



**GREAT PEOPLE  
OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT**

.....  
**MARTINE. MAYER**

**LIVING WAY**  
BIBLE STUDY

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# WELCOME TO LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY (LWBS)

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LWBS is a practical course of study with a special emphasis on the application of God's Word to the life of the individual. While emphasizing practical application, LWBS presents each book of the Bible as the holy, inspired, Word of God, the confessional position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Our purpose is to help equip believers to live joyfully in God's redeeming love and to share with others God's plan of salvation.

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to help you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of our God and His Word. *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* 2 Peter 3:18

## STUDY STRUCTURE

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### LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY SUGGESTS THIS FOUR-STEP METHOD

- 1. PERSONAL** – The student prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit and answers the Personal Application (P.A.) questions at home using only the Bible (no commentaries).
- 2. SMALL GROUPS** – The class meets for an opening and divides into small groups of 8–10 people. The small group leader guides the group through the P.A. questions, encouraging each to share their answers and discuss further as time allows.
- 3. THE MESSAGE** – The lecture or message is given by a pastor or layperson who has researched the material and presents the study, giving personal insight and augmenting, but not duplicating, the author's comments.
- 4. THE NARRATIVE** – The author's comments or narrative, along with the P.A. questions for the next lesson, are given out at the end of the class. At the next class meeting, before answering the P.A. questions, the small groups may choose to review the author's comments of the last lesson, and share what each has highlighted as meaningful or important.

With this four-step method the student has the opportunity to study the particular section of Scripture covered by the lesson from four different approaches. This emphasizes the Bible text and gives the student an understanding and ownership for each section studied.

*Each lesson should be stapled together according to the number of the lesson in the right-hand corner of the page.* The P.A. questions for the next week should be attached after the author's narrative for the current week, as they will be the home study for the next class session.

The first meeting of the class is an introduction to the study. Since the members of the small groups have no P.A. questions to discuss at the first meeting, they may use the time to get acquainted or to tell what they hope to receive by studying this course. At the first meeting, the lecturer presents background information about the course, using the Introduction lesson as a guide.

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# GREAT PEOPLE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

MARTIN E. MAYER

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# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## *GREAT PEOPLE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*

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*The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version...revised – 2nd ed. of New Testament AD 1971 King James Version*

### **REFERENCES:**

*Men Who Dared*, Barbara Jurgensen.

Note: In the studies of Amos, Micah, and Malachi, I have been indebted to a book “Men Who Dared” by Barbara Jurgensen, the wife of a Lutheran student pastor. I used many of her paraphrases for the words the prophets spoke.

*(This study, written in 1986 by Rev. Martin Mayer, was edited in 2017 and includes quotations from the Bibles listed above.)*

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*The purpose of the Old Testament is to tell us the story of God's chosen people and how He directed the course of their history until His promise, first given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15), could be fulfilled and the Savior, who would redeem the world from sin, could come into the world.*

• • •

Many people question the value of the Old Testament as a resource for modern day living. In writing to Timothy, Paul gives us the reason for such a study. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The purpose of the Old Testament is to tell us the story of God's chosen people and how He directed the course of their history until His promise, first given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15), could be fulfilled and the Savior, who would redeem the world from sin, could come into the world. This makes these writings vitally important, for they speak constantly of this coming Savior, the Messiah.

Another important consideration is that we are dealing today with the same God who was involved in the lives of the people of the Old Testament. Our God is unchangeable (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:27). What a comfort that is for us! The gracious manner in which God dealt with these people is the same way He deals with people today. Everything written about Him and His relationship with man is applicable to our day.

Another thing to be considered is how God arranged for us to have the story of the lives of these great people of the Old Testament recorded so that we might learn from them. As we examine these people, we will discover that they are very much like us. Since they were successful in both their earthly lives and in their relationship with God, there is much to be learned from them.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER STUDIES

In the study of the books of Genesis and Exodus, we find that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the patriarchal family of God's chosen people. They possessed no permanent land for their homes. However, God was determined they should have such a land. First, He needed to strengthen and solidify them as a people. This was accomplished by their sojourn in Egypt, the great trials they had to endure, and their exodus through the wilderness.

Through the leadership of Moses, God again brought these people to the land that He had promised to Abraham. Our study is going to show how they conquered that land and how they used it until the time when God's great promise of a Savior would be fulfilled. They became an established people with a permanent home who could build cities and develop industries.

