

Go - Week IV

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Notes

John 10:10

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

The journey of the Hebrew people in Exodus is a picture for us today of how to leave the bondage of sin and navigate into following Jesus. Two men, Joshua and Caleb, experienced an abundant life because they chose to trust God, even when no one else did. From them we learn of three decisions we need to make in order to enter into the rich, satisfying, abundant life God promises:

1) Decide to be a good follower

Exodus 17:9-10a, 13

Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand."

So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek... As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

This is the first time Joshua was mentioned in the Bible. He made a decision to follow what his leader had told him to do.

One of the biggest obstacles that keep us from experiencing the abundant life is rebellion in our hearts or an unwillingness to listen to the ones trying to help us grow. God places leaders, and authority figures, in our lives to guide us and help us grow. We should listen to them and to the voice of God who is the ultimate authority.

2) Decide to see God's plan as progress

Numbers 13:1-2, 27-33

The Lord now said to Moses, "Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve ancestral tribes." ... This was their report to Moses: "We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley."

But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. "Let's go at once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"

But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!"

Numbers 14:1-3

Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. "Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"

The Hebrew people thought they were being punished, but God was really helping them make progress. On the other hand, Joshua and Caleb saw God as their provider. Just as a child thinks they're being punished by not being allowed to eat sugary snacks from dinner, so we often think that every obstacle we face is a punishment from God. But He has guidelines in place for us, not as punishment, but so that we can learn and grow.

3) Decide to listen to the master's voice, not the voice of the crowd.

Numbers 14:6-10a

Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing. They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Do not rebel against the Lord, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb...

When God gives you something to run after, we need to run after it. Don't take a vote! Joshua and Caleb chose to go with God even though no one else around them wanted to. When the crowd isn't following God, we have to make the decision to be different and listen to His voice instead.

Group Questions

- What does "rich and satisfying life" or "abundant life" mean?
- Why do you think the Hebrew people reacted the way they did?
- How can we see obstacles in the light of progress rather than as punishment?
- What should we do when those around us aren't following after God?

Prayer

Thank you for your guidelines and guidance, and for being the voice of authority in our lives. We want to follow after you with everything we are.