

Russell Kelfer

Why Wander?

725-A

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

Why Wander?

As the Living Legends of Scripture have unfolded before us, it has become increasingly apparent that God has a specific plan for the lives of His children. It is a plan that is both essential and impossible. The essential part is an understanding that what God wants in us is character, not accomplishment. God is not so concerned *with what you have done* as He is with *who you are becoming*. If you allow His character to become yours, what you need to do will take care of itself. Simply put, God's will for your life is God's character in your life, and it is not an option; it is essential. You may achieve the pinnacle of success in your life, even in your ministry; but if your heart is not pure, your spirit not humble, your objectives not spiritual, you have not become God's kind of man or woman.

The second truth we hold to is that the will of God is not only essential, but impossible. It is impossible to attain in and of yourself. Jesus said, "Of mine own self, I can do nothing" (John 5:30a). The servant is not greater than his master (John 13:16). Without Him we can do just as much as He could without the Father, which is nothing. Whatever you become in the Christian life will be proportionate to your understanding that you cannot become anything in the Christian life without Him. So, in humble surrender, you lay your life at His feet, simply seeking for Him to become Himself in you. That is Christianity. So the two keys to the Christian life are: God's objective is character and His objective is impossible, except that He do it in us.

Such an understanding of God's purposes ought to quietly change the focus of our lives. It should give us confidence in His adequacy. This adequacy will bring strength out of weakness, something out of nothing. In other words, the longer we live, the more aware and amazed we ought to be, not at how *much* we know, but at how *little* we know; not at *what we have become*, but at *what we haven't yet attained*. The amazing thing ought to be as we grow older in Christ, that God is able to use us at

Why Wander?

all. God got no bargain when He got me. God got no bargain when He got you, either. The price He paid was ten trillion times our value. Yet He counts us as priceless treasures worth every drop of blood His precious Son shed. What a God is He, indeed.

It becomes painfully clear, both throughout history and throughout the word, that few men seem to have fully grasped these two truths: Character and Inadequacy. Fewer still have been able to hold onto them throughout their entire lives. Many begin well, but the stigma of success obscures their vision of the holy, and the end of their lives is marred by disgrace or apostasy.

This man Moses was an exception to the rule. We will see that as we continue our look at his life and at the lives of his contemporaries. Here we see one man who was willing to take God at His word. He was a man who, though aware of his inadequacies, stood miles above the throng, who thought they had all the answers. The danger, however, is that we believe a Moses can come along only once in a millennium. That is not true. You, too, are a Moses just waiting for God to open the flower of His grace in you and cause you to become that kind of man or woman of faith. This lesson is designed to help us see that tiny difference *that makes all the difference* and allows a man or woman to truly become a victorious Christian.

As we left Moses in our last study, our man of God had been at the feet of God receiving the Word of God. There he received at the mouth of God the expression of the wrath of God. The people he served and led were in rebellion. For 46 days, the heavens had been silent, and that silence was more than they could handle. So, with the help of their associate pastor, Aaron, a man who aimed to please, they had fashioned for themselves a new god, one made out of gold. They had given the lifeless, golden calf the honor and glory for leading them out of Egypt. So God tested His man Moses and offered to wipe out the entire nation and fashion a new one beginning with him. Moses passed the test and reminded God that these were His people and it was His reputation, and he stood on His promises. God's anger was turned away. Moses then saw their sin for himself and as a godly leader both interceded and disciplined his flock. It was a flock that simply could not endure it when the heavens appeared to be silent.

Why Wander?

We continue our look at the things that both created and revealed the character of God in Moses. The series of events we will look at in this lesson begin in Numbers 12:

And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" And the LORD heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.) (Numbers 12:1-3)

We observed how Moses responded when the reputation of God was at stake. He was filled with righteous anger. Now we see the man when his own reputation is at stake, and what a marked difference there is in his response. Moses was like Jesus who, when His Father's reputation was at stake in the temple, drove out the moneychangers; but when His own reputation was at stake, He answered not a word but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously and prayed for His accusers. This was the toughest kind of charge to deal with. It was tough, first of all, because it affected not only his character, but the character of his wife. Secondly, because of all the mean multitudes, it was none other than his own brother and sister who challenged him. That is tough.

