

Do You Have the Spirit of Caleb?

To be spiritually successful requires having the right spirit. If you're looking for a Biblical hero to emulate, Caleb is an excellent choice. God gave him this glowing endorsement, "But My servant Caleb, because he has a *different spirit in him*, and has followed me fully, I will bring into the [promised] land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it" (Num. 14:24, NKJV, emphasis mine). The Living Bible reads, "Caleb is a different kind of man." Several times the Bible mentions how he "wholly followed the Lord." Caleb was not only different from the Canaanites (the heathen); he was also different from most of the Israelites (God's people). You see, we are not called to follow the crowd or even the crowd who calls themselves "Christians"; we are called to follow the One who is called the Christ.

Caleb was one of the twelve spies Moses sent to scout the promised land. A leader of the tribe of Judah, his name means "bold" or "impetuous." Someone who is impetuous has a tendency to act or attack. In other words, Caleb was a doer, not just a talker. This trait made him a great asset to Joshua during Israel's conquest of Canaan. Strangely, Caleb can also mean "dog" or "raging with canine madness." Apparently he had a dog-like tenacity that made him a ferocious fighter, something we all need to resist temptation, overcome evil and fight the good fight of faith.

The Spirit of Caleb Looks Forward, Not Backward

When the majority of the Israelites wanted to go backward to Egypt, Caleb wanted to go forward to Canaan. He said, "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey" (Num. 14:8, MEV). Many people live in the past and, as a result,

forfeit their future. One author noted, "The past should be a guidepost not a hitching post." We can learn from the past, but we can't live there. Neither can we change the past. No wonder Paul wrote, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). You can't drive a car very well staring in the rearview mirror. If you do, you will certainly run off the road and crash. We must look ahead. God has greater things in store for us, but we must stop looking backward and, like Caleb, start looking forward.

The Spirit of Caleb Reacts With Faith, Not Fear

Ten of the spies brought back a negative report fostered by fear. Only Joshua and Caleb gave a positive report fueled by faith. As preachers like to say, "Ten brought back gripes; only two brought back grapes." Caleb saw grapes and promises; the other spies saw giants and problems. Caleb saw milk and honey; the others saw calories and cholesterol. Fear will paralyze you, but faith will energize you. Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are able to overcome it." (Num. 13:30). Caleb focused on the opportunities, while others focused on the opposition. Consequently, only Joshua and Caleb inherited the promised land of their generation. The doubters all died in the desert. Perched on the threshold of Canaan, God made Israel make a U-turn and wandered in the wilderness on a spiritual treadmill for the next 40 years. If only they all had the spirit of Caleb and reacted with faith instead of fear. As one author aptly put it, "Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible."

The Spirit of Caleb Is Aggressive, Not Passive

At the ripe old age of 85, Caleb was still not ready to retire. You'd think he'd settle down in a corner of Canaan, sit in a rocking chair and tell war stories to his

grandchildren. Not this grizzled warrior. He boldly told Joshua, "So now, give me this hill country that the Lord spoke about on that day. That day you heard that the Anakites live there in large, fortified cities. Perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I will drive them out, as the Lord said" (Josh. 14:12). Joshua blessed him and granted Hebron as part of his inheritance. According to Nelson's Bible Dictionary, Hebron was situated 19 miles southwest of what became Jerusalem. It was later designated as one of the cities of refuge (Josh. 20:7) and served as David's capitol for the first seven years of his reign over Judah (2 Sam. 2:11). At 3,040 feet above sea level, Hebron was the highest town in Palestine.

Because Caleb had the right attitude, he became a man of high altitude. He was not satisfied living in the low land, he wanted the high ground. He claimed and conquered a mountainous region inhabited by the Anakims, a clan of giants. Can you imagine this 85-year-old man wielding his sword against three overgrown sons of Anak (Josh. 15:14) and driving them off their own property? Inspiring, isn't it? That's what I call aggressive! Incidentally, Hebron means "alliance, league or confederacy." Why was Caleb so victorious? He was in alliance with God and His purpose for his life. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

We must all resist the "I've arrived" mentality. The spirit of Caleb is to keep learning, growing, reaching, pressing and advancing. Paul, after 30-plus years in ministry, said, "Not that I have already attained or have already been perfected, but I follow after it so that I may lay hold of that for which I was seized by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). Keep pressing on, child of God. Don't allow yourself to become passive or complacent. The spirit of Caleb is expressed in bold, aggressive faith. We can't afford to be spiritually passive, because God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). If we want to walk in God's promises, we should adopt the spirit of Caleb—the courageous champion who proved, both

literally and figuratively, that your attitude can help determine your altitude. {eo}

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