



Near and Now

When I Don't Think I Have What It Takes To Live Into My Calling? – Spies of Israel
By Rev. Evan McVann

Warm-up Question

Was there a time in your life when it seemed like doors of opportunity closed?
What happened afterwards for you?



Photo by Sandy Millar on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

We Are Not Able

Read [Numbers 13:25-33](#)

Bible Story Reflection

After the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, the real challenge began: journeying through the wilderness to the Promised Land. For the Israelites this was a period of difficult formation, learning to trust God. After this long exodus, they are on the cusp of reaching their God-given destination. In this passage we read the report from the scout team who went ahead to see the land for the first time.

This small scouting party saw what they only dreamed of before! The promise of God was right before their eyes. But to many, it seemed like the road in was closed, for hostile enemies were everywhere in sight. Compared to them, they felt like mere grasshoppers. The Bible is filled with examples of how God uses the powerless and weak to do mighty deeds. That is because it is not by one's own strength, but by God's strength that we overcome all the forces that try to prevent the promises of God. Unfortunately, remembering God's strength wasn't on their mind. In our entire scripture passage, no one even mentions God.

In our own lives, there can be times when our calling feels so clear. Times when it seems God's promise and purpose for our life is right in reach. Yet, an obstacle prevents us from moving forward. Disappointment, spiritual wrestling, and doubt about our call invade our hearts and minds. In seasons where obstacles put everything in question, a spiral of shame and fear can lead us to believe we're not enough; mere grasshoppers. Perhaps we can find space, amidst the doubts and questions, to pray and meditate. In faith, though a difficult formation indeed, we can learn to trust that God will lead us to the promise set for us, whether that be opening a closed road or being guided to a different road entirely.

Discussion Questions

1. Like the Israelite spies in the face of their enemies, have you ever felt like a mere grasshopper? Describe how and why.
2. Was there a time in your life when the call from God felt very clear?
3. Was there a time in your life when there were obstacles in the way of God's call for you?
4. What emotions, doubts, or questions come to your mind when you doubt your ability to carry out God's call?
5. In the face of obstacles, do you tend to try break through them or search for another path? Give an example from your life or vocation.
6. Why do you think God allows obstacles to remain despite the Promised Land being so near?
7. When you are afraid, do you find it difficult to remember God and God's promises? Why?
8. In the scripture passage, Caleb was the only spy that believed in the strength of the Israelite people. Who are the people in your life that encourage you when you hit obstacles and closed roads?

Activity Suggestions

Imagine yourself as one of the Israelite spies in the scripture passage, but this time with God's promises in mind. Write a prayer to God from their point of view.

Identify an obstacle you are currently facing. With a trusted partner, discuss how God has remained present and how God might be forming you this season. Close by praying for each other.

Though the big moments of your life, take note of the different obstacles you have faced and the opportunities you have been given. Create a timeline of all these moments. When completed, ask yourself, "What surprised you? What have you learned? How do you see God at work through your timeline?"

Prayer Concerns

For those facing spiritual, emotional, and physical barriers, those learning to trust God more and more, those whose callings and vocations were not as clear as once thought, all people travelling their own exodus journeys.

Closing Prayer

When the obstacles in front of me cause me to doubt my ability, O God, turn my attention again to you, and renew your call for me. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

