

Journey to the Promise: Overcoming the Grasshopper Complex

Dr. John Carmichael

[Num 13:31-33 NASB95] 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of [great] size. 33 "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

- **Grasshopper Complex Examples:** "My family's always struggled. It's just in our bloodline." "This is just the way I am. I'll never be healthy." "That dream is too big... I'm not wired for that." "I've messed up too much. I'm not a good enough parent to raise godly kids." "I could never apply for that promotion. I'm not qualified."
- **The children of Israel stood at the edge of promise.** God had already declared the land theirs (Numbers 13:1-2). Yet, what kept them from walking into it was not giants—it was how they saw themselves.
- **This passage reveals a crippling mindset called "The Grasshopper Complex."**
- **It's a spiritual inferiority that causes God's people to retreat when they should advance.**

What is the grasshopper complex? What causes it? How to overcome it?

Here is a definition of the grasshopper, it's cause and how to overcome it.

I. What Is the Grasshopper Complex?

- a. A mindset of inferiority that underestimates God's promises, overestimates the opposition, and limits what God can do through us.
- b. Numbers 13:33 – "... we became like grasshoppers in our own sight ..."
- c. Root Causes:
 - i. Fear of inadequacy ([Jdg 6:15 NASB95] 15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house.")
 - ii. Comparison to others ([1Sa 17:42-44 NASB95] 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was [but] a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.")
- d. It's not what others see in you—it's what you believe about what God has said about you.

II. The Problems of the Grasshopper Complex

- a. It Magnifies the Opposition
 - i. Numbers 13:31 – "they are too strong for us" They exaggerated the threat. The giants were real, but so was God's promise!
 - ii. [Deu 1:28 NASB95] 28 'Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there." Fear is contagious and distorts reality.
- b. It Believes Lies Over God's Promises
 - i. Numbers 13:32 – "...land that devours its inhabitants..." A lie birthed out of fear. They stopped speaking faith and started speaking fantasy rooted in fear.

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- ii. [Jhn 8:44 NASB95] 44 "You are of [your] father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature,] for he is a liar and the father of lies." Satan loves to whisper lies that sound like facts.
- c. It Paralyzes Progress
 - i. [Num 14:1 NASB95] "Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night." The result? A night of weeping, decades of wandering.
 - ii. [Pro 29:18 NASB95] "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law." When you lose God's perspective, you lose your direction.

III. Antidotes to the Grasshopper Complex

- a. Trust in the Word of God
 - i. [Num 13:2 NASB95] "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them." God had already declared it theirs. Faith begins where God's Word is believed.
 - ii. [Rom 10:17 NASB95] "So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." We overcome the complex by anchoring ourselves in the Word.
- b. Speak God's Report, Not Man's Report
 - i. [Num 14:7-9 NASB95] "7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, 'The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 'If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 'Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.'" They refused to repeat fear—they proclaimed faith.
 - ii. [Pro 18:21 NASB95] "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit." What you say reveals what you believe—and influences what you do.
- c. See Yourself Through God's Eyes
 - i. [1Pe 2:9 NASB95] "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR [God's] OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" You're not a grasshopper—you're anointed, empowered, and appointed!
 - ii. [Rom 8:37 NASB95] But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
- d. Declaration: "I may feel small, but my God is big, and He lives in me!"

- **The entire generation that believed the wrong report died in the wilderness. But Joshua and Caleb—who overcame the Grasshopper Complex—entered the promise.**
- **Your future isn't determined by what's in front of you—it's determined by Who is within you and what you believe.**
- **Ask for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit to produce boldness like Joshua and Caleb.**
- **Declare: "Lord, I reject every lie that says I'm not enough. I receive Your truth that I am more than a conqueror. I will not see myself as a grasshopper—but as a warrior of faith!"**