

ENTER AT YOUR OWN REST

Studies in the Book of Joshua

"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"

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Text

Joshua 15:13-19

Topic

Caleb offers his daughter in marriage to whoever will attack Debir and slay its occupants

Title

"The Family that Slays Together, Stays Together"

Joshua 15:13 Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak).

Joshua 15:14 Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

Joshua 15:15 Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher).

Joshua 15:16 And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife."

Joshua 15:17 So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.

Joshua 15:18 Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

Joshua 15:19 She answered, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Introduction

“Family values” is a term you are hearing a lot in this election year. Everyone is for family values. But whose family is considered the standard?

About fifteen years ago there was a movie titled (in a play on words) *Addams Family Values*. The tag line was, “The family just got a little stranger.” It was based (of course) on the Addams Family TV series that chronicled the misadventures of a very creepy, kooky, mysterious and kooky, altogether ooky, family.

Our text presents Caleb as a family man passing on his spiritual values both to his tribe and to his immediate family. In Caleb we see a godly man reveal by his example and promote by his expectations his spiritual values.

That is going to be our lesson. It is to realize that everyday our family and our friends and anyone watching us sees what we truly, actually value in our example and in our expectations.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Reveal What You Value By Your Example, and #2 You Promote What You Value By Your Expectations.

#1 You Reveal What You Value By Your Example (v13-14)

See if you recognize these words:

*A child arrived just the other day,
He came to the world in the usual way.
But there were planes to catch, and bills to pay.
He learned to walk while I was away.
And he was talking 'fore I knew it, and as he grew,
He'd say, "I'm gonna be like you, dad.
You know I'm gonna be like you."*

They are the opening lyrics of the Harry Chapin song, *Cat's in the Cradle*. The father who never quite had enough time to spend with his son produced a son just like him.

The father's bad example to his son revealed what he truly valued. Like it or not, you example your values everyday. All the more reason to strive to be a Caleb and value things that are spiritual.

Joshua had led the Israelites over the Jordan into the Promised Land. They fought and overcame the inhabitants for a period of seven years. The land was secure but not settled. It was time for each tribe to receive their inheritance.

As Joshua was about to begin distributing the land by casting lots, Caleb stepped forward and demanded he first be given the land promised to him by God through Moses forty-five years earlier. Joshua happily granted his request.

We're skipping ahead in chapter fifteen to finish the story of Caleb's conquest of the land he was promised.

Joshua 15:13 Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak).

If you read through the entire chapter fifteen you can't help but see Caleb as an example to his tribe. We saw in our last study that Hebron was in many ways the most difficult portion to possess. It was mountainous with fortified cities. The sons of Anak lived there - giants who struck fear into the hearts of the Israelites. Not to mention that Caleb was eighty-five years old.

Caleb would show the tribe of Judah, and the other tribes for that matter, that God would help them finish the task of settling their lands. He would be their example that with God all things are possible.

Joshua 15:14 Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

In chapter eleven we were told that the Israelite army had conquered Hebron and Debir. They did not, however, leave garrisons behind to keep those areas secure. Sometime after the land was conquered but before the land was distributed the three sons of Anak returned to Hebron and dug in.

The land was conquered but it had not been settled and more warfare was required. It's a great depiction of your Christian life. Jesus has conquered every enemy. Satan and sin have been crucified on the Cross at Calvary. But you must settle in His promises by engaging in spiritual warfare to dispossess enemies that tend to creep back and dig in.

Caleb engaged the enemy and drove them out. He was the example for his tribe and, really, for all the tribes. If he could do it in the Lord's strength then so could they.

His actions and attitudes towards the promises of God reveal what that man of God valued. He valued faith and obedience. He valued the Word of God. He valued the leading of God and the lot that God had chosen for him. He valued his brothers and sisters in Israel.

We could go on-and-on. You might summarize it by saying that Caleb valued what God valued. Nothing more; nothing less.

The application for us is this. My attitudes and especially my actions reveal what I truly value. Regardless what I might say, how I act says more.

If a total stranger were to analyze my conduct and conversation, what would he conclude I truly valued? What would he conclude you truly, actually value?

I'd like to think he would conclude that I valued only what God valued.

You not only reveal what you value by your example...

#2 You Promote What You Value
By Your Expectations
(v15-19)

These verses show Caleb as a dad. Like any good dad he wanted the best for his daughter. For him that meant what was spiritually best for her. He wanted her to marry someone who had a zeal to serve the Lord. So, after he conquered Hebron, he designed a challenge for her future husband that would show his heart for the Lord.

Joshua 15:15 Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher).

Joshua 15:16 And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife."

Caleb understood the times in which he lived and in which the next generation would live. The land was conquered but not settled. Battles were yet to be fought that would establish each tribe and each family in their inheritance. The best man for his daughter would be someone who was on fire for God.

Marriage is tough in any culture and in any times. Good times or bad there are stresses and struggles. Bottom line is this: Both spouses must first be submitted to God or they will not be likely to submit to one another.

