



Topic: Possessing A Different Spirit (The Way To Favor With God)

But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

~ Numbers 14:24 (NKJV) ~

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INTRODUCTION

We are first introduced to Caleb in Numbers chapter 13 where the Lord spoke to Moses giving him instruction to send men to search the land of Canaan. The Lord tells Moses in verse 2 “*Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.*”(KJV) Moses, by the commandment of the Lord, chooses twelve leading rulers one from each tribe to send forth as God has instructed. Of the tribe of Judah a young man by the name of Caleb is chosen for the assignment at hand. And so, the men are given instructions for their assignment.

Numbers 13:18-20 (TLB)

And see what the land is like; see also what the people are like who live there, whether they are strong or weak, many or few; and whether the land is fertile or not; and what cities there are, and whether there are many trees. Don't be afraid, and bring back some samples of the crops you see. (The first of the grapes were being harvested at that time.)

The Bible records that the men took their assignment and headed on their way to search the land. As they proceeded, they came unto the brook of Eshcol and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes that they gathered along with pomegranates and figs as they continued on their assignment. After 40 days of searching the land, the men returned into the camp of the Israelites. They came to Moses and to Aaron and to all the congregation of the children to give report of their findings.

Numbers 13:27-28 (TLB)

This was their report: We arrived in the land you sent us to see, and it is indeed a magnificent country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is some of the fruit we have brought as proof. But the people living there are powerful, and their cities are fortified and very large; and what's more, we saw Anakim giants there!

Of the twelve men sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan, 10 brought back a doubting report. From their report in the above verses, we can see that although they found a land flowing with milk and honey as God said it would be when he promised to give the land to the children of Israel, they lack the right spirit to embrace the promise of God and to believe God to do just what he promised to do.

Exodus 3:17 (NKJV)

And I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

The men continued to report their findings identifying the people who dwell in the land; (*the Amalekites; the Jebusites; the Amorites; and the Canaanites*) all of whom the Lord had spoken of earlier as dwellers in the land. At this point, the Bible tells us that Caleb spoke positively concerning Israel's ability to possess the land.

Numbers 13:30 (NKJV)

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

A midst the defeatist report of the 10 spies, we find Caleb standing in faith and belief in their ability to take possession of the promise of God. He along with Joshua believed the report of the Lord and as a result of their faith were the only two men of that generation to enter and take possession of the land of promise.

OUR STUDY

It is easy to know why all but two of the men of that generation were not allowed to go in. It was because of their sinful rebellion. But what made Caleb and Joshua accepted? It was said that they wholly followed the Lord (*cf. Numbers 32:12*). They were unquestionably obedient. But Caleb it seems is singled out even more. The Bible says that he had a "different spirit."

Numbers 14:24 (NKJV)

But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

It is apparent that Caleb had met a requisite that we all should aspire unto. Clearly, there was something in Caleb that set him apart within his faith community bearing upon him the testimony of having a different spirit. And that difference was clear in God's eyes.

What did the Lord mean when he said "Caleb had a different spirit"? And what does that look like in a believer today?

The kind of different spirit that God is looking for can't be manufactured by the flesh. It's not an external strength, fortitude, zeal or determination as these were traits possessed by all 12 men sent out to spy the land. Moses was instructed in selecting the men to choose from each tribe one who was a ruler among them (*cf. Numbers 13:2*). Obviously, God was looking for something else.

The best place for us to begin in gaining an understanding of the different spirit Caleb is said to have is to define the word "different".

Different (dictionary.com)

- Not alike in character or quality
- Distinct in nature
- Out of the ordinary; unusual

From our definition, we can see that being different or possessing a different spirit means being set apart from the norm. It means being of character unlike the status quo. It means not being a part of the ordinary or usual crowd.

So, then the questions are:

What made Caleb different? What was that different spirit he had?

