lord okayed it, but it was not His perfect plan for them as we see the fear it brought upon many of them.
 - iii) The Lord had already told Moses everything about this land. The people did not have to spy the land. It was not God who initiated this.
 - b) After the people came to Moses, he then went to the Lord and the Lord said, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them." (Numbers 13:2) which Moses did.
 - i) Did Moses have to go to the Lord well knowing what God had told him earlier about this land?

- ii) Moses should have communicated this to the people. He should have told them the kind of land it was and so forth.
 - A lack of communication leads to failure.
- iii) Leaders or the higher-ups have to clearly and effectively communicate to the people they are leading to avoid failure.
- iv) Moses in a sense set these people up for failure.
- v) The Lord said, “search the land of Canaan.”
- c) However, when Moses was giving instructions to the chosen spies, he filled in the blanks and said more than what the Lord and the men had told him—which was only to search or scout the land.
 - i) Moses instructed the spies to search for more than that; he added the negatives.
 - He turned a sentence from the Lord into a paragraph.
- d) We need to be careful about how we hear and how we instruct those we are leaders.
 - i) Bad results are usually a reflection of leadership.

2. Negative Focus Leads to Failure

When it came time for Moses to send out the spies to spy on the land, Moses commissioned them to look for the positives and negatives.

- According to Moses’ instructions, there was a huge focus on the negative.
 - Remember that the Lord had told Moses that the land was a good land.
 - Moses had received a positive report from the Lord about the land, not a negative report.
 - All the things that Moses asked the spies to find, God had revealed and told him.
- A. Numbers 13:17-20 “And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or

many; And what the land is that they dwell in whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strongholds; And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.”

- a) Moses wanted the spies to check and see what the land was like— “what it is”.
 - i) Notice that the Lord had told Moses earlier that the land was one that flowed with milk and honey (Exodus 3:5, 8; 33:2-3; Leviticus 20:24).
- b) “And the people that dwell there in”
 - i) Moses knew the people that dwelt in the land. The Lord had told Him.
- c) Moses wanted to know if the people were “strong or weak, few or many”?
 - i) Did it really matter whether the people were strong or weak, few or many?
 - ii) Notice that the Lord had promised that He was going to send an angel before them and would drive the people out (Exodus 33:2-3).
 - iv) 1 Samuel 14:6 “And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.”
- d) He also wanted to know whether the land was “good or bad”.
 - i) Last time I checked; Moses was not deaf.
 - v) This is so wrong because the Lord had spoken on multiple occasions about the land being one that flowed with milk and honey.
 - Exodus 3:5, 8; 33:2-3; Leviticus 20:24
 - ii) If God said the land was good, it didn’t matter what the spies said it was not. What has God spoken to you?
- e) “Whether they dwell in tents or strongholds”
 - i) Moses had seen the goodness and the power of God on display before. Did it really matter if the land was one with tents or strongholds?

ii) God was going to fight and drive the people out. Moses needed to remember the promises of God and the victories He had delivered on their behalf.

f) “Whether the land be fat or lean?”

i) Again, God had told Moses that the land flowed with milk and honey.

ii) God did not promise them a desert. Why would Moses be concerned about wood or trees?

How do you expect someone to bring a better report or even have good success after you commission them to look for the negatives?

3. Be encouraged

a) After all these negative things, Moses then told the spies to be encouraged yet nothing was encouraging from his words. He had told them to look for all these negative things and “be encouraged.”

i) You cannot be encouraged while focused or looking for a negative report.

b) This was poor leadership because it set the spies up for failure. They went in the land looking for the negative things that Moses told them not just the positive things that God spoke about earlier—a land that flows with milk and honey).

4. Spies return with two reports.

A. Numbers 13:27-31 “And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.”

B. Numbers 13:32-33 “And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

- a) The spies confirmed that the land flowed with milk and honey, which is exactly what the Lord had told Moses earlier. I guess now Moses believed it after the people told him so.
- b) The spies added a negative report because Moses had told them to look for it.
- i) When they went into the promised land, they not only saw and looked for the good in the land, but they also looked for the negatives as well.
 - ii) In other words, they had a checklist from Moses of all the positives and negatives and they went down that list.
 - iii) Had Moses not commissioned them to look for all these negative or intimidating things, they probably wouldn't have seen them and therefore wouldn't have brought an evil report.
- c) Moses' instructions and leadership influenced the reports that these spies brought back. On many occasions, our results will be reflected in our focus—positive or negative.
- i) Many times, we blame the ten spies, but it is clear that Moses had instructed them to bring both reports.
 - ii) I'm not saying that the ten spies get away with the evil report, but rather I'm saying that Moses is to be held to a greater responsibility because he was the leader that gave those instructions.
 - iii) Although the 10 spies could have given a positive report, Moses hadn't focused solely on the positives and good things to be found in the land, but he also incorporated the negatives.
 - He had not stuck to what the Lord had told him about the land—that it flowed with milk and honey.
 - iv) The Lord knew all the things that spies would bring back (positive and negative) but instead told Moses that the land was a good land because it is what was required to be focused on.
- d) As long as we are looking for a negative report, we will get it. As long as our eyes are focused on the negative, we will find it.
- i) We need to keep our eyes on what the Lord has told us and spoken to us and not dig around for the negatives.

- ii) Not, “what if it doesn’t work” but rather, “What if it works?”
- e) The Lord had clearly told Moses who and all that dwelt in the land and these spies confirmed that as well.

Conclusion

Moses set these men up for failure because of:

- a) No communicating what God had told him about the land
- b) Saying more than God did
- c) Asking them to look for the negatives.

This doesn’t take away responsibility from the spies, but the leadership of Moses set them up for failure. Leaders that are focused on the negative will cause those around them to be the same.