

Giants of Faith: Joshua and Caleb



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Numbers 13:6; Joshua 14:6–14; Joshua 15:16–19; Joshua 19:49–51; Hebrews 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12: 1, 2.

MEMORY VERSE: “Remember your leaders. They taught God’s message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith” (Hebrews 13:7, ERV).



We need heroes we can admire who can show us how to live and be better people.

EVERY PARENT KNOWS that children learn from the examples of the people around them. Many parents feel upset when they see their children copy their bad behavior and not their good behavior. Whatever our age, we often want to do evil or wrong more than we want to do good or right. As Paul says, “I don’t understand why I act the way I do. I don’t do the good I want to do, and I do the evil I hate” (Romans 7:15, ERV). We all have felt this way, right?

From the time we are born, we copy the things we see other people do. We copy how our loved ones walk, talk, and show their feelings. We learn to do the most basic things in life this way. As adults, we continue to need good examples. We need heroes we can admire who can show us how to live and be better people. Maybe these people aren’t perfect. But their spiritual lives help us to improve our own lives. That’s what makes these people “giants” whose faith we can look up to and admire.

This week, we look at the personal examples of two giants of faith in the book of Joshua: Caleb and Joshua. What made these men stand out? How did they bless God’s people during one of the most important times in Israel’s history?

MEN OF FAITH (Numbers 13:6)

Who was Caleb? Read Numbers 13:6, 30–32 and Joshua 14:6, 14 for the answer.

The name Caleb comes from the Hebrew word “keleb.” “Keleb” means dog in the Hebrew language. In the Old Testament, “keleb” always means something bad. But in other writings outside the Bible, the word “keleb” is used in letters and hymns to mean a servant’s courage. The word “keleb” is also used in these hymns and letters to mean a servant who is loyal to his master. Caleb’s life showed that he was loyal to his Lord.

Caleb wasn’t afraid to speak the truth, even when most of the spies didn’t agree with him. Caleb also wasn’t afraid to speak the truth when the Israelites wanted to kill him. What do these things teach us about Caleb? Read Numbers 14:6–10, 21–25; Numbers 26:65; and Numbers 32:12 to answer the question.

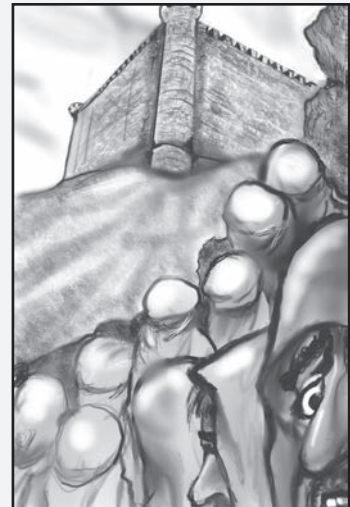
Who were some of the important Israelite leaders during the time of Caleb and Joshua? These leaders were named Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel. Do you know who any of these men are?

Not really, right?

Why? Because these are the names of the other ten spies that Moses sent to explore the land of Canaan. We don’t remember their names because they didn’t show faith. They weren’t brave. They gave Moses a lying report. These ten spies said that Israel couldn’t win the Promised Land. These spies compared Israelites to grasshoppers and said the Canaanites were giants. These men were afraid when they saw the strong and tall walls around the Canaanite cities.

Caleb was older than Joshua, so he speaks first. Caleb is filled with faith. He reports that Israel can win the Promised Land. Caleb wasn’t afraid to stand for what he knew was right. He wasn’t afraid when the other ten spies were against him. He wasn’t afraid when the Israelites wanted to kill him for speaking the truth (Numbers 14:10).

What do you do when most people don’t agree with you? Do you go along with them? Or do you say the truth?



The ten spies were afraid when they saw the strong and tall walls around the Canaanite cities.

GIVE ME THIS HILL COUNTRY (Joshua 14:6–14)

How did Caleb and Joshua show their faith? What does it mean to follow the Lord fully? Read Joshua 14:6–14; Numbers 14:24; Numbers 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; and Luke 6:45 for the answers.



Caleb understood that everything depended on faith.

Caleb remembered the promise the Lord gave him: he would enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:24). Forty years later, Caleb talks about his report on the land all those years ago. Caleb gave Moses a true report. Caleb said, “ ‘It was in my heart,’ ” about the land (Joshua 14:7, NLV). Caleb believed Israel could win the land with God’s help.

The report of the other ten spies filled the Israelites with fear. But Caleb trusted in the promises of God. Caleb talks about the ten spies who went with him to Canaan: “ ‘My brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people weak with fear. But I followed the Lord my God with all my heart’ ” (Joshua 14:8, NLV). As we see from this verse, Caleb gave his whole heart to the Lord.

