



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story The Desert Wanderings, Week 12 Numbers Chapters 10-25

The Book of Numbers in the Old Testament covers the thirty-eight years of wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. Numbers can be divided into three distinct stories. The first section talks about the preparation at Mount Sinai for the conquest of the Promised Land. The second section covers the desert wanderings and the death of the older generation. Finally, the third section addresses the birth of a new generation ready to enter the Promised Land. We are going to focus on the second section and the desert journey.

The second section talks of the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land of Canaan. However, they still have not learned to completely put their faith in God and the journey has stories of grumbling, complaining, and rebellion. They never broke their old patterns and they continued this behavior. The straw that broke the camel's back occurred when the first army refused to enter the Promised Land because they had heard that the land was inhabited by fierce giants.

So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all of the people that we saw in it are of great size. There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

Numbers 13.32-

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After this, God decreed that none of the older generation who came out of Egypt could enter Canaan. So, God's Chosen People wandered the desert for thirty-eight years, until that generation was completely gone, and the next generation had grown and taken hold.

Why do we as people born into the human condition find ourselves committing the same sins repeatedly throughout our lives? Well, the answer is simple. We are not divine. We are flawed people born into the human condition who struggle with our faith from time to time, and we need to constantly look to God for forgiveness and help to become better people of faith. Look at what happened to The Chosen People. They grumbled and complained constantly. They did not learn. They even went as far as choosing idolatry when they were upset and became impatient when they made the Golden Calf.

The good news for all of us is that there is hope. That hope has been around for all of human existence. God does not expect us to be perfect, but He does expect us to put our faith in Him. God knows that we are going to make the same mistakes from time to time in our lives, and in a lot of cases those sins revolve around grumbling and complaining. God wants us to be conscious of our sins and knowingly think about them and reflect on them when we commit them. He wants us to be sincerely sorry for these sins, grow in our faith, and try to make changes in our lives to hopefully reduce the number of times we sin.

If lack of faith, patience, grumbling, and complaining are issues in our lives, we need to make changes. Maybe they happen because we are too busy and we do not take time to put God first. Perhaps then, an effort needs to be made to remove busyness from our lives and spend more time in reflection and prayer. Subtle changes can make a big difference and allow us to build on our spiritual lives and grow closer to God through faith.

Is my temper, impatience, grumbling, and complaining an issue in my life? If so, why? What can I do to make changes in my life to prevent these sins from reoccurring? Are there times in my life when I feel that my faith in God is diminished? Why is that? Maybe I need to unpack that and rest in God's presence to contemplate it.

