

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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A Different Spirit

Success and failure in life is not a matter of luck, but of approaching our challenges with the right attitude. The story of Caleb shows us how.

“But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it” (Num. 14:24).

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Caleb was one of twelve men sent on a spy mission into the land of Canaan before the Israelites began their invasion. Most of the spies returned with a bad report, convinced that an invasion would fail. Only Caleb and Joshua believed that the invasion should proceed. This lopsided report spelled disaster for the nation. The people cried out against God and demanded to go back to Egypt. God condemned the entire population (above twenty years of age) to a life of wandering in the wilderness until they died off. Forty years later, only Caleb and Joshua were allowed to enter the land with the next generation.

God attributed Caleb’s reward to his “different spirit.” What was it about Caleb’s spirit that enabled him to stand firm against the headwinds of negativity and defeat? Why did he succeed where the others failed?

This story reveals two aspects of Caleb’s thinking that hold lessons for us today. First, we learn that Caleb had a deeply anchored confidence in God’s promises. God had repeatedly assured the Israelites that Canaan was theirs. There would be battles, yes, but they were winnable. Caleb believed that promise, and was willing to stake his life on it: “Their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them” (14:9). Most of his fellow Israelites, however, were not convinced of God’s protection: “Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword?” (14:3). God instantly recognized the root problem: “How long will they not believe Me?” (14:11). The Israelites were not atheists; they just didn’t trust God to deliver on His word. For Caleb, however, the issue was already settled; God had promised victory, and He would give it.

The second ingredient that set Caleb’s thinking apart from his countrymen was directly related to the first: *he was an incurable optimist*: “We are well able to overcome it” (13:30). This was

not a boastful brag of his own prowess in battle, but a natural outgrowth of his trust in God. He genuinely believed that, with God’s help, he and his people were capable of accomplishing great things. The rest of the Israelites, unfortunately, did not share that positive outlook: “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we” (13:31). That gloomy assessment betrayed a serious self-image problem: “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight” (13:33), incapable of little more than getting squashed by their enemies.

This stark contrast between two mindsets is an ageless reminder of the choice that confronts each one of us. Most people, faced with the challenges of life, crumple like the grasshoppers they believe themselves to be, handicapped by their own lack of faith. But there are a few who, like Caleb, make the decision to get close to God and drink deeply of His promises. By nurturing “a different spirit”—a strong faith in God and the optimism to act boldly—they find the strength to overcome hardships and accomplish great things.

– David King