Take the OFFENSIVE for God

(Numbers 13-14 & Joshua 14)

Introduction: The posture of many churches and christians today is the defensive mode; or worse yet -- neutrality; or retreat. Too often we focus more on maintaining what we have rather than gaining new territory for our Lord!

In the team sports world it has been said: *"The best defence is a good offence"*

*** Take the Offensive for Christ!**

Be encouraged to take the offensive by the examples of Joshua & Caleb

I. Don't be influenced by the negative opinions of others. (Num.13:27-29)

II. Face the challenge with initiative & confidence.

A. Initiative (Num. 13:30a)

B. Confidence (Num.13:30b-33)

III. Have God's goal to reach and a burning passion to reach it. (Num.14:6-7)

IV. Trust in the Lord with all your heart to give you the victory. (Num.14:8)

V. Strictly follow the orders of your captain without rebelling. (Num.13:1-2; 14:9a)

VI. Don't retreat out of fear, rather move forward by faith (Num.14:9b)

VII. As time passes, never lose sight of the dream or vision God has put in your heart. (Joshua 14:6-11)

VIII. Face the giants with God-confidence not self-confidence (Josh.14:12)

A. Remember God's presence with you (v.12a)

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Introduction: "What a tragic spirit of fear has overcome the professing Christian church today! There are giants in our land: Secularism, materialism, promiscuity, organized opposition to historic Christian values, idolatry as rampant as that of ancient Greece. And in response the Church either retreats or accommodates itself to the prevailing idols of the age." Bill Shishko

The posture of many churches and christians today is the defensive mode; or worse yet -- neutrality; or retreat. Too often we focus more on maintaining what we have rather than gaining new territory for our Lord!

In the Book of Acts Christianity grew and flourished because the church of Christ took the offensive; was on the move; was going everywhere preaching the gospel; could not be quieted. They had the testimony of turning the world upside down!

Too often we have a satisfaction with mediocrity, rather than a thirst for progress.
When we are content, satisfied, self-confident etc. we a prime victims for defeat.

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What are some practical areas in which we need to take the offensive?

Soulwinning; standing up for right; initiative to serve others; Build each other up before a crisis rather than merely patching each other up during it; praying;

promote righteousness rather than merely battling evil in society; start more churches rather than merely maintaining the ones we have; (Note: if more churches were on the offensive, we would spend less time tearing each other down and more time building each other up); We need to take the offensive in our home, work, church, society.

Be encouraged to take the offensive by the examples of Joshua & Caleb

I. Don't be influenced by the negative opinions of others. (Num.13:27-29)

Don't let the opposing crowd distract you...stay focused!

The Devil will always stir up his crowd to discourage you from being faithful to what God has for you to do.

Ex. The opposition Nehemiah faced.

II. Face the challenge with initiative & confidence.

A. Initiative (Num. 13:30a)

Nothing ever gets done without someone's initiative. Ask God to give you the right incentives to do for him what others are too afraid to do.

Some people:	"make things happen"
others:	"watch things happen"
others say:	"what happened?"

Don't wait for things to happen, make things happen!

B. Confidence (Num.13:30b-33)

In life, winning is basically a matter of having the right attitude. You can

have the right training and follow the right technique & plan, but without a confident attitude you will not win!

III. Have God's goal to reach and a burning passion to reach it. (Num.14:6-7)

What are God's goals for your life as a christian?

He who aims at nothing will hit it every time.

Paul's single goal:	"For to me to live is Christ"
Paul's single message:	"Christ and Him crucified"
Paul's single aim:	"Do all to the glory of God"
Paul's single desire for the lost:	"that they might be saved"
Paul's single desire for the save:	"that they might be perfect in Christ"

IV. Trust in the Lord with all your heart to give you the victory. (Num.14:8)

"In God we trust" has become a cliche of the past, but rarely is seen by the on-looking World in our lives.

Jesus said: "without me ye can do nothing" (John 15)

V. Strictly follow the orders of your captain without rebelling. (Num.13:1-2; 14:9a)

The military & the team sports world have this in common -- they both depend on everyone cooperating with the man in charge.

God has given us in His Word the formula for success, we simply must follow orders and live by the Book. To the degree that we rebel we fail.

Not like king Saul.

VI. Don't retreat out of fear, rather move forward by faith (Num.14:9b)

Don't fear making a mistake; the biggest mistake you can ever make is to do nothing at all!

The greatest deterrent to going backwards is to move forward (ex. Pedalling a Bike)

Elijah was victorious when he took the offensive; when he retreated from Jezebel he faced defeat and replacement.

VII. As time passes, never lose sight of the dream or vision God has put in your heart. (Joshua 14:6-11)

Note: you will never lose your dream, if you follow the Lord.

How big is your vision? How big is your God?

VIII. Face the giants with God-confidence not self-confidence (Josh.14:12)

"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. Remember God's presence with you (v.12a)

B. Remember God's promises to you (v.12b)

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!

Conclusion:

8 Steps to Spiritual Stagnation:

1. We're no ready.
2. We never did it that way before.
3. We don't know how.
4. We've tried that once before.
5. It costs too much.
6. That's not our responsibility.
7. It won't work.
8. No one else is doing it.

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