The history of Israel could have been very simple if they had served the Lord and followed the leadership He provided for them. Unfortunately, they did not do so, and that is why Israel's history is a complex one.

Rather than confine ourselves to the study of one book in the Old Testament, we are going to examine the great people who had an important influence on God's chosen people. In that way, we will have an opportunity to look into most of the Old Testament.

Here are the Great People you will learn to know.

JOSHUA – Godly Nobleness

CALEB – Courage to Dare

RUTH – Picture of Faithfulness

GIDEON – Dare to Do Great Things

SAMSON – A Victorious Ending

DEBORAH – Faithful Obedience

SAMUEL – Supreme Dedication

SAUL – Good Beginning — Bad Ending

DAVID – Trials and Triumphs

DAVID – God's Man

JONATHAN – Brotherly Love

SOLOMON – True Blessedness

ELIJAH – Faithful Always

ELISHA – With God, All Things Are Possible

HEZEKIAH – With God's Blessing

JONAH – A Man on a Mission

JOSIAH – Bent on Reformation

ISAIAH – Vision of Isaiah

JEREMIAH – Suffering For Convictions

ESTHER – For Such a Time as This

DANIEL – Using Our Talents

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO —  
Let Your Light Shine

EZRA – Being Truly Satisfied

NEHEMIAH – Going Home

AMOS – God's Faithful Messenger

MICAH – Message of the Coming Messiah

MALACHI – God's Last Messenger Until...

May God bless us together as we look at these Great People of the Old Testament!

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

## JOSHUA

*Pray that the Holy Spirit may guide you as you look today at the life of Joshua. We will be looking at portions of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua.*

## Review:

1. After having read the INTRODUCTION, who are the “Great People” that were the patriarchal family of God’s chosen people?

2. What part did Moses play in the history of these people?

## Lesson Preparation:

3. What is our first introduction to Joshua? (Exodus 17:9–13)

4. On Mount Sinai, God had just given His Law to the people and had then asked Moses to come to Him on the mountain. What are we told about Joshua in Exodus 24:13?

5. Joshua is being prepared for leadership. What did he deem essential in his training according to Exodus 33:11?

6. Look at Numbers 13:1–3, 8. For what important task was Joshua chosen? You noted a different spelling of his name here. This was a common name, and it became the root of many Jewish names, including the name of Jesus.

7. In Numbers 13:27–33, two reports were brought back by the spies. What was the report of the majority?

What was the report of the minority?

To which group did Joshua belong? (Numbers 14:6–9)

8. Because the people accepted the majority report, what was to happen to them? (Numbers 14:28–30)

What about Joshua?

9. Read Exodus 33:11 and Deuteronomy 31:14. For what had the Lord been preparing Joshua?

What characteristics would Joshua need?

According to Ephesians 3:16–17, what is necessary for strength?

10. In Joshua 1:1–2, what is God's command to Joshua?

In your own words, state the promise God gives to Joshua in 1:5. Does that apply to us today? See Hebrews 13:5–6.

What encouragement and exhortation is Joshua given in 1:6–7?

What was Joshua's formula for success as a strong leader? (1:8)

How does 1:9 encourage you?

11. From Joshua 5:13–15, describe the strengthening experience Joshua had as he stood before the walls of Jericho.

12. Read about the Fall of Jericho in Joshua, Chapter 6. According to Joshua 6:27, what was the result of this miraculous accomplishment?

13. What impression do you get of Joshua from Joshua 8:30–35?

14. Describe the unusual occurrence in the life of Joshua found in 10:12–14.

15. The battles of Joshua in conquering the land have been described in previous chapters. From Joshua 23:1–3, what conclusions do you draw about his accomplishment?



How do you suppose the people felt toward him?

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To whom does he give the glory?

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16. In Joshua 24:14–15, read the exhortation that Joshua makes to his people. What words would make a good wall motto for your home?

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17. Joshua 24:24–28. What is the point Joshua is trying to impress upon his people?

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Why do you suppose he is so concerned?

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Where did Joshua write the covenant he had made with the people?

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18. From Joshua 24:29–31, describe the manner of Joshua's death. What marvelous summary is given of his life?

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Explain how Revelation 14:13 applies to Joshua.