Almost the same words, “with all my heart,” are said two more times (Joshua 14:9, 14, NLV). The Bible says these words to show us that Caleb was a man of faith. That’s why the Lord said, “ ‘My servant Caleb has a different spirit. He follows me completely’ ” (Numbers 14:24, ICB). Caleb’s spirit made him different from the other ten spies. Now, Caleb was 85 years old. He continued to be an example of what the Lord can do with people who give their hearts fully to Him.

God promised to give land to each of the 12 family groups in Israel’s land. Caleb understood that everything depended on faith. If the Israelites had a lot of faith to fight for the land, then the Lord would help them win. So, the more faith they had, the more land God gave them. We must act on our faith in God’s promises. That’s why Caleb says to Joshua, “ ‘So give me the hill country that the LORD promised me that day long ago. At that time you heard that the strong Anakites lived there and the cities were very big and well protected. But now, maybe the LORD will be with me, and I will take that land just as the LORD said’ ” (Joshua 14:12, ERV). The word “maybe” can mean fear and doubt. But it often means hope that something good will happen (Genesis 16:2; Numbers 22:6, 11; Numbers 23:3).

What “small” things can keep us from following God?

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE (Joshua 15:16–19)

Read the story in Joshua 15:16–19. (Also read Judges 1:13 and Judges 3:7–11.) What do these verses teach us about the power of example? How are the younger Israelites copying Caleb’s spirit of courage and faith?

In this story, Caleb offers his daughter, Achsah, in marriage to the man who wins the land of Debir in battle. Othniel fights and wins the city. So, Caleb gives Achsah to Othniel to be his wife. This story is important. It shows Caleb’s courage and faith. Caleb is ready and willing to do new things for the Lord.

This story also shows that the younger Israelites followed the example of Caleb and Joshua. As the older Israelites finish their work on earth for God, the younger Israelites are ready to continue God’s work.

Achsah shows the same faith and courage that her father showed. Achsah continues to follow Caleb’s example. She believes in God’s promise to help Israel win the land.

The land is the Lord’s gift to Israel. But Israel must fight to win the land. The people must show faith and courage in God’s promises to give the land to them in battle. Achsah is a symbol of the Jewish mothers later on who come to Jesus. These women have faith. Jesus’ followers try to send them away. But these women will not leave until Jesus blesses them and their families.

Read Luke 18:1–5. What lesson do these verses teach us?

We must help young people get ready to serve God when our work for Him is done. God trusts us with this special work. Think about what we must do to help them get ready. What can we do to train today’s youth to be tomorrow’s leaders? How important is our example to the success of this work?



Caleb gives Achsah to Othniel to be his wife.

A HERO WITH NO PRIDE IN HIS HEART (Joshua 19:49–51)



Joshua could have asked for or chosen a better piece of land. But Joshua has no pride in his heart. He chooses to live a simple life.

God promises to give Caleb and Joshua land. Caleb gets his land before Joshua does. Joshua gets his land after everyone else in Israel gets theirs. First, Joshua gives land to the 12 family groups of Israel. Now the time finally comes for the Israelites to give Joshua his land.

Why does Joshua get his land last? What does that information tell us? Read Joshua 19:49–51 for the answer.

Joshua gets a city named Timnath-serah. This name is made from two words. The first word, “Timnath” comes from a word that means a “part” or “territory.” The second word comes from the Hebrew word “serach.” “Serach” means something leftover. So, the name of Joshua’s city can be written as “the leftover part of the territory.”

What does this name tell us about Joshua? Joshua waits until all of the Israelites get their land. Then Joshua chooses for himself. Joshua doesn’t choose one of the territories that is filled with cities. Joshua doesn’t choose a rich or beautiful city. He chooses a city that may be ruined. So, he will need to rebuild it.

Also, Timnath-serah was located near Shiloh, where God’s holy tent is. So, Joshua’s choice shows us where his heart is. He wants to be near God. Joshua could have asked for or chosen a better piece of land. But Joshua has no pride in his heart. He chooses to live a simple life. He knows what is important. His choice helps us remember King David’s words:

“I ask only one thing from the Lord.

This is what I want:

Let me live in the Lord’s house
all my life.

Let me see the Lord’s beauty.

Let me look around in his Temple” (Psalm 27:4, ICB).

**What lessons can you learn from Joshua’s spirit?
How can you have a heart empty of all pride?**

THE LIVES OF BIBLE HEROES (Hebrews 12:1, 2)

The lives of Bible heroes can help us grow strong in faith. Of course, Jesus is the best example. How does thinking about the life of Jesus and His teachings change us? Read Hebrews 12:1, 2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 for the answer.

Ellen G. White talks about what happens to us when we think about the love of Jesus: “When we look at Jesus, we will understand God better. God’s love changes us. When we look at Him, we will become good. Love for other people will fill our hearts. Our thoughts and feelings will become the same as God’s thoughts and feelings. We will become like Him in our hearts. When we become more like God in our hearts, we will know Him more and more. We will fellowship with heaven more. God will give us more knowledge and wisdom.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 355, adapted.

