After being camped at Mount Sinai and receiving the Law, the book of Numbers chronicles the events as the Israelites leave Mount Sinai and prepare to enter the Promised Land. Unfortunately, in this episode we see that as they are on the edge of the Promised Land, they let their fear be stronger than their faith.

1. Describe a time when you took a leap of faith and the blessing you experienced as a result.

2. **Read Numbers 13:1-14:4.**
   a. Except for Caleb, why were the other spies’ reports so negative?

   b. Where are you struggling in your life to step out in faith? In what areas of your life are you making decisions based on fear and not faith? What is it that you are failing to believe?

3. **Read Numbers 14:5-10.**
   a. In contrast to the people, what was the source of Joshua’s and Caleb’s confidence?

   b. What can you definitively look back on to see God’s faithfulness?

4. **Read Numbers 14:26-39.**
   a. What were the consequences for the Israelites’ lack of faith?

   b. What is at stake in your life if you live in fear instead of stepping out in faith?

**Challenge:** Make a move! If God has been nudging your heart toward something; reconciling with someone, going after a different role at work, making a tough choice in a relationship (good or bad), pray for clarity on the action to take and take it! Stay tuned into God through it all and maybe journal the process to be able to reflect back on it to see how God moved and how you may have grown through it.
Prayer: We see the power of community in this story. Our brothers and sisters can either feed our faith or our fears. One of the most powerful things we can do to strengthen each other’s faith is to pray.

Partner up with someone in your group. Share with each other a step of faith to take this week. Spend time praying for each other over that specific situation. Pray for the courage and the faith needed to step out, and pray for God to move in ways more awesome and amazing that you can even imagine!

STUDY DEEPER
Quiet the Fear, Do the Work

Strategy, organization, and training are essential when a soldier is called to fight in a war. But by far the hardest thing to do is actually quiet the fear and do the hard work of fighting.

During the American Civil War, Union major generals George McClellan and Ulysses S. Grant are studies in contrast.

McClellan was the first General-in-Chief, appointed to oversee all military operations. He was young, handsome, and carried himself with a commanding bearing. His countenance was fierce and confident. He was credentialed, having finishing second in his class at West Point. He was popular with his soldiers and with the masses. As a general, he could out-prepare, out-organize, out-train, and out-strategize every other Union commander.

But after one year, Abraham Lincoln removed McClellan from command. Why? Because on the field, McClellan was very slow to actually fight battles.

Ulysses S. Grant was nearly McClellan's opposite. He was scruffy and a bit disheveled, soft-spoken, constantly smoked, or chewed a cigar, and his demeanor was unassuming. He was undistinguished at West Point, finishing in the lower half of his class. Early in his career, he had been forced to resign from the army due to alcohol use. As a general, he was intuitive, could be impulsive, and even reckless.

But after one year in command, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox. Why? It wasn’t because Grant was more capable than McClellan. It was because Grant was willing to fight. In saying this, I do not condone unethical tactics that he sometimes employed or allowed. My point is merely this: Grant knew that at the end of the day, battles and wars are won by doing the hard work of actually fighting.

Faith-Filled Fighting
When God appointed Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of Israel, Joshua’s task was a daunting one. It was his job to march Israel into Canaan and take over the Promised Land. God had “given” this land to Israel, but powerful peoples still lived there. This time God wasn't going to send plagues to drive them out. He was going to send Israel to drive them out. That meant fighting. And fighting is a fearful thing.

That’s why seven times between Deuteronomy chapter 31 and Joshua chapter one, either God or Moses commanded Joshua to be “strong and courageous.” Joshua felt fear and was tempted to doubt his ability to
accomplish this task. So God said, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Being strong and courageous was not some kind of self-confident swagger for Joshua. It was trusting God’s promises more than his own strength and acting on that trust. Courage meant faith-filled action in the face of fear.

**Courage in the Face of Fear**

Jesus has called each of us to be “good soldiers” (2 Timothy 2:3) in the “good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12), which means we are to be faithful witnesses of his resurrection wherever he has deployed us (Acts 1:8, 22).

In sharing the gospel, there is a crucial place for strategizing, organizing, and training. But in this spiritual war, just like human war, victory does not go to the brilliant, talented, impressive, credentialed, and popular. It goes to those who, when push comes to shove, are willing to take action on the field. People come to know Jesus Christ when we “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5).

To do “the work” requires courage. And courage is doing what we know needs to be done despite the fact that we are afraid to do it. Courage does not allow fear to fill the post of General-in-Chief in our minds and hearts, in our belief and behavior.

There is likely some opportunity before us to pursue today. Let’s not be surprised if we don’t want to do it. That’s the nature of real fighting in a real war. Let us be strong and courageous. Quiet the fear. Fight the good fight. Do the work. The Lord our God will be with us wherever we go.