

## Title: Caleb's 7 secrets - Joshua 14

**Purpose:** To centre our thoughts on Caleb and to mine out what made him the lifelong success that we see in Scripture.

## INTRODUCTION

### Pairs

I want to start with a little audience participation and we are going to have something very simple - we are going to look at pairs. So if I say **Laurel** you need to say **HARDY** - OK very simple.

- **Morcecambe** and **WISE**
- **Little** and **LARGE**
- **Ant** and **DEC**

Ok let's do some bible pairs:

- **Adam** and **EVE**
- **Elijah** and **ELISHA**
- **David** and **Jonathan**
- What about **Joshua** AND **CALEB**

### Today

Now today we are returning to the book of Joshua where we will be considering this man **CALEB** for whom I want to share 7 habits, traits - yes - 7 secrets that made him the man of stature that the Bible shows him to be.

But before we dive into that it is important that we appreciate something about the book of Joshua that is going to affect the way that we approach the forthcoming chapters.

### The two divisions of the book of Joshua

Now the book of Joshua - rather like a number of the NT letters, divides down neatly in two:

- we have **Chapters 1-12** - which are all about the **CONQUEST OF THE LAND**.

And we've been seeing the various key battles that were described in some detail.

And then we have understood the fact that all told there were 3 campaigns by which the land was taken:

- There was the **CENTRAL CAMPAIGN** first and in this they drive a wedge right through the middle of the land.
- After this was the **SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN** which was precipitated by a coalition of Kings responding to the defection of the Gibeonites across to God's people.
- Last of all was the **NORTHERN CAMPAIGN** which wrapped things up.

Now much as it would be tempting to think that all the Israelites now had to do was to slice up the land and go and live in it - **Chapter 13 and verse 1** (which is a bit of a **hinge verse** for the book) tells us:

"When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the Lord said to him, 'You are very old, **and there are still**

**very large areas of land to be taken over.** ' "

- So this takes us now into the 2nd half of the book - **Chapters 13-24** - which are the **POSSESSION OF THE LAND.**

**The two parts of this book very much MODEL and MIRROR what Christian life itself is like:**

- **FIRST** - Jesus Christ must win a CONQUEST on our behalf - and He has done that at the Cross - He has broken the chains that bound us and He has given us the VICTORY and there is now no more condemnation for us who are IN CHRIST JESUS. We are in, as it were, the PROMISED LAND through Christ's work on our behalf.

- **SECOND** - as those newly introduced to being BORN AGAIN FROM ABOVE - we have to learn to appropriate our new found inheritance that Christ has won for us.

And these chapters from **Joshua 13 onwards** show us how well the Israelites did in pressing in and taking what was theirs.

The stranglehold that the Canaanites had had on the land was broken - their various strongholds (Royal cities and the like) were destroyed, their various Kings killed etc.

Now these remaining chapters contain a lot (and I do mean "a lot") of details of **history** and **geography** and are particularly useful & necessary for being able to piece together various other parts of Scripture.

**HOWEVER**, for our purposes here we are going to now move from a "chapter by chapter", "section by section" approach, **over to more of a THEMATIC APPROACH to the last 12 chapters** and so we will more pick and choose the themes and not necessarily move in a strictly linear fashion - we might dovetail around on occasion where that will serve our thematic approach better.

This morning - Caleb

This morning we are going to pick up the reins of **Joshua "Part Two" in Chapter 14** and we are going to be looking at this man **CALEB**.

So that you know what **Chapter 13** was about - suffice it to say that having said that **there was much work still to be done, much land still to be possessed** - we come to the division of the whole land section by section - and this begins with the **two and a half tribes on the Eastern side of the Jordan River**.

Q. Who were the two and half tribes?

Well these were:

- one half of the tribe of Manasseh
- the tribe of Reuben
- and the tribe of Gad

And before the writer of this book goes through these 3 describing in some detail the distribution of the land geographically - we get treated to a few SUMMARY VERSES and these help give us a feel for what things are going to be like as we go through the further chapters and the various other allocations to the different tribes of Israel.

One particularly interesting and noteworthy verse is **Joshua 13 verse 13** which reads:

"Moses had defeated them and taken over their land.

**But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur & Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day."**

You have to say that it is a little bit ominous and you hope that it is not going to become a bit of a theme through the rest of the book of Joshua.

Notice how it points out that Moses had given them the VICTORY, the CONQUEST - and now it was their job to simply do the "MOPPING UP EXERCISE", to simply drive out the stragglers.

### Turning our attention to Caleb

Well that's enough by way of general introduction & background, for the rest of our time we are going into chapter 14 which was read earlier on and has to do with this man Caleb.

