

THE FAMILY YOU BUILD



Introduction

Construction is one of the largest and oldest industries in the world. Today, new builders require at least four types of professionals: architects, structural engineers, general contractors, and craftsmen. But for centuries, master builders did all four jobs. They designed, engineered, managed, and built structures. However, the more complex buildings became, the less master builders could keep up with knowing how to do everything. So, eventually, the

master builder role was broken down into more specialized roles, and a team of people were needed to build new structures.

✚ **When has a job or situation become too complex for you to handle alone? What help did you need?**

Session Context

Israel has been in the wilderness about a year since the Red Sea crossing. During that period:

- They spent most of the time at Mt. Sinai.
- They were fed food from heaven (manna).
- God gave the Ten Commandments.
- They committed idolatry with the Golden Calf.
- They repented and built the Tabernacle as a visible reminder of God's presence among them.
- Moses took a census which found there were over 600,000 men alone.
- The nation's tents were arranged around God's presence.
- Priests and Levites were appointed.
- They marched from Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea, which was their gateway to the Promised Land.
- Moses sent 12 spies to explore the land for 40 days.

The spies return marked the beginning of an important period in Israel's development as a nation. They reported the land God promised them was good, fertile, and flowing with milk and honey – just like God said it would be. However, ten of them chose to focus on the people inhabiting the land instead of God's promise to give it to them. They reported giants lived there, which led to the people complaining against God for taking them out of

Egypt. But two spies, Joshua and Caleb, remained confident God would give them the land if they entered it.

Scripture Exploration

Numbers 14:11-24

¹¹ The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? How long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have worked among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

¹³ Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear it; for you brought up this people in your might from among them. ¹⁴ They will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you LORD are among this people; for you LORD are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them, and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you killed this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of you will speak, saying, ¹⁶ 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore to them, therefore he has slain them in the wilderness.' ¹⁷ Now please let the power of the Lord^c be great, according as you have spoken, saying, ¹⁸ 'The LORD is slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, forgiving iniquity and disobedience; and he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation.' ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your loving kindness, and just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

²⁰ The LORD said, "I have pardoned according to your word; ²¹ but in very deed—as I live, and as all the earth shall

be filled with the LORD's glory— ²² because all those men who have seen my glory and my signs, which I worked in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times, and have not listened to my voice; ²³ surely they shall not see the land which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of those who despised me see it. ²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed me fully, him I will bring into the land into which he went. His offspring shall possess it.

VERSES 11-12

God saw the Israelite's fear and complaints (see Numbers 14:1-10) as a rejection of him. He viewed his prior works for them as sufficient proof he was with them and able to give them the land even though it featured fortified cities inhabited by strong people (including some who looked like giants to the Israelites). His initial response to their rejection was to disinherit them and build a new nation through Moses's descendants.

VERSES 13-16

Moses appealed to God's reputation as mighty and faithful. He pointed out that God's reputation was already known among the Egyptians and his destruction of the Israelites would be interpreted as him not being mighty enough to give the Israelites the land he promised (Canaan).

VERSES 17-19

Moses turned his appeal from focusing on God's external reputation to concentrating on God's loving and just nature. Moses asked God to pardon the Israelites' sin again and acknowledged God had already extended it multiple times since they left Egypt.

VERSES 20-23

The Lord responded favorably to Moses's request. In love, God forgave them. In justice, he rebuked those who

complained and feared because their actions reflected a rejection of him and tempted him to anger.

VERSE 24

God calls out Caleb specifically because in Numbers 13:30 the Bible says: Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, "Let's go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it!"

Joshua and Caleb believed they could take the land as God directed but it was Caleb who spoke up first and quieted the crowd.

Life Application

+ God positions us to build capability before receiving responsibility.

The Bible says God didn't take the Israelites the quickest way to the Promised Land because he knew they would turn back if faced with war (Exodus 13:17). The journey he took them on should have only been days (Deut. 1:2) but it took more than a year because they needed time to develop capability for managing the responsibility that came with the promised land.

Families are one of the biggest responsibilities God gives us. They can start almost instantly but they take time to build effectively. So the more we let God build our capability, the more effective we will be with our given responsibilities, especially our families.

+ Stable faith is greater than a stable situation.

The Israelites moved more than 10 times in less than two years on their initial journey to the Promised Land, spending most of that time at Mt. Sinai. It wasn't easy but God kept them day and night, proving he was

more than faithful. So when they reacted to the spies' news with fear, it revealed their lack of faithfulness.

Life comes with moments of instability – times when we must do what hasn't been done before or change in ways we hadn't planned. But stable faith enables us to get through those moments and receive what God has promised. Unstable faith, on the other hand, limits our possibilities and robs our families of prosperity.

+ Complaining stops us from progressing.

The Israelites didn't just act with fear; they complained. They said, "We wish that we had died in the land of Egypt, or that we had died in this wilderness" (Numbers 14:2). Imagine how that felt to God. For years, they cried out to him and begged for deliverance from slavery. He did as they asked but they refused to do what he asked – trust and obey. Ultimately, he had to let the doubters die out before he could progress the Israelites to get the promise.

When we wish to go back to the very thing God delivered us from, we're essentially telling God we've changed our mind. Our complaining comes across as rejection of him or his plan, and we can't progress to what God has promised when we reject his way.

Session Reflection

- What things has God given you responsibility for, in your family?
- How have you (or have you not) demonstrated capability in your responsibility?
- In the last year, how have you handled delays in receiving what God promised you?
- When do you find yourself complaining instead of progressing?
- How is God working to build your capability for fulfilling current or additional responsibilities?

Notes

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