

=LITTLE-KNOWN BIBLE CHARACTERS=

Lesson 3

Caleb, the Man Who Followed God

SCRIPTURES: Numbers 13, 14; Joshua 14, 15.

POINT OF CONTACT: Make a visual aid by attaching two objects together. Pull the first one, thereby illustrating the following of the second one. In our lesson we will see that Caleb followed the Lord fully. He went wherever God led him.

INTRODUCTION: The children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt. They had been fed by God. Now they were ready for the real blessing of God. In Numbers 13:2a God said, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel." Moses was to call out rulers from each tribe and send them to look at the land which God had presented to the children of Israel. It was in doing this job that God commended Caleb and said of him, "Caleb...hath followed me fully." See Numbers 14:24.

- I. CALEB'S POSITION NEVER KEPT HIM FROM SERVING. See Numbers 13:2, 3. Caleb was a ruler and could have said that he had a previous engagement, previous duties, etc., but he went out to do the work that God had commanded.
- II. CALEB WAS ABLE TO WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE. In verse 2 God said, "Send thou men...every one a ruler among them." So it had to be someone who had the ability to work with other people.
- III. CALEB WAS WILLING TO LISTEN TO HIS LEADER. Notice in Numbers 13:3 that Moses "sent them." God spoke to Moses; Moses sent the rulers. The men who went to spy out the land had to take orders from their leader. God did not choose to speak directly to them.
- IV. CALEB WAS WILLING TO FOLLOW THE LEADERSHIP OF A MAN WHO HAD MADE MISTAKES. Check some of the things that Moses had done that could have been deemed as improper. In his past life he had been guilty of murder. See Exodus 2:12. In Exodus 4 he argued with God; he didn't want the job in the first place. In Exodus 18 he let his father-in-law tell him what to do. In Exodus 32 he lost his temper.
- V. CALEB WAS WILLING TO BE OBEDIENT INSTANTLY. In Numbers 13:17-20, Moses gave orders to the rulers. Verse 21 begins with the words, "So they went up, and searched the land." Immediately they went, without any discussion.
- VI. CALEB WAS WILLING TO FIGHT FOR THE FRUIT THAT GOD GAVE. Read Numbers 13:24-30. These verses describe the fruit that the spies brought back from the Promised Land and also the murmuring of the people saying, "The fruit is wonderful, but we can't overcome the opposition." Verse 30 begins with the words, "And Caleb stilled the people," indicating that it took some effort to do it. He was willing to fight that they might see more fruit from the Promised Land.
- VII. CALEB WAS WILLING TO BE IN THE MINORITY. Caleb and Joshua were the only two who were willing to stand and say, "God gave it to us; we can take it!" They were also the only ones who said the Promised Land was good. See Numbers 14:7.
- VIII. CALEB WAS NOT A VINDICTIVE MAN. In Numbers 13:31-33 the rulers gave to the children of Israel an exaggerated description of the opposition. Caleb could have stood before them and waved his finger and said, "You're a bunch of liars! It's not that way, and you're not right with God!" Rather than spend his time arguing with the rulers, he simply said, "Let's go take the land." The best way to prove your point is to do what needs to be done!

- IX. HE WAS WILLING TO GET INVOLVED. Numbers 14:1a, “And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried.” However, Caleb was willing to stand and say, “No, this is not right.” If he were like some modern-day Baptists, he would have sat at home and said, “I don’t want to get involved in this thing.”
- X. HE WAS WILLING TO ENTRUST HIMSELF TO THE PROTECTION OF GOD. Notice Numbers 14:10. The congregation started to stone Joshua and Caleb. We find no description of Caleb fighting back, but we do find where the Shekinah Glory appeared in the tabernacle and protected Caleb.
- XI. HE WAS WILLING TO TAKE A BACK SEAT TO ONE WHO WAS HIS EQUAL. The children of Israel came to Joshua. When Moses died, Joshua was chosen to be the leader of the children of Israel. Now when it came time for the promises of God to be fulfilled, the children of Israel came unto Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb came with them. Caleb could have said, “I have just as much right as do you to go into the presence of God and to ask for these things,” but he was willing to take a back seat. You recall that both he and Joshua brought a good report from the Promised Land. When God chose to put His hand on Joshua to lead the children of Israel, we find no place where it bothered the sweet spirit of Caleb.
- XII. HE WAS A PATIENT MAN. See Joshua 14:9 and notice that Caleb reminded the people that Moses had promised that the land would be given to him and his children. In verse 10 he said that the promise was made 45 years ago. How many of us would wait 45 years for a promise of God to be consummated?
- XIII. HE SERVED WHEN HE WAS AN OLD MAN. In Joshua 14:10, Caleb said, “...I am this day fourscore and five years old.” This was after the time of men living to great ages, and in this place this man was 85 years old. He was still serving the Lord with the same strength as he served when he was a child.
- XIV. HE GAVE HIS DAUGHTER TO THE MAN WHO WAS VICTORIOUS IN TAKING KIRJATH-SEPHER. See Joshua 15:16. Caleb was saying, “The power of God will have to be on the man who marries my daughter.”

CONCLUSION: If God was willing to bless Caleb and to say that he had followed Him fully, an unchanging God expects the same service from people today. Let us follow the Lord fully.