

DANGERS OF AN UNRENEWED MIND

Numbers 13:1-33
Numbers 14:1-45



After the children of Israel were set free from slavery in Egypt, the Lord led them through the wilderness to Canaan, the promised land. After many years of wandering in the desert, the Lord asked Moses to send out twelve spies [one from each tribe] to scout and bring a report on what they saw on their expedition. The Lord did this because He was preparing them to inhabit the promised land.

Of the twelve spies sent out, ten came and brought a negative report about the land. They spoke of how beautiful the land was but said it would be impossible to take it because those living in it were powerful. On the other hand, the two other spies [Caleb and Joshua] saw that they could defeat them. Here we see two groups of people, those with a renewed mind [able to align with God's way and will regardless of what they see] and those with an unrenewed mind [unable to grasp God's way of thinking].

When the ten spies spoke, their negative report affected the hearts of the Israelites, and they turned away from trusting that God was able to give them the land. That report brought fear and anxiety, which then birthed complaints. The Israelites said things that were contrary

to God's plan, and as a result, their entry into the promised land was delayed. Hence, it can be said that an unrenewed mind is dangerous because its way of thinking is at war with that of God.

A mind that is not renewed will always fail to see the power and glory of God. The Israelites failed to remember that the same God that split the sea in two and provided water from a rock was the one who was promising to give them victory over the Canaanites. An unrenewed mind has a way of magnifying the problem above God so that you lose sight of His grandeur. Miracles are a sample to show you that if God has done something, He can do it again.

Moreover, with an unrenewed mind, you will fail to see yourself with the identity that Christ has bestowed upon you. How do you see yourself? What do you say of yourself? These spies said they were like grasshoppers in the eyes of the Canaanites, as if they could tell what the Canaanites thought of them. In Christ, you are more than what the two eyes can see. When Gedeon was hiding in a cave, those around him saw a scared little boy, but God saw a mighty man of valour [see Judges 6].

You need to start seeing yourself the way God does and not what others say you are. There is no need to be stuck with an image God has not given you. All that you did before you accepted Christ has been washed away, and you have been made new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [NKJV] says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Learn to see yourself the way God sees you and not as a grasshopper in the eyes of others.

Lastly, an unrenewed mind fails to grasp and obey the will of God. Trying to execute the will of God with an unrenewed mind is like carrying water in a leaking container – it is counterproductive. As a result, you respond to a crisis with fear and panic instead of faith. At first, they did not want to invade Canaan when the Lord instructed them to, and when the Lord told them not to go, they went forth and were utterly destroyed. So obedience is key. Every season of your life comes packaged with instructions, and your ability to obey allows you to enjoy its fruits. It will benefit you to obey the Lord's instructions.

Contrary to an unrenewed mind, a renewed mind draws you away from self-consciousness and allows you to co-labour with God in what He is doing. This happens through abiding in God and allowing His word to abide in you because that is where pruning happens [see John 15:1-8]. Pruning removes dead branches and leaves [the old way of thinking] so that you think and see things as God does.

A renewed mind also comes from training your senses [see Hebrews 5:14 ESV]. Your senses play a huge role in your perception of things; if you allow it, your senses can be the breeding ground of unbelief. But above that, God can use our senses to make us perceive His promise. That is the reason he sent out the twelve spies; it was for them to see how beautiful the promised land was. He did the same to Abraham in Genesis 15:5-6 when He promised him that he would be the father of nations. He made him see that his descendent would be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the shore. God does this to create a vision and image in you of things to come. Joshua and Caleb saw the vision, and it is what allowed them to give a good report. When you see God's visions, you are enabled to express faith.

