

# Check Your Vision!

## *Becoming a “Can Do” Person:*

Numbers 13:26-32, Matthew 6:22-23

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The Apostle Paul was a “Can Do” thinker, a “Can Do” speaker, a “Can Do” worker; indeed, he was a “Can Do” person. He wrote:

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* (Philippians 4:13, NIV)

There aren't many limitations in the words “all things.” The Apostle Paul didn't say, “I can do only the things I'm gifted in.” He said, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” He was a “Can Do” person with a “Can Do” attitude. We, however, say and believe things that bind us like ropes, that cripple our potential. Last week, I used silly string to illustrate it. Every time, I said something that hinders my potential or somebody else's, I was shot with silly string. Boy, did I get pasted. This past week I went to a retreat where leaders wanted to shoot one another with silly string. Others wanted to shoot silly string at their spouses. Silly string might not be good marital therapy. Just imagine: “You never take out the garbage.” Zing goes the silly string. “You said ‘never,’ that hinders my potential!” You think it's cold! I feel the temperature rising. Truthfully, we do harm ourselves and one another with words. It can be pivotal. It proved pivotal for the people of God in the time of Moses.

A short time had passed since God delivered his people from Egypt. They had worshiped at Mount Sinai and made a covenant with God. They had witnessed God's protection and provision; and now, God was ready to lead them into the Promised Land. God told Moses to

send twelve leaders to explore the land. Moses gave them this checklist. First, what is the land like: good, bad, trees, fertile? Bring back some produce? Second, what are the people like: weak, strong, few, many? Are their towns fortified for defense or without walls?

When the twelve returned, two of them carried an impressive cluster of grapes on a pole. The cluster revealed the land was very fertile.

Ten explorers were fearful. They said:

***The people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there.*** (Numbers 13:28, NIV)

The ten saw great difficulty. Descendants of Anak are giants. Like the giant Goliath that David conquered, these leaders saw Goliaths in their path. Those listening became boisterous with fear.

Caleb, one of the twelve explorers, silenced them and said:

***We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.*** (Numbers 13:30, NIV)

Caleb was a “Can Do” person. He believed God was for him. If you follow Christ, you will believe God is for you and become a “Can Do” person!

However, others may call you reckless. When Caleb spoke, the ten responded:

***We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.*** (Numbers 13:31, NIV)

The Bible says the ten spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land. They said:

***The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.*** (Numbers 13:32-33, NIV)

Notice how fear changed their assessment. The land was fruitful, but now it devours. There were giants, but now everyone is big. The Israelites are grasshoppers in comparison. By nightfall the entire community was in an uproar. The Bible reports:

***All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "...Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?"*** (Numbers 14:2-3, NIV)

The people questioned God's love and talked of choosing a new leader and returning to Egypt.

Joshua, who had explored the land, pleaded with the people:

***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 swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.*** (Numbers 14:7-9, NIV)

The eyes of Joshua noticed how good the land was. They focused not so much on the enemy as the love and power of God. He could see God leading them into the land and declared, "The Lord is with us."

The Apostle Paul had the same vision. He wrote:

***If God is for us, who can be against us?*** (Romans 8:31, NIV)

The implied answer is that it doesn't matter. If God is for us, everything else is pointless and powerless by comparison... because there is only one God.

Joshua, Caleb and the Apostle Paul's eyes focused on God's favor and love. Specifically, Paul focused on God revealed by Jesus Christ. God spared nothing on our behalf. Even while we sinned, Christ died for us.

However the Israelites didn't see the mercy. They saw judgment and grumbled at God's actions. They saw the loss of what is predictable and familiar that gives them a secure feeling. They also saw the fears of one another. In their reaction, they refused the love of God. They refused the gift of God. They refused the leadership of God.

Listen! **“Can Do” persons get their security from God’s favor, not the familiar or the popular.** As a result, only Joshua and Caleb as “Can Do” persons entered the Promised Land. Everybody else, all the adults that were there, ended up dying in the desert.

Jesus said:

*The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!* (Matthew 6:22-23, NIV)

Can you imagine without corrective lens and surgeries what it was like to live in Jesus’ day? I don’t like these glasses, but I’m thankful for them. Jesus pointed to the importance of our physical eyes and then spoke of our spiritual eyes, the light within you. If the light within you isn’t there, if you cannot see the love of God, if your spiritual eyes are bad, then you’ll focus on other things for security and help. God won’t seem relevant. You’ll act as if God’s irrelevant. **You’ll be driven by fear rather than led by faith.**

If the Israelites saw God deliver them from Egypt with plagues, if they saw God lead them through the Red Sea, if they saw God provide manna from heaven, why were their eyes bad? Something was in their eyes, so they didn’t see the love of God. What was it? What hindered their vision?

What commanded their attention? It wasn’t the Scriptures, and it wasn’t their God-given leaders who were faithful. They listened to peers who feared other gods. Remember how they made a golden calf idol when Moses was getting the Ten Commandments? They listened to voices bitter with heartache and disappointment. They drew security from the familiar and from the popular. They sought safety in numbers rather than in God.

What about your spiritual eyes? Do they see a God who loves you and has removed your sins? Do you see a God who publicly claims you as his child and as his saint? Do you see a God who is for you? Do you see a God who is with you in your challenges? What do you see and what informs your vision?

In the science-fiction film *Avatar*, former marine Jake Sully is on a fictitious planet called Pandora in the year 2154. Through a special process, his soul is planted into a native body. The native girl who rescues him and trains him accuses him of not seeing. The words “I see you” speak of an understanding that goes beyond the surface. After three months of living with the native, he finally sees.

Are you living with Jesus so that you share his eyes, his understanding? Are you cooperating with Jesus, the author of your faith, to make you a “Can Do” person? Are you connected with his people in learning and serving? Do you see the changes God is making in lives around you? What step will you take today to cooperate?

Will you: 1) read God’s word – the Bible, 2) share your life with growing believers in a small group, and 3) pray with others about your challenges. Cooperate with Jesus and see.