Apparently Zipporah, Moses' first wife, had died and Moses had married a Cushite woman. Now this was not in conflict with the word of God because it was only the daughters of Canaan that they were forbidden to marry. But jealousy had reared its ugly head and, as so often is the case, the success of a brother can bring out the worst in a family. So Aaron, who by now ought to have known his own frailties, and Miriam, his sister, launch an attack on their own brother for marrying a woman they did not approve of. That was their surface complaint; but quickly the real issue comes to light in verse two as they sarcastically added, *"Is Moses the only one with the answers?"* They were asking, "Who put him in charge anyway? We know as much as he does." There is the cardinal sin of rebellion to authority: it is the absence of humility. "Who is he to tell us what to do? He married an Ethiopian woman."

Verse 2 adds,

And the Lord heard it.

Why Wander?

He always does. He took it very personally, as personally as Moses took the attack upon God.

THE MARKS OF A MAN OF GOD

Now look closely at these verses and you will see emerge the real marks of a man of God. There are at least four of them.

1- A godly man is a meek man. It is found in verse 3,

Now Moses was the meekest man in all the earth.

Meekness can be defined as the absence of retaliation and the presence of quiet gentleness. Meekness never comes to its own defense. Its trust is in a God who can take care of His own. Now if the Scripture says that Moses was the meekest man in all of the earth, that means that it was God's assessment of Moses, because God wrote the Scriptures. So if you desire meekness, study this man's life. Remember that God's objective is character, and meekness is a vital ingredient of the character of God in you. Now God is in the business of defending His own.

And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

(Numbers 12:4-10)

Thus, God reveals two more of the marks of a man of God by pointing to His man Moses.

Why Wander?

2- A godly man is a faithful servant. Verses 6 and 7 says that Moses is more than a prophet, he is a faithful servant.

Faithfulness is the quality of demonstrating the fullness of one's faith by remaining in place. The faithful man is "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord in as much as he knows that his labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). Moses was meek and faithful.

3- A godly man is in intimate fellowship with God. Verse 8 reveals the next mark of greatness as it tells us that Moses had close, intimate fellowship with God. Jehovah said, "I have prophets and I have revealed Myself to them in dreams or visions, *but with Moses I communicate with him clearly and directly.* He knows Me so well that I can just reveal My heart to him as it is and he can handle it."

Probably no compliment ever given to man could be more remarkable than that one. God said to Aaron and Miriam that they had not only defamed His chosen leader, they had defamed His best friend. God got angry. Now you see why Moses didn't have to defend himself. God took care of it for him. Your best friend, Jesus, can take care of your reputation, too. Just let Him.

The cloud departed, meaning that God's presence had departed, and Miriam was stricken with leprosy. I think you and I would have said that she had it coming; let her suffer. Deserve it she did. But perhaps we do not have the meekness of Moses, the absence of retaliation and the presence of quiet gentleness. We read on,

And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.

And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in

Why Wander?

again.

And afterward the people removed from Hazereth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran. (Numbers 12:11-16)

Now the use of the word “we” in verse 11 twice shows us that Aaron had come a long way. At least he had accepted equal responsibility for his rebellion and that is more than he had done the last time.

4- A godly man is a man of prayer. So Moses, the meek one, prays for his sister. It is an interesting prayer. He simply prayed, *“Heal her now, O Lord, I beseech Thee.”* It is amazing how unnecessarily long our prayers sometimes are. So God answered Moses’ prayer, but the “now” took seven days. It is also amazing how differently God views time. He views time through the lens of character and “now” was however long it took Miriam to learn the lesson of humility. So you see the fourth mark of the man of God. He is meek. He is faithful. He has an intimate relationship with God. He knows how to pray. Don’t ever forget these four marks of a man of God. He is meek. He is faithful. He had an intimate relationship with God as he spends much time with Him, and he knows how to pray.

The scene shifts now as we see Act II of this drama unfold shortly after Miriam’s healing. It begins with chapter 13:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

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.

And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel. (Numbers 13:1-3)

Now from Deuteronomy 1 we find that his response was to the people who 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.