If you are looking for a spouse, it is obviously critical that they be a believer in Jesus Christ. Don't even bother with nonbelievers. Hand them a tract; invite them to church. **Don't practice missionary dating!**

I think you should go beyond asking them if they are a Christian. What does their example show about just how much they love the Lord? Are they really living for the Lord? How important are spiritual pursuits to them?

In the tribal culture of the Israelites it seems that the father had a great deal of input into who his daughter would marry. It sounds almost barbaric to us that Caleb offered his daughter as some sort of prize.

Everything we know about Caleb is positive. I think it's safe to say he was a good dad. And beyond his desire that she marry well spiritually, it is at least possible that Achsah and Othniel were already in love.

Caleb's request was not unusual or unattainable. In fact, it was very normal. All he wanted was for Othniel to show that he had a true walk with

God. Everyone was being called upon to settle their portion by conquest. It was basic spirituality. If you were a dad in those days with your daughter's best interest in mind, you'd want a spouse for her who was engaged in the Lord's work. In that day it was warfare. Today we look at other criteria: church attendance, spiritual gifts, service to the Lord, etc.

You don't want to be in the position of having to convince yourself the guy or gal might really be spiritual even though you don't see any trace of it in their lives.

Joshua 15:17 So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.

Kenaz was Caleb's brother. Othniel was the son of Kenaz and the nephew of Caleb. He and Achsah were cousins. They ended up kissin' cousins!

It was not a sin to marry your cousin, especially in a tribal culture like Israel. I wouldn't have wanted to marry any of my cousins... But there are many famous cousin-couples in history, including John Adams and Abigail Smith, Johann Sebastian Bach and Maria Barbara Bach, Albert Einstein and Elsa Lowenthal, Jessie James and Zerelda Mimms, Thomas Jefferson and Martha Wayles, and Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt.

We saw that Caleb was a man with solid spiritual family values. He exemplified them in his own walk with God. Here we are seeing how he promoted those values to others. He set forth his expectations for them.

Caleb expected his daughter to marry someone who was spiritually solid. He expected his future son-in-law to show his spirituality by serving the Lord.

I think Caleb probably talked to Achsah often as she was growing up about her future husband. They prayed together for the man God would show them was her mate and soulmate. I'm sure Caleb looked out for his little girl among the Israelites. There were undoubtedly a lot of young guys interested in her. Caleb's expectations would narrow the field - especially if they became Achsah's expectations as well.

What do we expect of our children? Too often in a materialistic culture like ours what is 'best' for them is identified in terms of finances and education.

Those are minor components. They are important on some level but pale in comparison to what is best for them spiritually.

Young parents starting out should absolutely expect their sons and daughters to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. You should evangelize your kids. God has given them the privilege of having a Christian parent or parents. Lead them to faith in Jesus Christ.

You should absolutely expect them to serve the Lord. Their walk with God should be the most important part of their upbringing. Educational pursuits, athletic pursuits, social pursuits, and the like should always take a backseat to spiritual pursuits.

You should expect them to be interested only in a Christian for a spouse. And, as we've seen, not just any professing Christian but a young man or a young woman who by their actual example is living a life filled with submission to Jesus Christ.

Anything less than this is setting them up for a potential spiritual failure.

There is a footnote to the story of Caleb, Achsah and Othniel.

Joshua 15:18 Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

Joshua 15:19 She answered, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

On a practical level, a "field" with no water was useless. Caleb hadn't raised Achsah to be stupid! She asked and Caleb gave her more than she asked for.

The fact he gave her more indicates he wanted them to ask for the field and for the water. So why not just give it to them?

I think that Caleb was being an example to them. A spiritual example. If they wanted anything from their dad, all they had to do was ask and he would give them not just what they asked for but more.

Sound like any dad you know? Maybe this will help:

Luke 11:11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?
Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

Luke 11:12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Your heavenly Father wants to give you the good gift of the Holy Spirit in abundance.

Achsah and Othniel asked for water and were given more than they asked for. God the Holy Spirit is compared to water. Jesus said,

John 7:37 ... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

John 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

John 7:39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...

In the Luke passage Jesus was talking about believers who have already been born-again asking for more of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In John we're promised the influence and presence of the Spirit will be like rivers of living water flowing into, through, and out from us.

Why, then, do we sometimes sense a lack of the Holy Spirit? Even after we ask?

I'm sure there are many answers we could give. One is suggested by our story. Caleb, Othniel, and Achsah were all out on the front lines serving the Lord.

- Caleb was taking on giants in fortified mountain cities.
- Othniel was taking on the assault of Debir.
- Othniel and Achsah were starting a family in territory that, even though conquered, still needed settling.

They asked and received what they asked for because they were busy serving the Lord.

Do I really need more of the Holy Spirit? I do if I am stepping out in obedience in the field the Lord has given me to conquer.

Get busy for God. Take a step or steps serving Him. He'll meet you there with more than you ask for.