

The Loyalty Dare  
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Allen Power

Joshua 14:6-15; 15:14-17

The GREAT ONES in life...whether in sports, music, business, or anything go at it with their WHOLE HEART!

Opening Question: What are some of the CHARACTERISTICS of someone who is committed to something with their WHOLE HEART?

Those who fulfill their potential in anything in life make a decision to commit to it with their WHOLE HEART. Caleb, the man we will read about today, was such a PERSON.

Let me set the stage. In Joshua chapter 13 and 14, Joshua was in his old age and yet there were still “very large areas of (the Promised) land to be taken over.” It was time to divide up the INHERITANCE, promised by God through Moses, among the tribes of the Israelites. This process would be accomplished by “casting the lot” to determine God’s will as to which tribes would get which territory.

- But, before the “lot was cast”, Caleb and “the men of (the tribe of) Judah approached Joshua.
- Caleb had a SPECIFIC REQUEST regarding his inheritance.
- Caleb and Joshua went WAY BACK.
- After 40 years in the wilderness, these two men, Caleb in his 80s and Joshua in his 90s, were the only two of that generation left.
- Question: Anyone know what ELSE Joshua and Caleb had in common?
- In Numbers chapter 13 we read that the Lord told Moses to send men to explore the land of Canaan. One man for each tribe. Twelve in total.
- Two of the spies were Joshua and Caleb.
- The men came back with a report. The land is flowing with “milk and honey”...huge clusters of grapes like THESE! But, *“the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there.”* GIANTS!
- The people were in an uproar. Scared to death.
- In Numbers 13:30: *“Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”*
- Caleb and Joshua knew God had given them the land and He would make it theirs.
- But the other TEN SPIES said: *“We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” “The land we explored devours those living in it.”* The people are GIANTS and we’re like GRASSHOPPERS.
- They GRUMBLED: *“We should have stayed in Egypt! Let’s STONE Moses and Aaron, and go back.”*
- But, Joshua and Caleb said: *“This land is GOOD and God is GREAT and He’ll give it to us!”*

- In Numbers 14:9 in the KJV Joshua and Caleb put the GIANTS of Canaan in perspective: “neither fear ye the people of the land; for they [are] bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD [is] with us: fear them not.”
- Bread! Joshua and Caleb were saying: “This is a piece of cake!” Because the LORD is with us...fear NOT those GIANTS.
- But the people rebelled. God was FURIOUS. He said “I’ll just strike everyone down with a plague except you and the two good spies. But Moses begged...God relented.
- But he said “...not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. 24 But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.”

Caleb had FAITH and COURAGE and wasn’t focused on the GIANTS...he was focused on THE POWER OF GOD.

Now, 45 years have passed, and Caleb comes to Joshua with a REQUEST.

Joshua 14:6-15

6 Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. 7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, 8 but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. 9 So on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.’[a]

10 “Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! 11 I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. 12 Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.”

13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. 14 So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. 15 (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)

Then the land had rest from war.

- Verse 6: When he begins to make his plea, how does Caleb describe Moses? “the man of God”
- Question: Why didn’t he just say “Moses”? Why attach the title “man of God”?
- Caleb was reminding Joshua of something Joshua already knew. Moses was God’s man and what Moses promised came straight from God.
- Caleb wasn’t negotiating a “land grab”, he was claiming his INHERITANCE from God
- “Joshua, you were there, you know what happened.”
- Verse 7: What kind of report does Caleb say he gave in verse 7?
- Question: What do you think he meant by “my convictions”?
- Question: Why would it have required the courage of his “convictions”?
- Verse 8 says “my brothers”...these other ten spies were his close friends.
- It takes some COURAGE and CONVICTION to go against your close friends.
- Look at the last sentence of verse 8. What gave him his CONVICTIONS?
- “I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.”
- You should highlight that sentence. It’s the KEY to Caleb’s success.
- When we follow the LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY, HE will give us COURAGE.
- Verse 9: What did Moses swear to give Caleb? “The land on which your feet have walked.”
- Now, that is significant. He was asking for HEBRON. A mountain filled with GIANTS.
- Kent Hughes speculates that the fearful spies must have watched from the periphery but Caleb climbed that mountain and walked around WITH the GIANTS.
- God promised Caleb that mountain. And gave him another promise.
- Verse 10: “God promised to keep me ALIVE and now I’m 85 years old.”
- But Caleb was no typical “senior citizen”. What does he say about himself in verse 11?
- Caleb was still as strong at 85 as he had been at 40.
- He wasn’t looking for a retirement community, he was READY TO FIGHT!
- Caleb said: “Hey, 85 is the NEW 40!” He wasn’t bragging...it was a statement of fact.
- As Dizzy Dean said: “It ain’t braggin’ if you can do it!” Caleb later proved he COULD.
- God obviously gave Caleb supernatural strength for his age.
- But, based on this passage I believe Caleb did his part too.
- Question: What are the characteristics of YOUTH? When you’re young what do you is your attitude about life about the future? Hope. Optimism. Enthusiasm.
- Question: What do you think kept Caleb living a “youthful” life?

