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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Pinchas – Judging Wisely

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Pinchas, and it goes from Numbers 25:10 to Numbers 30:1.

This Torah portion discusses the covenant of peace and the covenant of a perpetual priesthood given to Phinehas, a second census of the people of Israel, questions about inheritance, Moses appointing Joshua to succeed him, and instructions regarding offerings for the feast days.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about some tips for making wise judgments.

In Numbers 27, we read about the daughters of a man named Zelophehad who approached Moses. They explain to him that their father, who had no sons, died in the wilderness. This was a problem, because normally the land inheritance is passed on from a father to his sons. So Zelophehad’s daughters request that his inheritance be given to them so that his name would be remembered and so that his family would have land.

It’s interesting that when Zelophehad’s daughters brought their case before Moses, his response was not to give a ruling right away based solely on his own knowledge or wisdom. No, Moses’ immediate response was to go before the Lord:

Numbers 27:5

Moses brought their case before the Lord (YHWH).

YHWH responds to Moses and says that Zelophehad’s inheritance is to pass on to his daughters. These instructions are then made universal for all of Israel: If a man dies and has no sons, then his inheritance is to be passed on to his daughters. If he had no daughters, then it would pass on to his brothers. If he had no brothers, the inheritance would then go to the next of kin.

What can we learn from how Moses responded to the daughters of Zelophehad? Well, there are a couple

of principles here that will help us judge wisely in our own lives.

The first is that it's foolish to answer a question when you are unsure of the answer. This was a new situation that had apparently not yet been considered. What if a man dies and he has no sons? What happens to his inheritance?

When people are faced with new situations, too often they react without really thinking it through or seeking the Lord on the matter. Moses teaches us that the best thing to do in that type of situation is to take the matter before God first. Judging wisely requires patience and the humility to admit that you don't have all of the answers. Ask God for wisdom, and He will give it to you (James 1:5).

One other principle we might learn from this is that we should seek an objective perspective, especially if we are emotionally invested. For instance, Zelophehad's daughters mentioned that their father was not among the "company of Korah." That is, he wasn't part of the angry mob that rose up against Moses and Aaron.

Emotionally, Moses might have felt inclined to judge in favor of the daughters simply on the basis of Zelophehad's loyalty to him during that conflict. While the outcome would still have been correct, it is not judging wisely. We must try our best to be objective and impartial when it comes to making righteous judgments. That's perhaps another reason that Moses immediately brought the matter before God instead of judging the case on his own.

This is how we ought to handle important decisions in our own lives. First, don't rush to judgment. Take a step back, breathe, and pray about it first. Secondly, don't judge on the basis of your emotions but try to be as objective as possible, which oftentimes requires seeking outside counsel from those who are not emotionally invested in the situation.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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