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19. What have you learned from Joshua's life that may benefit your spiritual life?

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# GREAT PEOPLE

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## JOSHUA



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*How does the Holy Spirit bring about this nobleness in us? Just as He did with Joshua. He reminds us of the promise Jesus made: “I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20). He brings it through the Word of God as we read and study it. He adds the strengthening gift of the Lord’s Supper.*



### JOSHUA – GODLY NOBLENES

Have you set your eyes on your goal? Are you taking the road that leads to it? There are goals that are “out of this world.” They have nothing to do with money and possessions. We know the way to reach higher goals is to be in Jesus Christ. But there are always those who want to find their own way. Instead of pointing to Jesus, they point at themselves and their achievements.

In this life, God’s Word will help us decide on our goals. Once we have determined God-pleasing goals, we should allow nothing to hinder us in our pursuit of them. It is here that Joshua serves as a good example. We shall define Joshua’s life as the ultimate in GODLY NOBLENES. The purpose of our study is to show the development of this great man of God.

### JOSHUA – THE SOLDIER

We have no information about the birth of Joshua except that he was of the tribe of Ephraim and his father’s name was Nun. We do know he was among those who came out of Egyptian slavery and knew the almighty power of God shown through the activity of Moses. No doubt this influenced him to develop a strong faith in God and a deep loyalty to Moses. We may have pictured Joshua as rather rugged, the kind of man a professional football scout would seek out today. He probably is the Old Testament counterpart of the big fisherman, Simon Peter, in the New Testament.



When the children of Israel are nearing the Promised Land of Canaan, Moses hopes to fill the people with enthusiasm for their new home (Numbers 13:1–2, 8). He decides to send a spy from each of the twelve tribes into this land to determine the kind of country to which the Lord is leading them. One of those spies is Joshua.

Joshua's tribe chose him to be their representative because he was a natural leader. When the spies returned, they reported with fear and trembling that the land was well fortified and the enemy was mighty. We are not surprised that it was Joshua and the old fire horse, Caleb, who stated their belief that the Lord would give them this Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to go forward.

At this point, Israel rebelled against the Lord and begged to go back to Egypt and a life of slavery. As a result, the Lord punished them by declaring they would wander in the wilderness until every last one of them was dead, and that only Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the Promised Land. This meant forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 14:30–33).

Soon after Israel entered the wilderness, Moses realized he needed to organize an army and chose Joshua to be his military leader (Exodus 17:8–15). He was a valiant warrior, and with the help of God, his untrained army won many a battle. This resulted in him becoming Moses' right-hand man.

After the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, God ordered Moses to ascend the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments recorded on two slabs of stone and the other laws by which the children of Israel were to be guided. Moses took Joshua with him up the mountain. By now, Joshua is described as Moses' minister for it was evident to all that he fought for the glory of the Lord with God's blessing (Ex. 24:12–13).

Joshua's preparation for leading Israel included the cultivation of a strong relationship with God. We are made aware of this in Ex. 33:9–11. The tabernacle, which God ordered His people to construct, was the center of their worship. The people could not enter the tabernacle, but stood around it while Moses entered and communicated with God. Moses then brought God's messages to the people. The cloudy pillar was the sign of God's presence. In this instance, we are told that Joshua entered the tabernacle with Moses and they became prayer partners. When Moses left the tabernacle, probably because of pressing duties, Joshua remained behind and continued his communication with God.

The Bible emphasizes throughout the need for this kind of a relationship with God (Ephesians 6:10–18). If we are to be strong and successful, we need God's help and His constant guidance, and this comes to us as we meditate upon His Word and seek Him in prayer.

## JOSHUA – THE CONQUEROR

As always, when a person lives in close communion with God, He reaches out with the promise of His blessing. So the Lord assured Joshua that He would also bless him, and that he would be successful in all the battles into which he would lead Israel's army (Joshua 1:5–6).

The time had come for the big venture. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the time had finally arrived when God's people would possess the land that He had promised them. Certain preparations needed to be made, and the Lord guided Joshua through all of them (Joshua 1:8–9). It was necessary for Joshua and his army to know something of the lay of the land, so he ordered spies into the city of Jericho. This would be their first challenge.

The two spies entered Jericho and were received into the home of a woman named Rahab.