(Deuteronomy 1:22b)

So the progression was this: Moses tells the people that the land is theirs. All they have to do is possess it. There is nothing to be afraid of. The people respond with a suggestion to send spies into the land to determine the best route to take

Why Wander?

and what cities they should possess first. God agreed with this suggestion. He commanded Moses to choose out twelve men, the leader of each tribe, and to send them in to find the best route. They were not assigned the task of questioning the venture. *They were only to find the best route to take and assess the enemy for the sake of glorifying God.*

Now for the record in verses 4-15 we find a list of this twelve man espionage team. We will call them the OISS—the “Original Israel Secret Service”. Very quickly they look like this:

Shammua from the tribe of Reuben
Shaphat from the tribe of Simeon
Caleb from the tribe of Judah
Igal from the tribe of Isaachar
Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim
Palti from the tribe of Benjamin
Gaddiel from the tribe of Zebulun
Gaddi from the tribe of Joseph or Manasseh
Ammeil from the tribe of Dan
Sethur from the tribe of Asher
Nahbi from the tribe of Naphtali
Geuel from the tribe of Gad

Now let’s look at these verses,

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 strong holds;

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 first ripe grapes. (Numbers 13:17-20)

Moses gives specific instructions to check out the people, the land, the cities, the wood and the crops and bring back a sample. He asked them to come back with a report on how to enter and how to conquer. That sounds easy enough, doesn’t

Why Wander?

it? Now the story goes that the grapes were so big that it took two men to carry back a cluster of them. So much for the crops. Let's continue,

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.

(Numbers 13:27-31)

Now remember that nobody asked them if they were stronger than the inhabitants of the land. The question was: were these people stronger than their God?

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.

(Numbers 13:32,33)

Their report included a minority report and a majority report. The only thing all twelve of them agreed upon was that the land that God had promised was everything God had promised it would be. No argument there. God had selected a choice piece of real estate. The problem was that ten of the twelve forgot God had promised to deliver it into their hands. That is where we lose our way in the Christian life. We forget II Chronicles 20 which says,

...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle

Why Wander?

is not yours, but God's.

(II Chronicles 20:15)

So the majority report goes on to tell that the people were too strong. The cities were walled and virtually impenetrable. The Amalekites were in the south. The mountains were swarming with Hittites and Jebusites and Amorites. Along the coast by the Jordan River were the Canaanites. The majority report concludes that they could not go in to take the land because the inhabitants were stronger than the Israelites. Conclusion 2 was that the land was one big batch of quicksand and it would eat them alive. Conclusion 3 was that the inhabitants could all play first string for the Dallas Cowboys. They were big fellows. Conclusion 4 was that the more they thought about the inhabitants, the bigger they got. They were giants and the Israelites were as grasshoppers. The final conclusion was that it was a bad deal. They told everyone to run for their lives.

The progressive development of fear was caused because they did not have God's perspective. The longer you stare at the problem, the bigger it becomes until you are but a grasshopper in a land of giants and quicksand. The minority conclusion was delivered by Caleb. He simply said, "Let's go up at once and possess it." Ten men looked through eyes of fear. Two men looked through eyes of faith. All twelve men were looking at the same problem.

I don't know if you have ever had the grasshopper syndrome. Most of us have frequent attacks of it when life's problems begin to stare us in the face. God's perspective is that the bigger the giants, the greater the grace. But as with David, it is unfortunate that only a minority see giants as an opportunity. All the world wants to hear is that life is impossible and times are hard. If you don't believe it, just pick up today's newspaper.

So the multitude read the Sinai Gazette, and every man went home and cried in his tent. "Poor us, we are grasshoppers," they cried. Then their weeping turned to murmuring. Their murmuring turned to rebellion. They moaned and groaned, "Would to God that we died in Egypt. No, would to God we died in the wilderness!" Now listen, that is what they believed their God was like. So they wished for the best thing they thought He could do. "Let us die in the wilderness!" they cried. God answered their prayer. He let them die in the wilderness. They never had to slay a giant. They never had to take a city. They

Why Wander?

never had to climb the wall of a fortified city. They finished their lives by living out the emptiness of their faithlessness in the wilderness. God gave them exactly what they were able to believe. Their solution was to elect a new leader, depose Moses and head back for the good old days in Egypt. Have you ever felt like that? Then you need to listen carefully to the end of the story.

