

# Family Bible Series for June 4: Caleb demonstrated an enduring faith

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### Caleb demonstrated an enduring faith

- Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9; Joshua 14:6-14

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Legend says Phedippides, a Greek soldier, was sent to Athens to announce the powerful Persian Empire had been defeated at the Battle of Marathon. Supposedly, he ran the entire distance from Marathon to Athens without stopping—21.4 miles. After the messenger announced to the city of Athens that the Persians had been defeated, he promptly collapsed and died. From this legend, the name “marathon” has become associated with an endurance race of a similar distance.

During June, our lessons will focus on godly men of faith. In this week’s lesson, we examine Caleb, a powerful man of God whose faith endured the years. Much like the Greek soldier, Caleb endured to the very end. In looking at Caleb’s example, we can see how our faith can endure as well.





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### **Meet faith's challenges (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)**

The Israelites were at a challenging crossroad. They were encamped at Kadesh-Barnea, on the southern edge of the Promised Land. God had promised the land to his people, yet they were fearful of the land's inhabitants. The Israelites had heard the people were large, vicious and powerful.

As a result, the Israelites decided to send spies into the land to observe and return with a report. Each of the 12 tribes had one representative on the "spy committee." When the 12 men returned with a report of the land, only Joshua and Caleb said the Israelites could meet the challenge. Caleb said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (13:30).

The majority won and the Israelites decided not to attempt to conquer the land. Caleb grieved over the decision and tore his garment as a sign of his displeasure (14:6). He had faith to meet the challenge and encouraged God's people to do the same. "And do not be afraid of the people of the land. ... Their protection is gone but God is with us. Do not be afraid of them" (14:9).

Life often issues challenges to us. The challenge may appear in the form of a relationship fracture, a financial difficulty, death, an illness, the loss of a

job or another area. Yet, believers can face any challenge with faith and know the same God who empowered Caleb will strengthen them.

### **Believe God's promise (Joshua 14:6-9)**

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness 40 years after refusing to believe God's promise. Later, Joshua and Caleb were the only spies allowed to enter the Promised Land since they believed God.

As Hebron was given to Caleb, he spoke with Joshua about believing God's promises. Caleb recalled: "I was 40 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 about my convictions" (v. 7). Caleb stated, "I followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly" (v. 8). As a result, God promised Caleb, through Moses, the land upon which his feet walked would be his inheritance. Caleb's children would enjoy the land forever (v. 9). Caleb believed God's promises.

There are more than 2,000 specific promises made by God throughout the pages of the Bible. Believers can claim these promises and know our Lord will not break one of them. Someone noted God's promises do not break when you lean on them.

Perhaps you are in a situation where God wants you simply to claim his promise. The eternal God of the universe does not lie. You can trust his word.

### **Remain loyal (Joshua 14:10-14)**

Caleb remained loyal to God many years. He was 45 years old when Moses sent him to spy out the Promised Land. He was 85 years old when God gave

him Hebron as his inheritance (v. 10). The Lord blessed Caleb with strength and the possession of a land because he was loyal to his God. “So Hebron belonged to Caleb ... because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly” (v. 14).

Polycarp was the faithful Bishop of Smyrna from A.D. 70 to A.D. 155. He was a powerful witness for Jesus Christ and remained loyal to his faith in the midst of persecution. He was urged by the Romans to recant his faith or die. Polycarp replied: “For 86 years, I have served my Lord, and he never did me any harm. How then can I now blaspheme my King and Savior?” The executioner replied: “I have respect for your age. Simply recant and live.” Polycarp refused to give up his faith and was burned at the stake.

Many Christians today have served faithfully many years. Through both joys and trials, their faith and service have remained strong. If you find yourself inconsistent in your daily walk, make a commitment today to become more faithful. God blesses loyalty. May you serve with strength in the coming days and be a person, like Caleb, whose faith endures to the very end.

### **Discussion questions**

- What challenges have you faced recently as you try to live by faith?
- Which of God's many promises has brought you the most comfort?
- What keeps Christians today from being more loyal to Christ?



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