Although she was a prostitute, she became a tool in the hand of God. Rahab protected the spies when a search was made for them. As a result, she was told she would be preserved when the destruction of Jericho occurred by placing a red cord in her window. Even more interesting is the fact that Rahab became an ancestress of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5). The report the spies brought back gave Joshua the assurance the Lord would give Jericho into his hands (Joshua 2:24).

Joshua began the spiritual preparation of God's people for their great adventure. Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5). He then summoned all the people to him and rehearsed for them the things the Lord had promised (3:9). Joshua wanted the people to realize and remember that whatever success they achieved was a gift of God's grace. He then asked each tribe to select someone to bring a stone that would be used to erect a memorial.

The time had come for Israel to cross over the Jordan River into the land God had promised them. The Jordan River was at flood stage, but when the priests carrying the ark of the covenant stepped into the water, it divided and made a clear path of dry ground upon which all the people could walk into their land of promise (Joshua 3:1–17).

Joshua ordered all uncircumcised males to be circumcised. He wanted to be sure that all were in covenantal relationship with God. That same night Joshua stood near the walls of Jericho where an angel appeared to assure him God would deliver the city into his hands (Joshua 5:13–15).

## THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND BEGINS

**Jericho:** It was a mighty walled city. Within the walls was the fortress, but most of the people lived outside the walls. God commanded the people to march around the walls each day for six days, and on the seventh day, they were to march around the walls seven times. At the end of the seventh march, they were to shout and make a great noise, and the walls of the city would come tumbling down (Joshua 6).

**Ai:** By God's order (Joshua 8:1), Ai was to be the next challenge. God's plan was that this city be taken by means of an ambush. By night, a great army moved to the far side of the city and remained hidden while the remainder of the troops marched upon the city and coaxed the army of Ai to come out for battle. The other army entered Ai from the rear and the soldiers of Ai were caught in a pincer movement. The result was complete destruction of Ai (Joshua 8:28).

**Gibeon:** These were the next people with whom Joshua intended to deal. They, however, were a wily people who sent ambassadors to Joshua pretending to have come from a far distance. They pleaded with Joshua not to invade their land, which was a great distance away. Joshua and his people believed them and made a treaty with their ambassadors promising them safety. It was three days before they discovered these men were from Gibeon. Because of the treaty, the people of Gibeon were spared, but they became servants to Israel (Joshua 9).

**Amorites:** The Amorites were led by five kings including the King of Jerusalem. They banded together when they heard what had happened to Jericho and Ai, and how Gibeon had made a peace treaty with the invading forces. They

decided to attack Gibeon and punish its people for their treachery, but the Gibeonites sent word to Joshua, who came to the defense of Gibeon, and a great battle ensued.

It was in this battle the great event took place for which Joshua is perhaps best remembered. Israel was prevailing in the battle, but the day was coming to a close and the enemy was not totally defeated. Joshua was afraid the enemy would escape during the night so he commanded the sun to stand still. For almost a whole day the sun did not move. Read the summary of this story in Joshua 10:12–14.

The victory was complete, but the five kings fled and hid themselves in caves where they were discovered and executed. In this way, it was known the Lord had given this land to the Israelites. These were God's special people, who needed to be a nation so His promise of salvation could, in His time, be fulfilled. While we may be disturbed by some of the cruelty perpetrated, we must remember that if God's plan was to be accomplished, these people with their pagan religions had to be driven from the land so God's people could remain faithful to Jehovah. Even in this day, there are those times when a Christian must fight for the Lord against the forces of evil and destruction (2 Cor. 10:4 and Eph. 6:12).

**The Others:** Joshua 11 records the manner in which Joshua completed the conquest of the land that would belong to God's people. The real purpose of this conquest is given in

a rather strange statement in Joshua 11:20. For God's people to remain His people they could not live among those who worshipped other gods. The same thing is true for us, and this is stated clearly in Matt. 7:15; 1 John 4:1; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14–18.

### JOSHUA – THE LEADER

Now that the land belonged to Israel, the time had come for them to get organized as a nation. Joshua demonstrated the ability to make it happen. We recognize Joshua's talent as a gift of God. He was the kind of man God could use for this great task.