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the congregation, humbled themselves and begged them to listen. It was to no avail. Then Joshua and Caleb stood up and read the minority report one more time. Let's look at Numbers 14:8-9. If you are looking for a good memory verse, here are two good ones to memorize this week.

If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this is land, and [He will] give it to us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.

Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. (Numbers 14:8,9)

Joshua and Caleb had God's perspective. They said to the people, "If it is God's will, who is there to stop us? The question is, will we rebel against God by refusing to believe. The Lord is with us, how can we be afraid?" The people responded with stones and began to stone them to death. God responded with a command performance before the whole nation.

And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?

I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. (Numbers 14:11,12)

God asked Moses if he wanted to consider "Plan B" again. God had done for them, given to them, performed miracles, and still they wouldn't believe. God asked Moses if he wanted to set them aside and He would give him a new batch of troops, a whole new bunch of guys to work with. Moses meekly answered, "No, thank you, Lord."

In the last lesson we saw Moses intercede with a three-fold plea. He said, "God, these are Your people, it is Your reputation and Your promises." Now Moses adds a fourth dimension. He

Why Wander?

adds, “Lord, it is Your character at stake.” We read in verses 13-19 Moses’ impassioned plea to the Lord to withdraw His anger from the face of His children. In verse 18 he goes before the Lord and says,

The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

(Numbers 14:18,19)

Moses recites the awesomeness of God’s nature: His word, His worth, His works and His ways. He quotes Exodus 34:6-7 to God, which God had spoken to Moses to reveal the depth of His character a few months before. Moses said, “God, they are Your people and Your reputation hinges on how You treat them. God, You promised to hang in there, not because they deserve it, but because You are patient and of great mercy. Lord, forgive them because of the greatness of Your mercy, the way You have been doing ever since they left Egypt. It is Your nature to forgive, Lord. Your character is at stake.”

And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

(Numbers 14:20,21)

God adds that His overall purpose will not change. Moses had sought the glory of the Lord through the pardon of God. Moses had cried, “God, pardon them.” God answered, “I have pardoned them according to your word. But Moses, even My pardon will work for My glory.” Even your rebellion and mine ultimately will work to His glory as He forgives us and disciplines us and reveals to us the depth of His nature through forgiveness. But to balance His mercy with justice, He hands out discipline to His pardoned saints. The essence of it magnifies how essential obedience is to God.

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their

Why Wander?

fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

(Numbers 14:22-24)

God said, “As believers you are accountable for your choice. You have seen My glory. You have experienced My miracles. You have tempted Me again and again and again. I won’t disown you, that is the essence of salvation; you are Mine. But the land, the victorious life, you have missed. I will hold you accountable. You have been to seminars, read books, heard testimonies. Time after time you have toyed with this matter of commitment as though it were some tradable commodity to take or leave. Eternal life is yours. The abundant life you have missed. You are accountable for all you have been taught and for all you have ignored. Turn around; your sentence is a life of fruitlessness. I will care for you. Your shoes will never wear out. I will love you. You will still have a mansion in glory, but you will never experience the joy of slaying a giant or capturing a city or living in a land filled with milk and honey. Instead, you will wander aimlessly around in circles without real purpose until your life is spent. I warned you. I called you. I led you. I promised you. But you would not. Not so with Caleb and Joshua. They have followed Me fully. They will possess the land, the land I have given to all of you. But only they will possess it. For with eyes of faith they believed that the battle was not theirs, but Mine.”

Now let me pause for a moment to give you a quiz. Take a piece of paper and write the names of the twelve spies. Got it? I bet 98% of you can only remember two of the twelve, Joshua and Caleb. Why? Because only the men and women who enter in by faith ever leave their mark on the kingdom. Thousands of years have come and gone and still you remember Caleb and Joshua. I bet this lesson was the first time many of you have even heard of the other ten. Right? No one remembers the faithless. No one forgets the faithful. Now you and I have a similar choice to make as Christians. The Scripture says, *These things were written for our admonition*. We can sign up for the battle to take and possess the land because God has prepared to give it to us; or we can long for Egypt and spend the rest of our lives wandering in a desert of compromise. We can live out

Why Wander?

our days without experiencing the consistency of victory. We can live without tasting the fruit of the promises which is our logical inheritance. God isn't like the Marines. He isn't looking for a few good men to cast the rest aside. It is not His plan for a chosen few to learn the joy of rest, the experience of peace, the abundance of power. God prepared the land for the whole nation. The refusal to enter into the fullness of it is our choice, not God's. He never designed the wilderness as a resting place for Christians. He designed it as a place to pass through and experience the glory of God on our way to the promised land.