Read Romans 12:1, 2. What two powers are fighting against each other for our attention? How can we be sure to choose the right side?

In Romans 12, Paul talks about two powers that fight against each other. On the one hand, this life, with all its false ideas and fun, tries to force us to accept its ideas and habits. These things are outside us at first. But they try to change us on the inside.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside. Think of the way a caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly. The change happens from the inside first. The Holy Spirit works to change us in the same way. He starts with our hearts. But if we want this change to happen, we need to give our lives to God first. We must ask Him to continue to do the good work in us that He already started (Philippians 1:6). In the end, we must make a choice, each moment, to give God’s Spirit full control over our lives.



**“When we look at Jesus,
we will understand
God better.”**



“Now, at almost 80 years old, Caleb continued to be healthy and strong.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Caleb’s faith now was the same as when he gave his report forty years ago. Caleb’s report didn’t agree with the evil report of the ten spies. Caleb believed God’s promise. God promised to give Israel the land of Canaan. So, Caleb trusted in the Lord and followed Him fully. Caleb wandered for 40 years in the desert with Israel. Caleb suffered with Israel. But Caleb didn’t complain. Caleb praised God for showing Him mercy. God kept him alive in the desert when almost all the other Israelites died. Israel suffered hard times, danger, and disease during their time in the desert. But Caleb lived many more years. The Lord spared Caleb’s life during the time Israel fought wars to win the land of Canaan. Now, at almost 80 years old, Caleb continued to be healthy and strong. Caleb didn’t ask for land that Israel already won in war. Caleb asked for the land that the ten spies said no one could win. With God’s help, Caleb would remove this land from the giants who caused Israel to lose faith. Caleb didn’t fight for his honor or fame. This brave old warrior wanted to give the Israelites an example that honored God. Caleb wanted to encourage Israel to fight to win the land that their fathers said no one could win.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 512, 513, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How much courage does it take to speak the truth when other people won’t do it? Why is it so hard to be brave? How much courage do you need to talk about your faith? How can we avoid being rude and unkind when we stand for what we believe is right?
- ② Share in your class some examples of faith from your church or community that changed your life for the better. How did their stories help make you more like God in your heart?
- ③ Think about the power that the media or TV has in our life. How can we use media for good? At the same time, what are its dangers? How do we keep media and TV from hurting our lives?
- ④ How is Joshua an example to you of a good leader?

THE MAN NO ONE EXPECTED TO DO GOD'S WORK

Kim Sun was surprised when the young man slammed the door shut in his face.

Sun was a 19-year-old student from South Korea. Sun went from door-to-door to invite people to Bible meetings in the Philippines. Many people were polite to Sun and his friends when the students knocked on their doors. But the young man at this house was mean and nasty. The young man didn't answer when the students asked him if they could come in for a visit. The young man just slammed the door shut.

Sun felt ashamed and upset. The experience didn't bother the other students. Sun didn't understand why. Sun suggested that they come back the next day, on Tuesday. The Bible meetings were being held all week, including the Sabbath.

On Tuesday, the students knocked on the door again. The same young man came to the door. He remembered them from the day before. The young man looked ashamed. He invited the students in. He said, "I'm sorry that I closed the door yesterday."

The students talked with the young man about Jesus' love. They invited the young man to the meetings. The students met with the young man again on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Saturday, the young man decided to give his heart to Jesus and get baptized.

The young man said, "I love Jesus. I want a new life."

Sun was surprised. As Sun watched the baptism, he thought, "This man changed so much. He is so different from when I met him on Monday. Can someone really change so much?"

But what happened to this man happened to Sun, too. No one, including Sun, expected Sun to become a Bible worker. Sun didn't come to the Philippines to baptize people. In the past, Sun lived to please himself in South Korea. Then his parents put a stop to that. They sent Sun to the Philippines to learn English and to become a nurse. Sun's parents wanted him to go to the United States to work after he finished school.

Sun's parents sent him to the Adventist University of the Philippines. There, Sun was surprised to see that his classmates went to church on Saturday. Sun thought that all Christians worshiped on Sunday. Sun went to a Korean-language church at his school. Young people in the church helped the pastors get ready for the Bible meetings. Sun didn't know much English. He didn't know much about the Bible. But he joined the students in going door-to-door to invite people to the meetings. That's how Sun first became a worker for God without planning to.

Kim Sun is a manager for the 1,000 Missionary Movement, in Silang, Philippines. The headquarters were built with help of the 13th Sabbath Offering from 1996. Read more next week.

INSIDE *Story*



As Sun watched the baptism, he thought, "This man changed so much."



Kim Sun