### Numbers 13-14 + Joshua 14-15

Now if you want to get the lo-down on Caleb that is actually quite easy - and the reason I say that is because he only really crops up in two places in Scripture (at least in terms of any story sections) - you find him in Numbers 13&14 and you also find him here in Joshua chapters 14&15.

### A young man of 40

Caleb's name first turns up in Numbers 13 when we meet the 12 spies that Moses chooses from the 12 tribes.

He is one of 12 tribal leaders, he is the leading representative for the tribe of Judah and he, at this point in his life, is 40 years of age.

You may be familiar with the story at this point of Israel's wilderness wanderings but they are meant to simply spy out the land and then once they have done their reconnaissance they are to all move forward into the land because it is God intention to give them victory.

Well, after 40 days they all return and rather than getting one report you get two reports:

- **the first report is the MAJORITY REPORT** - and this one acknowledges that the land is one truly flowing with milk and honey as God told them BUT - it is a land also filled with great fortified cities and also with descendants of the Nephilim, the Anakites - those who were considered as GIANTS - and THEREFORE their conclusion was that they could not go in and possess the land. Their MAJORITY REPORT - discouraged all the people.
- **the second report** is brought by Caleb (and backed up by Joshua) - this one is **the MINORITY REPORT** - and it went like this:

Numbers 13 verse 30 "Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, '**We should go up and take possession of the land, FOR WE CAN CERTAINLY DO IT.**'"

And so from this we able to derive the FIRST SECRET OF THIS MAN CALEB - #1

## **SECRET #1 - "His measuring rod"**

Clearly Caleb was not like the rest - he wasn't unique, but he was certainly different.

Q. So what was at the heart of this difference?

Evidently all 12 of the spies had seen the same things - they had all eye-balled the great high walls of the cities such as

Hebron - and they had all seen and tasted the amazing fruits that the land provided.

Yet one group says: **"We can't do it!"** AND the other (much smaller) group says: **"We certainly can do it!!"**.

Tell me - Q. Are you a **"cup half empty"** OR A **"cup half full"** type of person?

It might be you incline more easily to being pessimistic.

I wonder - Q. Are you the sort of person who just sees problems - and you habitually say **'this doesn't work', 'I can't do this or that'** OR are you the sort who says **'Ok, so that didn't work, what about this maybe that will do it or if not that maybe we could try the other'**? You are **more into solutions** THAN you are **into problems**.

Now it would be easy to say - well the secret about Caleb was that he had a "good attitude" - he had an "optimistic outlook on life". But to just put it all down to TEMPERAMENT is really \*not\* the answer here.

If we go onto **Numbers chapter 14** - lets see what God, the LORD, comments about Caleb:

**Numbers 14 verse 24** reads "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."

Joshua has a DIFFERENT SPIRIT - and really this picks up on something we were talking about last time with Joshua, there in Joshua chapter 10 - remember how Joshua is able to pray that amazing public prayer calling on God to stop the sun and the moon in their tracks - and God amazingly yielded to the voice of a man - and we were saying that Joshua was a BIG-GODDER and not a LITTLE-GODDER.

Caleb was the same - he had a BIG GOD and he measured every giant that he met alongside the size and power of his God.

God was his MEASURING ROD for things - he did \*not\* compare himself, and his own military prowess against the giants that he faced. No! God was his one and only MEASURING ROD.

There is another early secret that comes out here in Numbers 14 (and this is an early life secret)

## SECRET #2 - "His servant status"

The text said:

**(Numbers 14 verse 24)** "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."

It might surprise you to know that MOSES was the only other one, at this point, who was spoken of in this way by the LORD.

There is no question that Caleb had a "GREAT HEART", a "BRAVE HEART" - but before any of all of those things his secret was that **he had a rare "SERVANT HEART"**.

Tell me: Q. Are you happy to SERVE or to be SERVED?

There is a prayer that you may have heard - supposedly by St Francis of Assisi in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century - and it reads in the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse:

"O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life."

It is a great secret and not every Christian, by a long margin, really consider themselves as those who are plainly and simply SERVANTS OF GOD.

Now there is **at least one more early secret** (before we move on to Caleb's later life in [Joshua 13&14](#)) and that is:

### **SECRET #3 - "His wholeheartedness"**

Now I guess if there was only one single thing that we were allowed to home into about this man CALEB - it would be this aspect - he was one who followed the LORD wholeheartedly.

#### Mentioned x6

Although Caleb only turns up in these 2 pairs of OT chapters there in Numbers and Joshua - you discover that no less than 6 times (in one form or another) is it stated "**that Caleb followed the LORD wholeheartedly**".

In fact, there is only one other person who gets the same designation of WHOLEHEARTEDNESS and that is David.