So why wander? Why settle for anything less than all of God's best? I believe God is sending some of us out this very day to spy out the land for the first time and make a decision. I believe our choice looks something like this: If you are a Christian, when you received Christ you passed from death unto life. The Red Sea of salvation parted for you and you passed over on dry land. The sea of death stood up like a wall and by grace you entered in. You couldn't do it yourself. You walked into a life of hope, into a life of promise, into a life of victory. On the way into that land, God led you through the wilderness of life. There you began to experience a taste of this new life. God allowed you to get thirsty and then He brought you water from the Rock.

He allowed you to hunger and then fed you manna from heaven. Maybe you cried out for the quail of this world and He gave you enough to make you sick so that you would come back to your senses and long for spiritual treasures instead. You may have, as I have, made an idol or two when the heavens appeared to be silent, only later to find that God was in heaven doing His greatest work of all. He has given us His word and His promises of a spiritual land of milk and honey. The glimpses we have seen have sometimes frightened us. So we have come again and again to the banks of the Jordan only to turn and wander again back into the wilderness of spiritual compromise.

I will tell you why we choose to wander.

1- We choose to wander because the enemy *does* dwell in the land. Real spiritual warfare greets you as you first plant your feet on the soil of the promised land. It is a land filled with the milk and honey of spiritual riches, but to possess it we must encounter warfare and we become afraid. There is less warfare in the desert, but there is no victory in the desert.

Why Wander?

2- There are walled cities in the land. There are walls of resentment, rejection and bitterness. They must come down if we are to occupy the land. We can wander in the wilderness and never have to deal with these walls that separate us. There are no walls in the wilderness. There are no spoils in the wilderness either.

3- There are giants in the land. They are the giants of tribulation, testing and persecution. God will slay them for us, but only through the process of encountering them can we come to really know who God is. We can escape the giants by wandering in the desert. There are no giants in the desert. There is no power in the desert either.

I believe that every time we study the story of the twelve spies God takes us back again to the banks of the Jordan. He says, “Look what some of you are missing. As you murmur in the wilderness, your eyes are catching fleeting glimpses of Jericho, but your heart is refusing not to glance back to Egypt. You keep asking for the good old days.” God keeps saying, “Give it up. Give up that habit you cling to that keeps you from the Jordan. Give up that relationship you cherish that keeps you from the Jordan. Give up that consuming passion for the things of this world. Your Egypt will pass away. It is your desires that are keeping you from the Jordan.”

Why not make up your mind once and for all right now that you are tired of living the compromised Christian life. With one eye to each world, you are tired of wandering. You don't want to end your life with your name added to the list of the forgotten ten. God isn't looking for a few good men or a few good women. He wants a world full of Joshuas and Calebs. He wants men and woman who say, “I know there are giants in the land. I know the enemies are there. I have seen the walled cities. But I have also seen the fruit of the Spirit that comes from living there and it is worth it all. Besides, the battle isn't mine anyway. It is God's. All I have to do is one day at a time crawl up into Him and watch Him slay the giants and scale the walls and win the battle. My choice is to enter the battlefield and claim the victory or to wander aimlessly in the wilderness until my days are over.”

Jesus is asking us this penetrating question that Elijah asked in I Kings 18,

Why Wander?

How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.

(1 Kings 8:21b)

If the Lord be God, believe Him. Ask Him right now to take you across where the giants are so that you can watch them fall. If Satan is god, go back to Egypt. You have simply forgotten that you were in bondage there. You were in bondage to one who would not let you go. As for the wilderness, why wander? Why wait outside the restaurant while there is a feast inside? Why walk around the stadium when there is a championship game going on inside? Why live on scraps and bones in the desert when inside those walls there are grapes so big that you can't even carry them by yourself? Why wander? Let's put our feet in the Jordan with our eyes on the Lord and possess the land, giants and all. Our world and our lives will never be the same. It may mean giving up your aspirations for greatness only to find that the secret of happiness is humility. It may mean living in a troubled marriage or a troubled situation defined with the endless struggles of life only to find the key to life: character through inadequacy. And we do not find that in the wilderness.

