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Adventure and Challenge

Key References: Numbers 13:31-33; 14; Patriarchs and Prophets, chap. 34, pp. 389-394; The Bible Story (1994), vol. 3, pp. 26-31; Our Beliefs nos. 17, 22, 7
“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2).

When have you had to deal with difficult people? You want to help them, but they don’t seem to want to help themselves. For any variety of reasons you may face challenges. Let’s see how Joshua, Caleb, and Moses faced the challenges of leading a stubborn, unfaithful nation.

Palti stood in front of Joshua, pointed his finger in Joshua’s face, and shouted, “We can’t attack the Canaanites; they are stronger than we are. They’re giants! Compared to them, we look like grasshoppers.” Caleb stepped forward and silenced them. “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it” (Numbers 13:30). In spite of his efforts, arguing and fighting spread like a fog over the whole assembly gathered to hear the spies’ report. The fruit they had carried back had caused quite a sensation. This land seemed perfect. It had everything they needed to live well. But now this conflict ruined everyone’s enthusiasm.

“The people who live in Canaan are powerful,” one spy said. He had forgotten that God is more powerful.

“The cities are fortified and very large,” said another. He had forgotten that God had taken them out of Egypt, the strongest nation on the earth.

“We even saw giants living there, the descendants of Anak,” said a third. He had forgotten how big God is.

By nighttime the wails of the people filling the air sounded like a gigantic funeral. By morning the people blamed Moses for their misery. “Why did you bring us out of Egypt?” they demanded. They had forgotten that God, not Moses, had taken them out of Egypt.
Sunday
READ Read Numbers 13:31 and this week’s story, “Adventure and Challenge.”
PLAN Plan what you will do this week to be of service in a challenging situation as discussed in your lesson.
REVIEW Review the power text.
PRAY Pray for strength in your service to God.

Monday
READ Read Numbers 13:32, 33.
THINK What did the spies mean by feeling like “grasshoppers”?
In your Bible study journal, write how you could overcome feeling insignificant while working for God.
REVIEW Review the power text.
PRAY Pray for strength in your service to God.

Tuesday
READ Read Numbers 14:1-9.
DISCUSS With an adult, discuss how to handle being unfairly blamed for something you haven’t done while maintaining a Christlike spirit.
ACT Serve someone this week, even though it may be challenging.
REVIEW Review the power text.
PRAY Pray that God will bless your efforts as you do your service adventure this week.

“If only we had died in the desert,” they said. They had forgotten that God had protected them from death in the desert.

Someone said, “Let’s go back to Egypt.” Without stopping to think it through, the people decided they should choose a leader to guide them back to the land of slavery. The Hebrew people rejected Moses as their leader. They rejected God as their guide.

Caleb and Joshua tore their clothing and cried, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be
afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them” (Numbers 14:7-9).

“Stone them,” someone yelled. Others picked up the cry. “Stone them! Stone them!”

Suddenly the pillar of cloud, God’s visible presence, moved to the front of the tabernacle tent. God spoke to Moses. “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?” (verse 11). It was as though God was asking Moses, “What more do I need to do to prove Myself to them?” Then God said something very unusual to Moses. “I
Thursday
   READ   Read Numbers 14:20-35.
   DISCUSS   Consider the words that God has spoken 
against the Israelites following their rebelious response. 
   How do you understand God’s justice in relation to His 
compassionate mercy?
   REVIEW   Review the power text.
   PRAY   Pray that you will choose to obey God.

Wednesday
  READ   Read Numbers 14:10-19.
  THINK   What reasons did Moses give God as to why He 
should not destroy the Israelites? What do these reasons 
reveal about Moses’ understanding of God? Whom was 
Moses serving in this situation?
  REVIEW   Review the power text.
  PRAY   Pray that you will have the compassion and 
long-suffering patience of Moses.

Friday
  READ   Read Numbers 14:36-45.
  ACT   Help younger children act out the story at worship. 
Or tell the story to your family in your own words.
  SHARE   Share the power text with your family.
  PRAY   Pray that you will stay committed to serving God, 
no matter how difficult the situation.

will strike them down with a plague and 
destroy them, but I will make you into a 
nation greater and stronger than they” 
(verse 12).

   Moses answered God, “If you put all 
these people to death, leaving none 
avible, the nations who have heard this 
report about you will say, ‘The 
L ord was 
not able to bring these people into the 
land he promised them on oath, so he 
slaughtered them in the wilderness.’” “In 
accordance with your great love, forgive 
the sin of these people, just as you have 
pardoned them from the time they left 
Egypt until now” (verses 15, 16, 19).

   Moses’ response to God is remark -
able because Moses didn’t think about 
himself, but about God. He could have 
blamed God. He could have let them 
suffer the consequences of their dis- 
trust in God. Moses didn’t respond in 
any of these ways. His answer to God 
demonstrated that he loved the Hebrew 
people in spite of their hurtful words and 
actions, in spite of their stubborn rebel- 
lion. His answer to God demonstrated 
that he was concerned about God’s 
reputation, not his own.
The terrible sentence finally came to the people camped on the edges of the Promised Land. God said, “Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun” (verse 30).

One entire generation gone. One entire generation who didn’t get it, who didn’t recognize that joy in this life comes from loving God and serving Him as Moses had modeled for them.
**Instructions:** Follow around clockwise, starting with the word that contains the open quote mark, and pick one word from each section on each pass to read out a Bible verse that gives us a good attitude. Not all the words are used.