So at an early age Caleb is, in one sense, already in the BIG LEAGUE:

- he is **aligned with Moses** as a SERVANT OF GOD
- AND he is **aligned with the future King David** (one who will be described as "a man after God's own heart") as one who FOLLOWED GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

Now maybe you say to yourself:

"Well there are always going to have to be big-hitters in life - those who are on the high road, those that are the PREMIERE LEAGUE CHRISTIANS - but guess what - I am not one of those. It's just little me!!"

Well although that might sound a little attractive - you know: "Don't expect me to aim as high as a CALEB or a JOSHUA" - effectively you are saying:

"Don't expect me to be WHOLEHEARTED - instead I'm going to be HALF-HEARTED in my following after Jesus!"

You see put like that it does sound quite as admissible.

Q. Don't you remember what Jesus said when asked about what the greatest OT commandment was?

(Mark 12 verse 29) "'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with **all your heart** and with **all your soul** and with **all your mind** and with **all your strength**.'"

Caleb then from an early age had taken up the bearing of a leader (because if you remember all the 12 spies were leading men of the tribes) because he had put FIRST THINGS FIRST:

- God was GREAT - that was his measuring rod
- He was a SERVANT - that was his ministry, his basic calling
- & He would always follow God WHOLEHEARTEDLY - that was his WORSHIP - God was worthy and merited only his best - all day and every day

Ok let's move on to the book of Joshua and if you think that it is reasonably easy to start well - we are now going to see Caleb 45 years further on - he is now 85 years of age - and even by today's standards that is a RIPE OLD AGE.

So let's see if we can dig out some, what you might call "ELDER MAN SECRETS".

## SECRET #4 - "His stickability"

Now Caleb doesn't just have longevity ("long life") - because it appears that for him absolutely nothing has changed from what he was like when he was just 40 and in the absolute prime of life.

### An initiator

For a start Caleb is the one who strides to the front when they begin the process of allocating the land to Judah - he is not backward about coming forward. He has been very patient for these 45 years and now is the time to press in and take what is his.

And this is what he says to Joshua:

Joshua chapter 14 verse 10-12 "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 desert. **So here I am today, eighty-five years old! 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.**

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."

You know as the Bible observes:

(Eccles 9 verse 11) (My paraphrase) "**The race is not always to the swift AND the battle is not always to the strong...**"

What really counts (and that is what Caleb has learned and mastered) is how to have STICKABILITY.

You see Caleb was, in some ways, a bit like a plodder through life. Just think of those 45 years since the days of spying were done. At least 38 of them were remarkably predictable and dreary and seemingly pointless.

Perhaps you have moaned about the slow progress in your life. You want to achieve things but somehow the pace of things, the seeming opportunities don't present themselves. You feel rather trapped even.

Q. Have you considered how it might have been for this man Caleb?

- he was someone with potential BUT who was completely overshadowed. He is named alongside Joshua and yet we don't hear of him again until now.

It can't have been a stroll in the park being (excuse the pun) "PARKED!!".

Others like Miriam and Aaron found it ultimately too much for them because they did not get the limelight that Moses (their younger brother got) and they rebelled.

But Caleb just keeps marching on

- he had to wait for half a lifetime for God's promise to him to be fulfilled - that is a long time and we don't learn that he grumbles, moans, whines about it to anyone.

I wonder: Q. Do you have what it takes to set your gaze and just keep plodding where God would have you be (especially when other options might sound more exciting - after all every "new" chapter always sounds more exciting than an "old" one)?

## SECRET #5 - "Faithful in a little"

Jesus told a parable, in [Luke 16](#), about a Shrewd Manager and in Verse 10 he gives us a useful life principle and that is:

(Luke 16 verse 10) "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much..."

And for 45 years Caleb has proved himself faithful with little - he has shown stickability and he is still wholehearted in his service to God.

**And now comes the moment when God comes through for Caleb and gives him much.**

**You see Caleb had set his sights on something and it wasn't just anything.**

### Two pre-allocations by Moses

As we were saying earlier on the book of Joshua is in two equal halves and this second half is where the process of allocating the various parts of the land happens - however, what you might not know is that 2 sets of people had already had, what you might call "pre-allocations" by Moses:

- The 2 and a half tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had made their request for the land of the Amorite kings Sihon and Og on the East side of the Jordan.
- BUT years before this Caleb had made his claim:

[Joshua 14 from Verse 7](#) recounts the history from Numbers 14 we read:

"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, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.

**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.'**"

Q. So which bit of the land that they walked on (and that was essentially the whole land from top to bottom that they traversed over those 40 days) - which bit of the land did Caleb set his heart upon AND the obvious follow on question - why that bit?

