

God describes for us the character of various men by referring to them by certain phrases. Abraham was called a friend of God (James 2:23). In Jehoshaphat's Prayer he mentions Abraham as being a friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7). Then God himself said *Isaiah 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.* Perhaps that gives greater weight to what Jesus said. *John 15:14-15 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. (15) Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

Then there was a time when God sought a man after God's own heart to replace Saul (1 Samuel 13:14) and God found such a man in David. In Paul's sermon in Antioch he gave an old testament overview and said of David, *Acts 13:22 ... he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

There is the perseverance of Job (James 5:11); the meekness of Moses (Numbers 12:3). Each tells us the type of character God desires in his servants. But for the next few minutes I want to look at the character of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He is remembered as the man who wholly followed God.

As the Israelites neared Promised Land, twelve spies were sent into the land of Canaan. When they returned, ten came back certain that Israel could not conquer the land. *Numbers 13:27-29 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. (28) Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. (29) The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.*

But there was two spies who disagreed with the ten. It was Caleb, with Joshua at his side. ***Numbers 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.*** But the ten prevailed and convinced the multitude that they could not conquer the land. ***Numbers 13:31-32 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. (32) And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.***

In Numbers 14:6-10 Joshua and Caleb had a different spirit than the rest of Israel and tried to get the people to relent. They took the unpopular stand because it was the right stand. In verse 10 of chapter 14 we learn that they were about to stone Joshua and Caleb and probably would have had the Lord not intervened. Even when threatened with stoning, they did not back down.

Later in chapter 14 (verses 20-24) we learn that all the adults of Israel were forbidden to enter Canaan, except two. God recognized Caleb as a man with a different spirit, one who followed God FULLY. ***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 whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.*** Everyone else would die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:28-35).

There was a census given in the beginning chapter of Numbers. Numbers 1:35-36 we find there were 603,500 men 20 years old and up, not including the Levites. Over the next 40 years, all but two died. That averages out to about 15,000 deaths per year; almost 300 per week or 41 funerals a day! Try to put yourself in that setting with death all around you every day. Caleb watched just about everyone he knew die.

Forty years later after wandering in a wilderness and just before entering Canaan, we find in the first chapter of Deuteronomy Moses reminded the next generation what had happened to their ancestors. Then in Joshua 14 we see Caleb talking with Joshua,

now the leader of the Israelite people. He reminded them that Moses gave him a right to his own inheritance. ***Joshua 14:9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.***

By this time he is 85 years old. ***Joshua 14:10-11 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. (11) As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.***

At age 85 Caleb chose the area where the Anakims lived and was in good enough condition physically that he was able to wage war against them. ***Joshua 14:12-13 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. (13) And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.***

This is rather impressive in that the Anakims were the giants of the land. They were the ones the ten spies said were too big and too strong to conquer. Look back to Deuteronomy 9. ***Deuteronomy 9:2 A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!***

While we don't know how tall the giants were, the Bible does give information of two giants. One is King Og in Deut 3. It tells us his bedstead was 9 cubits (13.5 ft) long and four cubits (5 cubits) wide. Although the exact height is not given, one can assume he was at least nine to ten feet tall. Then there is Goliath. His height is mentioned in 1 Samuel 17:4 which says: "*And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span,*" which is around 9'-9" in height. ***Amos 2:9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose***

height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

It was these people that the original twelve spies said by comparison they were like grasshoppers. Caleb specifically chose to fight the ones everyone else thought was too powerful, to win his inheritance ... at the ripe age of 85 and he defeated them. ***Judges 1:20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.***

He did a good job of expelling the giants except for a few that settled in the cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. ***Joshua 11:22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.*** This was likely the same lineage that Goliath came from since Goliath was from Gath.

APPLICATION: So many want to sit back and wait for God to handle matters, but Caleb was out at the front line. He did what he could; knowing God would handle the rest. And he did fade away in his old age. He gave God everything he had. Like Paul, he finished the course - 2 Timothy 4:6-8. And at the same time, he did not demand God's help. He acted even though he did not know he would win - Joshua 14:12. Too many people won't make a move without a sign from God. But Caleb knew what God had said and what He wanted, which was enough. Caleb didn't do the minimum possible. He reached for the maximum he could do. It is easy to go along with the majority, but can you take a stand because it is right, knowing most will oppose you?

The majority doesn't decide morality - Matthew 7:13-14. When you think you are alone, remember - Hebrews 13:5, - 1 John 2:25. It is hard to be different from others, but Caleb had a different spirit. Do you have that different spirit? Caleb held on to the promise. Will you?