It was important for the twelve tribes to maintain their identity because of their various destinies. Salvation for the whole world would come from them, and from the tribe of Judah would come a Savior. For this reason, it was important that each tribe receive its own allotment of land, and Joshua made the assignments very wisely, no doubt keeping in mind the words Jacob had spoken to each of his sons as he gave them his final blessing (Genesis 49). Note that the tribe of Levi received no land, but was given cities in which to live scattered throughout the land, for they were to be of the priestly order. Note also that Joseph's descendants received two allotments for the tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Ephraim.

Most important of all, Joshua was very intent on keeping his people close to God, and so he initiated a number of traditions that would always remind them of the great things God had done for them. Joshua

*“Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*



established the Altar of Remembrance (Joshua 22:26–27), not as a place of worship, but as a constant reminder to all the tribes that they were dedicated to the Lord and thus joined to one another. This was pleasing to all the people and became a bond between them (Joshua 22:33–34).

His task completed, Joshua realized his days on earth were numbered so he called an assembly of all the people and gave them his final exhortation (Joshua 23 & 24). Listen to his words in Joshua 23:11 for they characterize this man: “Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God.” Again, in Joshua 24:14: “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.” What a ring of GODLY NOBLENES in these words!

Joshua’s final words will always remain with us (Joshua 24:15): “And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” Here was a man of 110 years, his life was drawing to a close, but he still had love for his people and wanted to inspire them. What gave this ancient man of God such strength? As in the cases of Moses, Abraham, and Noah, Joshua trusted himself into the hands of God. He remembered the promise God had made to be with him wherever he went (Joshua 1:9). That promise had proved true.

### **JOSHUA’S LIFE FOR US**

Godly Nobleness — Surely, we need it too! It is not ours by nature, but given by the power of the Holy Spirit. We see it in the dedicated people of God who give unselfishly of themselves and of their material wealth so that others may be benefited. We see this nobleness in faith-filled people who go out to speak to those who do not know Jesus. We see this nobleness in young people who are determined to walk in the ways of the Lord though others go their own way.

How does the Holy Spirit bring about this nobleness in us? Just as He did with Joshua. He reminds us of the promise Jesus made: “I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20). He brings it through the Word of God as we read and study it. He adds the strengthening gift of the Lord’s Supper. God does not force anyone to use the gifts He offers, but He makes His grace available to all through Word and Sacrament.

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

## CALEB

*Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you examine the passages in Numbers and in Joshua that pertain to the life of Caleb.*

## Review:

1. From your notes on the life of Joshua, what impressed you about this man? What was essential in his preparation for the big task God assigned him?

## Numbers 13:

2. From which tribe did Caleb come? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What was important about the destiny of this tribe? \_\_\_\_\_  
 For what responsibility was Caleb chosen? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Beginning at verse 27, detail the report of the spies when they returned.  
 What were the positives?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were the negatives?

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you define the impression the reports left on the people?

4. What was Caleb's immediate reaction? (From our last lesson, we know Joshua stood with him.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Examine a few Bible passages to show why we could stand with Caleb too, note what you learn from each one.  
 1 Peter 5:7 \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 50:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Psalm 37:5 \_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 19:26 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hebrews 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Beginning at Numbers 14:8–9, note the words of Caleb and Joshua. What did they recognize as important if they were to succeed in taking the land?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. List some of the things you think would be very essential to succeed in an "important venture."  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the punishment for Israel because they failed to trust the Lord? (Num. 14:26–30):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What about Caleb and Joshua?

9. From Numbers 14:24, give God's estimate of Caleb and tell what you think He meant by having "another" or "different" spirit.

10. What important time had come for Israel? (Num. 34:13–5:3)

Give Caleb's role: \_\_\_\_\_

Who did not receive an inheritance? \_\_\_\_\_

What concession was made to the tribe of Levi? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Using Joshua 14:6–15, what words of the Lord does Caleb remind Joshua?

How many years have passed since that time? \_\_\_\_\_

How old is Caleb at the writing of this narrative? \_\_\_\_\_

Give the name and description of the area Caleb requests. (Numbers 13:28 & 33)

12. Caleb's land was a mighty stronghold and many important events happened there. Identify a few of these from the following references:

Joshua 20:7–9

2 Samuel 2:3–4

2 Samuel 15:9–10

13. In Joshua 15:13–15, substantiate what we have already discovered about Caleb. How would you describe him?

14. List ways we might develop God-pleasing qualities in our lives by reviewing Romans 8:26–39. Specify one area in your life you would like to grow.