### Hebron

Now the part that Caleb wanted was a place called Hebron and it also went by the name Kiriath Arba.

It was a very special place because it was right here that Abraham chose to set up home and more than that this was where Abraham gained the very first toe-hold in the land of promise - for it was here that Sarah died and it was here that Abraham bought the field of Machpelah from the Hittites and used the cave in that field as a burial ground.

It was special not just because of the patriarchs buried there but also David too reigned over Judah for 7 and half years here until the whole of the Kingdom came over to him when he moved to Jerusalem.

#### Set his sights differently

It is worth noticing that Caleb has a very different scale of values to others.

- When **Lot chose** Sodom (a symbol of the world) - **Abraham chose** Hebron (one of the richest and most secure spots in the promised land)
- When the **2 and a half tribes chose** being outside of the promised land altogether - to reside East of the Jordan purely because of its material attractions - **Caleb chooses** that place which has all the right Spiritual connections.

It rather reminds me of Mary and Martha - Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen the best part and it would not be taken from her.

### **SECRET #6 - "Believes God is for him"**

There is no question that Caleb believed **IN** God (and that might be exactly the same for you).

BUT Q. What did Caleb believe **ABOUT** God?

When it came to going in and possessing the promised land this is what Caleb said in Numbers 14 (Verse 8):

"If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us."

And now, 45 years later, he is saying:

(Joshua 14 verse 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.**"

So many of us feel that God is like a hard taskmaster - one whose standards you can never reach and who is perpetually disappointed in us!!

Q. Can some of you identify with this sort of thinking?

The problem with this thinking is that you are trying to please God on the basis of your own MERITS, your own perfect obedience etc. etc.

And the fact is that you cannot do this AND this is precisely the reason why Jesus had to come and die in our place. It was upon the basis of Jesus' perfect record that he was acceptable to God as a sacrifice on our behalf.

So in coming to God our starting point is **\*NOT\*** our own MERIT **\*BUT\*** the perfect merit of the Lord Jesus.

Having been saved by Jesus we are those who can say with Paul: (Romans 8 verse 31f)

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Caleb believes that God delights in him - Caleb believes that God is a good God who delights to give good things to his children.

If you think this is a high teaching - it isn't - it is a really fundamental one actually:

Hebrews 11 verse 6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him **must believe that he exists AND that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**"

One last secret:

## SECRET #7 - "His Christ-likeness"

There is no question I think that Caleb had a very attractional life - by which I mean that his character was very winsome, very winning (if you like).

The way he lived had the effect of drawing people to himself RATHER THAN sending them running in the opposite direction.

And the more like the Lord Jesus Christ we are - the greater the attractional pull we will have.

Christ had a great sweetness and love and compassion and understanding and patience about him.

We gain the sense that Caleb was no different - Q. Where do we see that? Well I think there are a couple of places:

- **FIRSTLY** we see that **his life and his lifestyle flowed over to those that were in close proximity to him.**

In the last chapter where we read of Caleb's exploits we see him throw out a challenge to anyone who will conquer the city of Kiriath Sepher and the reward for this will be his daughter's hand in marriage.

(This certainly was one way to ensure that his daughter got someone with a suitable worthy character!)

And it is **Othniel** that **risers to the challenge and is victorious**. Othniel was his nephew, the Son of Kenaz Caleb's younger brother.

- **SECONDLY** we see that even to his old age Caleb is willing to give away good things.

His daughter and son-in-law come to him one day and they now have land of their own but they want more and request a special favour that they might also be given springs of water. And Caleb gives them both the upper and lower springs.

I guess we all know that old age can bring a lot of aches and pains - and not every old person we know is as gracious as they might be.

It is entirely possible for us to become in our senior years EITHER SOUR or CYNICAL - perhaps BOTH!!

Here it appears that Caleb has been able to grow old graciously and that is a lovely sign of God's ongoing work within.

Caleb doesn't merely come to the end of his days as a **WHOLEHEARTED** man of faith he also shows how to end the race well - being a **JESUS-HEARTED** man of grace

Perhaps like Paul he would have said:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day..."

## CONCLUSION

So we've seen something of what made a man like **CALEB** the sort of person who clearly, just like **JOSHUA** (who was that kindred spirit), a real man who had **POWER WITH GOD**.

- His measuring rod (measuring obstacle against God)
- His servant status
- His wholeheartedness
- His stickability
- His being faithful in a little
- His belief that God is for him
- His Christlikeness

Let us pray that we too can follow **Caleb's** lead - one that seemed to be consistent all throughout his lifetime - that we too may know wonderful **POWER WITH GOD** and lifelong blessing in and through Christ Jesus. AMEN