

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most important thing you have helped build or create?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

*This happened in the wilderness after God, through his servant Moses, led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt:* 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." So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of Israel, from their camp in the wilderness of Paran. **Numbers 13:1–3 NLT**

A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

"Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own. **Luke 14:25–33 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

Moving from agreement to commitment requires focus on vision over obstacles.

Do we scout ahead in faith or look ahead with skepticism?

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Do you view Jesus as a "partner" in your life or a complete "owner"?

Do you regard Jesus as a consultant or as your Lord? What's the difference?

Where are you at between agreement and commitment?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, in a world where I hear things like "believe in yourself" and "do what's right for you," it's sometimes tempting to consult you on my own terms. Help me trust you according to your terms, for you are God and I am not.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is an opportunity God has provided for you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the land: "Go north through the Negev into the hill country. See what the land is like, and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. See what kind of land they live in. Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls, or are they unprotected like open camps? Is the soil fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Do your best to bring back samples of the crops you see." (It happened to be the season for harvesting the first ripe grapes.)

So they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. Going north, they passed through the Negev and arrived at Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi—all descendants of Anak—lived. (The ancient town of Hebron was founded seven years before the Egyptian city of Zoan.) When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! They also brought back samples of the pomegranates and figs. That place was called the valley of Eshcol (which means "cluster"), because of the cluster of grapes the Israelite men cut there. **Numbers 13:17–24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

God had the power to give the Hebrews the land. God did not, however, force them to have faith or trust how he would provide. In your life, how have you seen God provide in surprising ways?

When have you been most tempted NOT to trust God to provide for your needs?

Are you tempted to focus on the problems versus the potential?

God provided the opportunity...and he expected Moses and the people to explore the land and take the steps to obtain what he provided. In what way does this match how God works in your life?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, there are a lot of difficulties and uncertainties in our world today. Some directly impact me and the people I love. Yet you continue to provide for your people. And the greatest provision you make is opportunity to succeed WITH your presence and power. Teach me to listen, trust, and act!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you typically the most courageous or the least courageous in the group of people you normally spend time with?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land.

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 13:25–33 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

The grapes are big, but the giants are bigger.

It’s easy to see all the reasons we *can’t*.

The obstacles were huge, but they weren’t taking God into account.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What giant obstacle do you believe God, with his presence and power, wants you to overcome?

The conclusions the “other men” arrived at were reasonable if they were considering only their own strength and resources. Why was it incredibly UN-reasonable for them—as leaders of God’s people—to come back to God’s people sharing fear and discouragement?

What would God like to accomplish in your life...in your family...in your church...in your community?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, teach me to move past fear to faith. Help me recognize that everything good that I have was a gift from you to be used to honor you and bless others by giving back during my limited time here on earth.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is your definition of a good leader? Are YOU one?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:**

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?” Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel. 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. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle. And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them? I will disown them and destroy them with a plague. Then I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are!”

But Moses objected. “What will the Egyptians think when they hear about it?” he asked the LORD. “They know full well the power you displayed in rescuing your people from Egypt. **Numbers 14:1–13 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

“Do not rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land.” It is easy to judge the Hebrews for not having faith. It is perhaps more productive to imagine ourselves in their sandals and deal with the power of fear in our own lives.

How has God shown himself faithful in your life?

Where in your life are you not trusting him now?

Do you fear God (in a reverent sense of awe and respect) more, or do you fear your difficult and unknown situations more?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for showing yourself faithful throughout all of history. Thank you for walking with me faithfully even when I struggle with faith. Thank you for providing good leaders like Moses who have not only a heart of compassion but also a willingness to lead boldly into the future—following you faithfully!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

In what ways does nature help you understand God better?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

**Scripture:** But Moses objected. “What will the Egyptians think when they hear about it?” he asked the LORD. “They know full well the power you displayed in rescuing your people from Egypt. Now if you destroy them, the Egyptians will send a report to the inhabitants of this land, who have already heard that you live among your people. They know, LORD, that you have appeared to your people face to face and that your pillar of cloud hovers over them. They know that you go before them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Now if you slaughter all these people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of your fame will say, ‘The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give them, so he killed them in the wilderness.’

“Please, Lord, prove that your power is as great as you have claimed. For you said, ‘The LORD is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But he does not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.’ In keeping with your magnificent, unfailing love, please pardon the sins of this people, just as you have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt.”

Then the LORD said, “I will pardon them as you have requested. But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the LORD’s glory, not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice. They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it. But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land. Now turn around, and don’t go on toward the land where the Amalekites and Canaanites live. Tomorrow you must set out for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.” **Numbers 14:10–25 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

How can you see both God’s righteous anger and God’s amazing grace in this incredible conversation with Moses?

God has expectations of those who have seen his power and participated in his plan. How is God calling you to trust him?

It has been said that there is a path of wisdom and a path of pain. While God will walk with us through the path we choose, the path looks and feels very different. Which path have you taken? Which path—going forward—will you choose?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for giving us your Word so that we can revel in your faithfulness and have the opportunity to trust you with our future. Forgive me for the times I have doubted you. Thank you for never giving up on me, even in the times I have chosen the path of pain instead of the path of wisdom. Thank you for putting my sin on Jesus so I can be free of guilt and full of your Holy Spirit—able to live a new life!