We have to believe from this text, that the SPRING in Caleb’s step and his BOLDNESS at age 85, came from the FAITH he had in what God promised about his future.

Quoting Kent Hughes again:

*“He (Caleb) was preeminently a man of faith. He followed the Lord, FULLY. The more one exercises faith; the easier it becomes to exercise faith. Conversely, the less faith we exercise the harder it is to begin to exercise faith.”*

- Did you get that? He spent all those years in the wilderness BUILDING HIS FAITH MUSCLES. Because he “followed the Lord...WHOLEHEARTEDLY.”
- Older Christians teach us a lot about FAITH. (Susan’s observation about my parents)

- It can be inspiring to see some saints of God who aren't SLOWING they're GOING!
- I can promise you that Chuck Swindoll at age 77 has more energy than many men half his age. What's his secret? He's EXCITED about what God has promised, and like Caleb, he's saying "Give me this hill!" There may be GIANTS but "the Lord helping me, I will drive them out!"
- Now, We may not be as physically strong at 85 as we were at 40. But...
- Question: How can you and I stay "still as strong" during our journey in this life?
- We can stay SPIRITUALLY STRONG if we will FOCUS ON THE HOPE WE HAVE and follow the Lord our God WHOLEHEARTEDLY.
- Question: What would it mean (practically speaking) for you and I to serve God wholeheartedly? [Have you ever known a Christian you believe served God wholeheartedly? What were they like?]

The great D.L. Moody sat on a park bench in Dublin with English Revivalist Henry Varley. Varley said to him: "*Moody, It remains to be seen what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him.*" D.L. Moody said he made up his mind: "*Well I will be that man.*" <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/1990/issue25/2510.html>

As we get older our FAITH can grow STRONGER if we'll just PRACTICE IT!

Psalm 92:12-14

12

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;

13

planted in the house of the Lord,  
they will flourish in the courts of our God.

14

They will still bear fruit in old age,  
they will stay fresh and green,

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16:

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

- In verses 13 and 14 we're told that Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. And in case you missed the point, Joshua gave it "because he (Caleb) followed the Lord, the God of Israel, WHOLEHEARTEDLY."
- Caleb took that mountain. And verse 14 of chapter 15 tells us he "drove out" the giants and claimed the land. "It ain't braggin' if you can do it!"

Warren Wiersbe writes:

*Caleb was eighty-five years old, but he didn't look for an easy task, suited to an "old man." He asked Joshua for mountains to climb and giants to conquer! His strength was in the Lord, and he knew that God would never fail him. The secret of Caleb's life is*

*found in a phrase that's repeated six times in Scripture: "he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. 14:14; also see Num. 14:24; 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8–9). Caleb was an overcomer because he had faith in the Lord (1 John 5:4).*

So, What's the Takeaway?

- As you and I grow older is our FAITH growing stronger or just going flabby?
- Like Caleb, we can be SPIRITUALLY STRONGER at 85 than we were at 40!
- The key is CLAIMING THE INHERITANCE that God has promised us, and FOLLOWING THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY.
- We need to STAY OUT OF THE SPIRITUAL RECLINER and instead say "give me that hill and I'll conquer it" for God's Glory!