

Numbers 14:27-35

"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 'But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'"

Murmuring Hearts

Comedienne Elayne Booster made this comment: "My ancestors wandered lost in the wilderness for 40 years because even in biblical times, men would not stop to ask directions." As much as this statement represents the humorous reluctance of people to seek direction, that was not Israel's problem. Direction, Israel had, joyful obedience is what they lacked. As a matter of fact, the real reason for the 40 year wanderings has a more common parallel today, Israel was judged to wander aimlessly because they perpetually murmured against God.

As anyone who works in the service industries will tell you, murmuring is at an all time high. We are told by social analysts that people are frustrated by crowded schedules, pressing deadlines, unfulfilled expectations and the ongoing pace of life. Frustration is followed by impatience (city traffic will vouch for that), impatience breeds rudeness, and rudeness cultivates murmuring.

As with Israel, God offers mankind at large an answer to this dilemma in human relationships. His answer is not to remove people from pressing circumstances, but to promise provision, strength and peace in all trials. This answer is found by following God's clear directions for life.

This means first establishing a relationship with Him through Jesus: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). It means secondly, making His purposes the focus of daily living: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Thirdly, replace worry with prayer by committing the uncertainties and stress to God, thanking Him for His control: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). Fourthly, this means trusting in God's promised provision: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). And finally, this means choosing to be contented with the path God chooses for us to serve Him in: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

The person who looks outside of circumstances - to God, for life's needs, will have no difficulty rising above life's difficulties, with God's strength, in response to life's relationships. Rather than murmur, the child of God can "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" and "let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 10:25, 13:1).

Israel murmured about missing their spice of life (the leeks and garlic of Egypt), while God was promising them the sustenance of life itself (the milk and honey of Canaan). Dear reader, don't make that same mistake!

What is my response:
