

CALEB: A MAN <u>COMMITTED</u> TO GOD

(Caleb "wholly followed the Lord")

Joshua 14:6-15

5/26/10

You should be like Caleb and "wholly follow the Lord!"

3 Reasons:

I. ***When you wholly follow the Lord*,**
You will develop deep <u>CONVICTIONS</u> (v. 7-8)

II. ***When you wholly follow the Lord,***
You will overcome difficult <u>CHALLENGES</u> (v. 12-13)

III. ***When you wholly follow the Lord*,**
You will reap desired <u>BLESSINGS</u> (v. 9-11, 14)



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A. Your convictions can be measured by your obedience

B. Your convictions must be personal convictions, not borrowed from others (v. 7)

C. Your convictions, if real, will pass the test of opposition (v. 8)

II. When you wholly follow the Lord,
You will overcome difficult CHALLENGES (v. 12-13)

A. Caleb put his trust in God's presence (v. 12)
("with me")

B. Caleb put his trust in God's promise (v. 12b)
("as the Lord said")

III. When you wholly follow the Lord,
You will reap desired BLESSINGS (v. 9-11, 14)

A. Personal blessings - "thine inheritance" (v. 9)

1. Caleb was blessed with a long life (v. 10)
2. Caleb was blessed with a vigorous life (v. 11)
3. Caleb was blessed with a prosperous life (v. 14)

B. Family blessings - "and thy children's forever" (v. 9)



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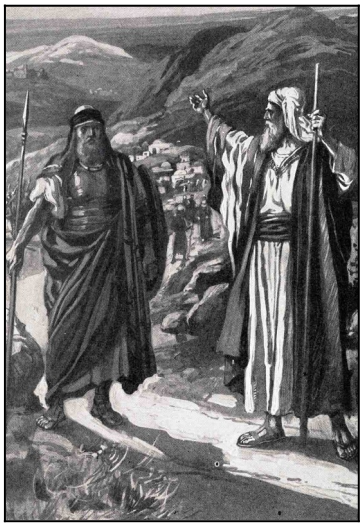
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To follow Christ requires commitment (SEE: Luke 9:57-62)

Three excuses for not following the Lord:

Excuse #1 -The cost is too _____ (v. 58)
(the <u>comforts</u> of this life)

Excuse # 2 -I'll serve You _____ (v. 59-60)
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Caleb serves as an encouragement to old people and an example to the young!

V. 6

When the elders of Judah appeared before Joshua to receive their inheritance, Caleb is apparently first in life (typical of the vigorous, aggressive nature of this leader).

God's focus in Joshua 14 centers around Caleb and his request for Hebron.

NOTE: the repeated phrase which describes Caleb as a man who "wholly followed the LORD" (v. 8, 9, 14). This phrase marks the emphasis of Caleb's life.

Caleb was sold out to God 100%. it is one thing to follow the Lord and another thing to "wholly" follow the Lord.

Some Christians say, "Lord, I've followed you for seven years. Don't I get a sabbatical?"

Or, "I've followed you for seven days. Don't I get a day off?" For Caleb, following the Lord was a 24-hour a day, 7-day a week, 365-day a year, commitment (Cawood, p. 54).

"Think of your commitment to God in terms of a set of keys. When you trusted Christ as your Savior, you gave your eternal destiny key to Him. But you have other keys on your key ring: vacation time, work, marriage, leisure time, and so forth. God wants the whole key ring, not just individual keys." (Cawood, p. 54).

It is said of the disciples, "they forsook their nets, and followed him" (Mk. 1:18).

Jess told them: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19).

We are commanded to be "followers (imitators) of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

***You should be like Caleb and "wholly follow the Lord!"**

3 Reasons:

I. When you wholly follow the Lord,
You will develop deep <u>CONVICTIONS</u> (v. 7-8)

V. 7
"I brought him word again <u>as it was in mine heart</u>" - Caleb's report to Moses was from his heart, meaning it was his convictions (hence, NIV - "according to my convictions").

When a truth goes from our mind (intellectually) to our <u>heart</u> , it becomes conviction.

Something you think about becomes a conviction when it is not a preference, but an absolute dogma. A conviction is a belief that you would be willing to die for. It is when you are totally <u>convinced</u> to the point of taking <u>action</u>. It motivates.

A conviction is not an intellectual theory, but a deep, personal belief that neither time nor trial can erode.

A. Your convictions can be measured by your <u>obedience</u>

The hebrew word translated "followed" (milleti) literally means to do something until it is "full" or "fulfilled." It points to full obedience; hence, to follow God in order to carry out his every wish and desire

Caleb's legacy:

Numbers 14:24 -"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

Num. 32:11,12-"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephuneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the Lord."

Dt. 1:35-36-Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephuneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord."

Cp. I Kings 11:6

B. Your convictions must be personal convictions, not borrowed from others (v. 7)

Convictions are not borrowed from others.

Caleb did not live based on someone else's convictions; he had his own.

There is no hint in Scripture that Caleb received his convictions from Joshua (though both had them). True conviction comes from God (though He can use teachers, friends, etc., to inspire the faith which produces them). Scripture seems to indicate that Caleb may have been the stimulating factor in Joshua's faith (Caleb is singled out by God for his strict obedient faith - Num. 13:30 & 14:24 - references where you would expect to find both men mentioned.).

C. Your convictions, if real, will pass the test of opposition (v. 8)

Convictions are beliefs that will pass the test of the fires of life. In other words: convictions are beliefs that do not deflate under pressure, nor do they melt under heat.

Caleb's convictions were such:

1. The opposition of the Canaanites (Num. 13-14)

Caleb knew the land of Canaan had walled cities; huge soldiers and trained fighters; yet he also knew the promise and power of God.

Such assurance spurred him on to obedience (Num. 13:30 - "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.").

2. The opposition of the Israelites (v. 8)

Caleb's "conviction was tested when the people decided that he and Joshua should be stoned unless they changed their votes (Num. 14:10). It is one thing to make a conviction known when it doesn't cost anything, but Caleb kept his conviction even in the face of his death" (Cawood, Confident Living, Nov. 86, p. 54).

Caleb had to stand up amidst an angry, unbelieving nation and speak his conviction to Moses and the Israelites (His own people).

Caleb had a minority opinion; his view was out-numbered; his idea was not popular.

It's easy to have convictions in Bible college, seminary, and in church, but when the rubber meets the road, when your back is up against the wall, and you are forced to give your view in the midst of the world who, like vultures, are gathered around you, all eyes are on you, and all wills anxious to trample on and devour what you say -- It takes convictions to speak your view when no one wants to hear it (EX: when I appeared before the Calvary Seminary faculty).

A conviction should not be based on likes and dislikes but on God's Word.

Such convictions involve a value system or set of beliefs that are not up for sale; cannot be bought off nor fought off!

Following Christ requires bearing a cross (Mt. 16:24).

NOTE: One can possess convictions without being obnoxiously arrogant or rude in their adherence to them (Ex: Daniel, chap. 1 & 6).

II. When you wholly follow the Lord,
You will overcome difficult CHALLENGES (v. 12-13)

V. 12

"Give me this mountain" - No mountain is too high to climb or too steep to conquer, for the Christian who is committed to God.

"Faith removes mountains!"

"If so be the Lord will be WITH me, then I shall be able to drive them out, AS THE LORD SAID."

Caleb was not self-confident, but GOD-confident. He put his trust in God's presence ("with me") and promise ("as the Lord said")

Caleb was willing to not only conquer a city, but to conquer perhaps the most feared city. The city where the giants lived! The terrifying Anakim people. The very people who struck the Israelite's hearts with fear 45 years prior (Num. 13:33).

Caleb wanted to be the instrument God would use to conquer the most dreaded of cities.

Caleb did not want an inheritance delivered to him on a silver platter. Anything he wanted in life, he was willing to work for and trust God for.

Caleb was a man who didn't mind the tough things. Typical of the kind of man he was, Caleb chose a mountain to occupy that still was not totally conquered. Though 85, Caleb was not ready for retirement. He was eager to take the job nobody else wanted. We need Christians today who will say to God "Give me the hard job to do" (See: Cawood, p. 55).

A. Caleb put his trust in God's presence (v. 12)
("with me")

B. Caleb put his trust in God's promise (v. 12b)
("as the Lord said")

Don't fear difficult circumstances, but face them with full faith in your omnipotent Father.

Don't shrink away from challenges.

Don't prefer the easy road or path of least resistance. If you do, your life like a river will meander around rough obstacles and be crooked, not straight.

(Too many times in life, we make decisions based upon what is easiest rather than what is best; what is quicker rather than what is better; what will produce the least friction, rather than what is right!)

Don't measure your problems by yourself (you, like the 10 spies will see yourself as "grasshoppers").

Rather, measure your problems by your God. Suddenly a surge of faith will grip your soul and you will say with Caleb, "Give me this mountain!"

There is nothing too big for God!

III. When you wholly follow the Lord,
You will reap desired <u>BLESSINGS</u> (v. 9-11, 14)

SEE: Mt. 19:27-29

V. 9

Verse 9 & 14 unveil the blessings that Caleb reaped <u>because</u> he wholly followed the LORD.

A. <u>Personal</u> blessings - "thine inheritance" (v. 9)

1. Caleb was blessed with a <u>long</u> life (v. 10)

"The LORD hath kept me alive" - Caleb, recognizing God as the Sustainer of life, gives God the credit for his long life.

NOTE: No one can take your life away until God gives the O.K.

Only God knows our appointed day to meet Him (Heb. 9:27).

2. Caleb was blessed with a <u>vigorous</u> life (v. 11)

Caleb, not in pride but in thankfulness, recognizes that he is just as strong at 85 as he was at 40!

(Cp. Moses - Deut. 34:7 - "And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.")

Never complain about your age! But realize that your age should never diminish your service for Christ (Titus 2:3-5).

3. Caleb was blessed with a <u>prosperous</u> life (v. 14)

He inherited the "apple of his eye" - the city of his choice, Hebron.

B. Family blessings - "and thy children's forever" (v. 9)

While the other 10 spies lost their lives and the lives of their children in the wilderness, Caleb's children inherited a blessing because of the commitment of their father (Deut. 1:35-36 - "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephuneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord.")

If for no other reason, you should commit yourself to wholly following the Lord for the sake of your children.

Your life (faith and practice) will either directly or indirectly influence the future for your children.

1. What evil you tolerate moderately in your life, will tend to be tolerated in excess in your children's lives

2. The habits you have will be mimicked by your children (EX: "I left . . . I stayed" illustration.)

3. Your character will be to one degree or another, reproduced in your children (EX: Jukes family, Tan, #4179)

The biggest blessing in receiving an inheritance (reward) is being able to give it away (back to God).
Though Caleb conquered the Hebron, he later willingly gave it to the Levites, and he settled in the suburbs (Josh. 21:12).

CONCLUSION:

Whether you realize it or not, everyone follows someone. Who you follow will determine who you will be like. The early disciples were called "Christians" (or Christ-like ones) because they followed Christ (Acts 11:26).

To follow Christ requires commitment (SEE: Luke 9:57-62)

Three excuses for not following the Lord:

Excuse #1 - The cost is too great (v. 58)
(the comforts of this life)

Excuse # 2 - I'll serve You later (v. 59-60)
(the customs of this life)

Excuse #3 - Other things (people) are more important (v. 61-62)
(the cares of this life)

Example: Mt. 19:21

Excursis:

Joshua was justified in conquering the nations of Canaan for three reasons: See Deut. 9:4-5

1. Because it was God's battle; Joshua and Israel were simply God's instrument to do His will (Deut. 9:4, 5 - "The LORD doth drive them out")

2. Because of the wickedness of the nations (Deut. 9:4-5)
   --Sexual perversion of every type (Lev. 18:1-30; *v. 24-25, 27)
   --incest (v. 6-17)
   --polygamy (v. 18)
   --adultery (v. 20)
   --homosexuality (v. 22)
   --beastiality (v. 23)

   --Child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21)
   Deut. 12:31 - "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."

   --Demonic worship of false gods (Deut. 12:30-31)

3. Because the land actually belonged to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut. 9:5b)

   God originally gave the land to Abraham 690 years prior to the conquest.

   Gen. 12:1 - the land given to Abraham

   Gen. 13:15 - the land is promised to Israel forever!

   Gen. 15:13-16 -Israel would not conquer it then because God was merciful to the Amorites. God patiently waited until the wickedness of the Canaanites came to a climactic head.