Which would you prefer: A life full of relative ease in the wilderness while never knowing the heart of God? or a life of battles with God's enemies that ends with a relationship to God like Moses had? Would you willingly give up the best of this world to have the best of the kingdom? Then, my friend, you are ready to cross over. It is not too late. It is never too late. If you can still hear His tender voice, whether you are 21 or 81, saying, "Enter into My fullness"; and if the weight of conviction still lingers, it is never too late. God never teases His children; He only blesses His children. All you have to do is to report to your Commander-in-Chief. You need to accept the report of Joshua and Caleb and say, "Lord, I want to enter into the fullness of the promised land. I don't care what it costs in this life. I will live for a spiritual kingdom. Your goal is character, Lord. Do whatever it takes. Your key is inadequacy, Lord. I can't slay giants or scale walls. I will have to leave that up to You. I know this, that there is no wall taller than You are. There are no giants You can't slay."

That is no prayer to pray lightly. It may mean certain death. Death to self. Many a night may be spent in tears or in pain. Giants don't fall without tears or pain. You must decide before

Why Wander?

you enter that the tears and the pain and what the Scripture calls “this light affliction” are but for a moment, and decide it is worth it. It is worth the “exceeding weight of glory” that will one day be ours. At first nothing may seem to happen. You may even forget that you prayed that prayer. Then one morning, in a land filled with giants and land mines, you may wake up and begin to notice that you have a gentle peace, a calm assurance, and a brighter joy. Suddenly your spirit cries, “I am in the land! The giants are falling. Praise God! I am in the land.”

WHY WANDER?

Why wander in the wilderness?
What good could e'er that bring?
Why walk around in circles
Life's triumphs ne'er to sing?

God has a land staked out for you
Where fruitfulness abounds,
Where milk and honey stand aplenty
And all His grace surrounds.

Ah, yes, the enemy is there,
And warfare lies in wait.
And yes the walls are ten feet tall
And yes, the men are great.

They look like giants (and giants they are);
That's no test for God at all.
He'll raise the slingshot of His Word
And, one by one, they'll fall.

And as we enter into what
Each victory holds in store,
Our eyes will see a bigger God
Than e'er we knew before.

Why wander? *There's no reason.*
God's land has all to give.
Beloved, enter Canaan,
And really start to live!

Why Wander?

For Focus and Application

1- What two truths help define what God is looking for in each of us? Why do we become so “performance-oriented”, when what God is looking for is character? How does Satan mask this need when God allows us success? What is the relationship between our inadequacies and God’s adequacy? Why does a negative self-image often lead a man or woman to Christ?

2- Define meekness. How does one “become meek”? How did Jesus demonstrate “meekness”? What verse can you share to validate that? What do you think is the relationship between meekness and servanthood?

3- Describe Moses’ prayer for Miriam. What made Moses so confident in his prayer life? Think carefully before you answer. He was meek before men, but bold before God. What is the correlation between those two truths?

4- Look at the odds Moses faced when the spies returned. Do you think this same percentage in today’s church would lack the faith to enter into the land? What did they lack? What one truth did they miss in their evaluation?

5- What is the balance between faith and presumption? Why could Caleb and Joshua be so assured of victory? Why was it not presumption?

6- How can we use Moses’ prayer for the people as a pattern for praying for those who rebel against our authority or leadership?

7- Can you remember the names of any of the spies who gave a negative report? Why not? What kind of spy are you? Will your name live on as a man or woman of faith? If not, why not?

8- Review the three reasons we choose to wander found near the end of the lesson. Ask God to apply them to your life. Make a deliberate choice to enter into the land, *no matter how big the giants appear to be*. It may mean an acceleration of warfare, but ultimately warfare is the course to victory. It will mean God’s character in you, and God’s adequacy will spring from your inadequacy. What a life. What a plan. What a God. Claim the land that He has given you, and begin to live.

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778
www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer

(03.10.15)