

Passage: Numbers 13-14

The title: *Fly Eagle Fly*, or *What Would We Accomplish If We Lived As God Intended?*

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Series: Attitudes and Actions of a Growing Church--Part 8

Introduction: How far below our potential are we living? What would we accomplish if we lived as God intended? In this session we hope to discover the answer to these questions.

I. **Israel: Eagles or Prairie Chickens?**--Numbers 13:1-2. (**Are We Eagles or Prairie Chickens?**)

A. **The Challenge from God**--13:1-2. Remember who it's from as we read it! (Deut.1:6-25.)

B. **The Instructions of Moses**--13:3-20. How will these 12 men respond to their opportunity?

1 **After God's general commands were heard, Moses gave some very specific instructions to the representatives of each of the 12 tribes that made up Israel/the Jews.**

a. Observation: If we don't take advantage of the challenges that come our way, we _____ . (We may even lose even what we have!)

- The point this example makes is, we are never ready to do what God asks us to do.
- We will need God's power and wisdom to be equal to any challenge He brings our way.

b. So with that understanding, here are the meanings of 12 spies names: heard, judge, dog - raging with canine madness, He will redeem, deliverance, God's deliverance, good fortune, God is my kinsman, hidden, and majesty of God--See Numbers 13:3-16.

2. **Here's the main instruction**--vv. 17-20. What did Moses tell these 12 leaders to do?

C. **The Exploration Is Carried Out**--13:21-25. With these questions in mind, off they went.

Summary: The investigation confirmed what God had said all along. It is always appropriate to investigate & confirm His word. He's not upset by spying out the land - then or now!

D. **The Exploration Recounted/Interpreted to the People**--13:26-33; 14:1-9. This is always very critical. Are we going to act (or present the facts) with faith, or fear?

- First, the spies displayed the evidence of their investigation--13:26-27.
- Second, they gave an account of the land and the people from two viewpoints--13:28-14:9.

1. **The majority report**--13:28-29,31-33. It is negative.

Principle: If our observation of possibilities, plans and dreams are based _____ , we will always say, "No!" to our opportunities.

a. **The particulars of the report are not positive or faith-filled**--vv. 28-29.

Application: This is very typical when churches or individuals begin to take steps of faith. We can come up with fantastic reasons why we shouldn't do whatever it is!



b. **The evaluation of any negative spiritual report.** Shows these characteristics:

- 1) **“I can’t” fills the excuses of the negative--v. 31a.**
- 2) **Evaluation is from a human viewpoint--God’s strength is minimized--v. 31.**
- 3) **Exaggeration is frequently used to bolster their findings/assessment--vv. 32-33a.**
- 4) **They overlook their enemy’s vulnerability and weakness--vv. 32-33.**
- 5) **They recall the enemy’s size, not how hard they will fall--vv. 32-33.**
- 6) **Self-evaluation is usually low--v. 33b. “We’re little bugs waiting to be crushed!”**
- 7) **Assumptions about the enemy/the risks involved are stated as facts--v. 33c.**
- 8) **Majority isn’t always right in their assessment of a faith venture--vv. 27-33.**
- 9) **Spiritual risks-takers are often not appreciated by faithless majority--14:10.**

c. **The sad impact of the majority report--14:1-4,10. “We want to go back to Egypt.”**

- 1) **Application:** Can you think of some specific area God has called you to obedience in and you have refused to obey?_____.
- 2) **If we are living in disobedience, this is how we will act:**

- Emotions are often exaggerated--14:1.
- Grumbling is usually in the background--v. 2.
- Spiritual leadership is attacked/questioned--v. 2b.
- We assume the worst is about to happen--vv. 2b-3a. We even make plans for it.
- We question the wisdom and direction of God--v. 3a.
- As doubters/resisters, we regress into a fanciful recalling of the past--v. 3b.
- We want to pick leaders who will please us--v. 4.
- We often move back into old sins/bondages--v. 4b.
- We use rumors, exaggerations, lies to spread our perspective to others--13:32.

2. **The minority report - a report from Joshua and Caleb--13:30; 14:5-9.**

a. **The particulars of the report are really inspiring--13:30; 14:6-9c.**

- 1) They (Caleb and Joshua) reported on the goodness of the land--14:6-7.
- 2) They then gave an evaluation of the potential attack--v. 8.
- 3) They followed that evaluation by instructing Israel about rebellion/fear--v. 9.
- 4) They assessed the enemy's strength. v. 9b--“...we will swallow them up.”
- 5) They gave a faith statement--v. 9c.

b. **The evaluation of a positive spiritual report.** It has these characteristics:

- 1) **First, “can” fills the words of the positive--13:30.** Success comes in “CANS.”
- 2) **Second, the strength of the enemy is evaluated from God’s viewpoint--14:8-9.**
- 3) **Third, faith in God is repeatedly used to bolster their assessment--14:8.**
- 4) **Fourth, victory is based on God’s promises and presence--13:1-2; 14:8-9.**
- 5) **Fifth, the minority may be right in their assessment of a faith venture--14:9.**
- 6) **Sixth, spiritual risks-takers are often not appreciated--14:10.**
- 7) **Seventh, faith ventures can be delayed by a faithless majority--14:20-25.**



II. **Caleb: He Was An Eagle Who Loved the High Places--Joshua 14:6-15.** Caleb shows us an example of one who takes on the ministry mountains and is successful. What will we be like?

III. **As Christians: Are we Eagles or Prairie Chickens?** What will determine the answer? How does Caleb help us answer that question? (See also Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:1-13.)