Caleb begins with the best ingredient to being made of a different spirit; ***his passion for the things of God.*** To get a better understanding of the blessing of having a different spirit, let's jump ahead in the life of Caleb to Joshua chapter 15. At this point Caleb is finishing strong. His passion and fervor for God has not faltered. He has "fully followed" the Lord God his whole life. And he's determined to finish as passionate as his former, younger self.

Caleb's story is an awesome one. Here is a man of 85 years of age still determined to drive out the inhabitants the Lord promised some 45 years ago that he would give him ability to do. With the same zeal and determination, this senior saint musters up the gusto and goes in for the kill and wins. He drives them out.

Let's look a little closure at the character of the man of a different spirit.

- 1. Caleb wholly followed the Lord God.** The product of a whole-hearted devotion is a whole-hearted passion. You cannot fully devote yourself to God without coming into contact with His Call, and that contact is combustible. This is not an emotional fire, not a short-burning zeal, but a real, long-lasting, deep-burning passion for God. God's call on your life always lights a fire within you—a passion to DO, to RISK, to OBEY, to FOLLOW—not for ego, not for self, but from a pure heart of PASSION for GOD.
- 2. Caleb's passion compelled him toward impossibilities.** Caleb didn't run from impossibilities. He leaned into them. God's call always leads to oversize challenges. If you're up against something bigger than you, you have ventured into God's territory. Understand that you cannot desire a comfort zone and a compelling call at the same time. The two are mutually incompatible. A life of providential calling is also a life of impossible challenges. Our passion must be strong enough to move us out of our comfort zone and into God's provisional zone. Trusting in God will always lead us to humanistic impossibilities but great possibilities in God.
- 3. Caleb's passion compelled him toward risk.** Caleb didn't calculate risk or cost. Instead he seized upon God's Will with abandon. Maybe we could say he calculated the cost of lethargy to be greater than the cost of defeat. The fact that this whole endeavor was God-oriented gave Caleb a confidence and courage willing to take risk. God-oriented passion cannot be complacent or talked down. It is restless until it stands at the precipice of God-ordained "risk". A God-given passion will compel you to take what appears to be unreasonable risk. It will call you forward from your comfort zone to the place where you face down your fear and confront that which would otherwise paralyze you.
- 4. Caleb's passion compelled him toward action.** Caleb stepped out, pursued, and drove out the inhabitants. Passion will always move you to action. You may pray a while, you may wait for clarity, you may seek the Lord for a season, but eventually, through all of the praying and seeking,

God will lead you to the edge of a cliff and say “JUMP.” Bear in mind that as long as you stand still, the path will remain foggy. Once you step into the fog and start moving forward, clarity will begin to take shape, God will lift the fog just ahead of you. It all hinges on your action.

Right from the beginning Caleb was passionate about reaching the Promised Land. He did not allow this passion to subside even in his old age.

CONCLUSION

Caleb’s life illustrates for us that there is “no retirement plan” in doing the Lord’s work. At the ripe old age of eighty-five many years past normal “retirement”, Caleb returns to the borders of what would soon be the land of the people of God. When the Lord’s challenge was offered to him in his old age, this stalwart of God gladly accepted it (*cf. Joshua 14:12*). Even in his twilight years, Caleb still possessed a “different spirit” a spirit of following God “fully”. He didn’t complain or shirk the task at hand. For forty years, he dreamed of a day when he and God would drive out the heathen of the land. Caleb inherited what God had promised because his faith never wavered (*cf. Joshua 14:14*). While his world changed dramatically following the people’s refusal to go into the land, Caleb never faltered in his confidence in God’s ability to fulfill what He had promised. He is our example of what it means to stay the course never letting anyone nor anything turn us away from pursuing and possessing all God has for us. I encourage you my brother and my sister to take a lesson from Caleb. Because of Caleb’s great example of courage and his display of a “different spirit” before God, may we as God’s children take courage and become stronger in doing the Lord’s will in our own lives (*cf. Matthew 7:21*).

God’s peace and blessing be upon you....

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