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*If you truly believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior, then live in that faith, show your faith in the manner in which you perform your daily tasks, in how you react to the people around you.*

#### CALEB – COURAGE TO DARE

As we study the life of Caleb, there is something that attracts us to him. He had the **COURAGE TO DARE**. It takes courage to be a Christian today. To bear witness for Christ takes courage, coupled with a winsome love that only the Lord Jesus can awaken in us. Courage employed with prayer draws upon God’s powerhouse so that great things can be accomplished. Courage does not look at the size or the power of the enemy, but rather at the necessity for victory over that enemy. Surely, we desire the kind of courage only God can give us. It is the courage not only to die decently, but to live bravely.

“What is courage?” asked a little boy of his mother. “Is it like our cat when she arches her back and spits when she is afraid?” The mother did not answer at once, but her answer came later as they walked together past a field that had been charred by fire. In the middle of the field, they saw a lone small flower. The mother explained, “There is courage, son, to stand alone when all around you there is destruction – a fragile red flower growing in a fire-swept land.”

Caleb was a man of courage. One might think of him as a “little old warhorse.” We have known people like that who, though advanced in years, were ready for any challenge, and we can’t help but admire them. So looking at Caleb, we want to learn about the **COURAGE TO DARE**.

**CALEB AS A SPY***NUMBERS 13:2-16*

The children of Israel approached the land of promise from the South. After their dramatic escape from Egypt, Moses, at the behest of God, decided to send spies to appraise the land the Lord had promised to give them for a permanent home. A man was chosen from each of the twelve tribes to be such a spy.

Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim, and Caleb was chosen from the important tribe of Judah. This is our first introduction to Caleb (Numbers 13:6). He was about forty years old, no stripling, but a man of maturity. No doubt he had a family that was dependent upon him, but he willingly accepted this assignment.

Think of the courage it takes to be a spy. It means going into enemy territory, not knowing what you might encounter, and also knowing that, if you are caught, it will most likely mean your death. You have to be very brave and surpassingly clever. Would you have that kind of courage?

**CALEB AND THE SPIES  
GIVE THEIR REPORT***NUMBERS 13:27-33, 14:6-9*

Caleb and the other spies went into the land of promise, and after passing through most of it, they returned to report on what they found. They were unanimous in their report that it was a wonderful land, a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Num. 13:27). They liked what they saw (Num. 14:7). Perhaps you recall from Bible story books the picture of these spies returning, carrying in their hands the produce of the land with a huge cluster of grapes suspended from a pole. Everyone was impressed with the richness of this land in contrast to the terrible desert they had traversed.

However, this is not the end of the report. The spies went on to declare that the land was inhabited by mighty nations who had been trained in warfare for generations, and who lived in great fortified cities. Their conclusion was that it would be impossible for a peace-loving people like themselves, who had languished in slavery all these years, to capture the land (Num. 13:28-29, 33). They said they were like grasshoppers in the presence of these armed people. Their report was discouraging!

But there was a minority report given by Caleb and Joshua. It was Caleb who dared to speak up against the majority. What the other spies had said was true, he acknowledged, but the people should remember that they had a great resource who would make it possible for them to conquer this land. That resource was their God who had seen them through everything thus far. He would fight for them (Num. 14:7-9).

What a powerful lesson for us! At times, the Lord places before us challenges which demand special effort on our part. We may be inclined to look at them from our point of view and think, “This is impossible.” We forget we have the Lord as our resource and with Him nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37). If God has convinced us that a certain thing needs to be done, then we should also have the faith in His name to go forward, knowing He will help us do it.

**CALEB HELPS JOSHUA  
DIVIDE THE LAND***NUMBERS 34:17-19*

With great assistance from God, Joshua had succeeded in conquering the land. We are not told if Caleb played an active part along with Joshua in the conquest of Canaan. Now the time had come when the land would be divided among the various tribes.

Joshua summoned Caleb (a man 85 years old) to serve on the committee that would divide the land. Caleb's name is mentioned first which might indicate that he headed the group.

We are never too old to render valuable service to the Lord. Moses was 80 years old when he was summoned to lead his people out of Egypt. Joshua was a man advanced in years when he led the victorious armies of Israel. It is for us to find those areas where we can best use the talents and experiences the Lord has given us to make our declining years of life a real joy.

