

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Interactive Sunday School Outline

TOPIC: Rebellion - Trusting God Against All Odds

TEXT: Numbers 14:1-25

Instructions - *Let the above passages be read each time you come together to study this topic so that everyone could participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on the topic and come up with follow-up questions. Participants should be brief in their responses and use relevant Bible references to illustrate their points. They should be careful not to dominate the discussion to allow everyone to have an equal opportunity to participate.*

Introduction - On the way to a meeting, I was praying about a major decision for our church. I knew that the direction everyone else was interested in choosing did not seem right to me. But then, I did not want to be the lone objector, standing in the way. As I was turning into the parking lot it was as if I heard a voice saying, "Would you jump off a bridge if everyone else did?" (Since my spiritual vocabulary is somewhat limited, it seems that God sometimes needs to speak in cliches to get through to me!) As it turned out, I ignored the cliché and went along with the groupthink. Later I came to regret my decision deeply.

After making the covenant at Sinai, God and Moses led Israel to the edge of the Promised Land. Twelve spies, one from each tribe, were chosen to explore the land and report back. Except for two, Joshua and Caleb, the spies told a terrifying story of overwhelming odds and undefeatable enemies. The crisis this created stopped Israel in its tracks and sent them back into the desert for forty years.

Discussion Questions

1. When have you found yourself in the minority when deciding an issue of importance? What did you do? How does Moses respond to the people and to God in this passage?
2. Same song, different tune! What are the complaints against Moses and Aaron this time (Vs. 1-4)? What are those likely issues in this modern-day Christianity that could prompt complaints against our Christian leaders?

3. Grumbling flares into outright rebellion, and Moses and Aaron fall prostrate before the entire assembly (v. 5). How would you describe the emotions that these two men could be feeling at this time?
4. Joshua and Caleb provide a minority report. According to them, why should Israel proceed (Vs. 6-9) Why is their perspective so different from the rest of the spies? Should this happen in the church, what do you think the leadership should do?
5. As Moses, Aaron, Caleb and Joshua face death by stoning, God steps in, furious (Vs. 10-11). How is the nation's unwillingness to follow Moses a personal insult to God? Must the congregation always follow their leaders? At what point could the congregation oppose a move by their leader?
6. The idea that God gets angry makes many Christians uncomfortable. How do you respond to this account of God's anger? Use scriptures to illustrate your response.
7. Why do you think Moses, who was also angry with the Israelites, asks God to forgive them (v. 19)? How rational was the basis upon which Moses appealed for mercy (Vs. 13-19)?
8. Observing Moses, the servant of the Lord-(Joshua 1:1), we can see that godly leadership is concerned for God's glory and based on knowledge of God's character and commitments. Can you argue that this level of concerns from Christian leadership is existing in today's church? Discuss.
9. How is God's decision to bar an entire generation from entering the land an expression of both judgment and mercy (Vs. 20-23)? Discuss.
10. How would spending forty years in the desert under the leadership of Moses addresses the Israelites lack of faith in the Lord? Was there anything Moses could have done differently to avoid the behavior that brought this upon the people?
11. What are those things that could help believers trust in God and to grow in their spiritual journey?