### CALEB CLAIMS HIS POSSESSION

#### *JOSHUA 14:6-12*

The Lord promised Caleb he would have a special portion of the land (Num. 14:24), and now the time had come for him to claim it. There was one section that everyone had shied away from because it was inhabited by the Anakim. They were the most powerful among the enemies, people who were indeed giants in stature, and had great walled cities high in the mountains.

Now comes this 85-year-old man who says, "I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming" (Joshua 14:11). It is recorded that Caleb outlived six wives and had 47 children. What a man!

How can we help but love this old warhorse? He is not ready to take it easy, he wants a challenge. We all should want such a challenge. There is such a challenge. It is the major one in the life of a Christian. In 1 John

2:4-6, John says, "Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this, we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." He has reminded us that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins, and when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father. It is this same Jesus, the Righteous One, who has made payment for all of our sins. John has pleaded with us to believe in Jesus, to put our complete trust in Him, and Him alone.

Do you want a big challenge? Here it is: If you truly believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior, then live in that faith, show your faith in the manner in which you perform your daily tasks, in how you react to the people around you. As the love of Jesus was a complete love, a sacrificing love, an overwhelming love, an all-embracing love, let us learn to walk in the same way that He walked. That is the challenge. Are you willing to accept it? Do you have THE COURAGE TO DARE?

### CALEB SUCCEEDS IN CONQUERING HIS LAND

#### *JOSHUA 14:13-15*

Not only did Caleb want a big challenge. He had no fear when the challenge was put before him. This old man knew exactly what he was getting into. He had been there; he had spied the land; he knew what giants the people were who inhabited this land. He also knew they far outnumbered his people, but he was not afraid. He said, "So now give me this hill country of which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim

were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the LORD said” (Joshua 14:12).

God had promised His people they would win the victory over all of their enemies, and Caleb knew there was no enemy too mighty for the Lord to conquer. It was a lesson Israel should have learned a long time ago, and one they would certainly learn in the years to come. Gideon would defeat the Midianites with 300 men, armed with trumpets, pitchers and torches; the lone warrior, Samson, would defeat the mighty Philistines; and young David would slay the giant Goliath. Read the Psalms and you will be impressed with the trust David had in his God.

For God there are no enemies that cannot be defeated. Do you believe this? Who are your enemies? Let’s think of your real enemies – the secret sins within that so often defeat you. These are the potent enemies. We have no power within ourselves to defeat them and to cope with the misery and pain they cause us. But when Jesus, as our Savior, becomes our Champion, we can deal with these sins, for “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Even our secret sins cannot destroy us, because in Jesus they can be forgiven, and from Him we can receive the strength to overcome them (Eph. 3:16).

Nor can our sins known to other people destroy us, the sins we willfully commit against our neighbor because of anger or hatred, lust or greed. They may indeed bring a punishment or a chastisement upon us because of the hurt we have done to others, but they cannot destroy us because Jesus has also earned forgiveness for these sins.

Nor can death destroy us, and it, too, is a terrible enemy each one of us is going to have to deal with. But Jesus has also overcome death for us by His own death and resurrection. Death is indeed swallowed up in victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:55–57). Actually, our death now becomes a glorious triumph; it is the gateway to heaven. It is true as Jesus promised, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

Nor can the mighty power of the devil destroy us because Jesus has also defeated this terrible enemy. Through Jesus, we receive the strength to resist the temptations that Satan is constantly directing our way. And should we fall, Jesus is right there to pick us up again. With His strength, we can again stand on our feet and start over.

In short, none of our enemies should cause us fear, even as the enemies of Caleb caused him no fear. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, and our complete trust in the love of our God, we are assured that we shall be more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us (Romans 8:37). It makes it possible for us to be a Caleb with the COURAGE TO DARE. When we know that our enemies cannot defeat us, then we can go forward for the Lord with every confidence.

## THE CONCLUSION

### *JOSHUA 14:15*

The story of Caleb ends with these words, “And the land had rest from war.” What a marvelous story. What COURAGE TO DARE! Do you have rest from war when you simply run away from conflict? Or, do you have rest when, with God’s help, you are able to overcome your enemies in a God-pleasing way? Behind our effort to win should be the desire to win the enemy for the Lord and His Kingdom, not to destroy, but to save. We need such COURAGE TO DARE.