

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen (Old Testament)

Numbers 13:30-31; 14:8-9, 24, 30

A Different Spirit

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."

(Caleb): "If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

(God): "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... Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised."

It's a familiar story in the history of Israel. Twelve tribal leaders were sent to spy out the land of Canaan. Upon their return, they reported that the land was truly bountiful. They even brought back some of the fruit as proof. But the good news ended there. Ten of the twelve leaders claimed that the inhabitants were too strong for them, convincing the children of Israel that they could not win.

In actuality, their self-confidence waned. They thought too little of themselves and therefore considered themselves even littler among the giants of the land (Numbers 13:33). But even worse was their total rejection of God's promise and provision. Caleb didn't mind bringing that to their attention.

Because they despised the land which the Lord was giving them, they were sentenced to wander around in the wilderness until that adult generation died out. God would give the promised land to their children, and to faithful Caleb and Joshua. Score: children 1, adults 0.

Caleb had a different spirit. He believed what David sang about many years later, that God is our rock, our fortress, our deliverer, our strength, our shield, our salvation, our stronghold, our refuge (II Samuel 22:2-3). While others thought little of themselves, he was fully aware of the Lordship of God in his life. He had the confidence to believe that he could do the impossible...

In September of 1814, the British army closed in on the frontier town of Plattsburgh, New York. The battle-hardened soldiers needed only to cross the Saranac River at Beekmantown to gain control of this region of the young nation. To make matters worse, many of Plattsburgh's men were away fighting the war on other fronts.

As word spread about the advancing army, 15 boys ran to their schoolhouse to see what could be done. Most were under 16 years of age. Although too young for military duty, they volunteered their services for defense of their town. Their offer was hastily accepted and they were immediately armed.

Self-organized and self-instructed, they accompanied General Mooers to Beekmantown. Under the command of Captain M. J. Aiken and Lieutenant Azariah Flagg, the boys harassed the British soldiers night and day. They scouted out enemy positions, reporting their findings to the general. One moment they were here, then there – the boys seemed to be everywhere. The kids didn't know that they were outnumbered and outgunned. Likewise, the famous British army didn't know that they were outclassed. Fifteen boys held the enemy at bay and saved their town. Score: children 1, adults 0.

They became known as Aiken's volunteers: Gustavus, Hazen, Frederick, Amos, and Smith; Ira, Henry, Hiram, James P., and Melancthon; James T., St. J.B., Ethan, Bartemus, and Flavel. On May 20, 1826, Congress passed a resolution that rewarded these young men for their patriotism and courage. Each received a rifle bearing the inscription: *For his gallantry at the SIEGE OF PLATTSBURGH*. It was the only time in American history when a rifle was officially given as a reward for valor in battle.*

Theirs was a different spirit. The kind that builds new nations. I'm sure that Caleb would have approved.

* Sources: Clinton County Historical Association, NY; and American State Papers Home Page U. S. Congressional Documents.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Numbers 13:30-31; 14:8-9, 24, 30
A Different Spirit

HOOK

1. What award have you received, or what have you achieved, that means the most to you?

2. What have you done as an outdoorsman to encourage or mentor a child? An adult?

3. Describe some events from your childhood that are most memorable for you.

LINE

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Explain what gives you confidence in the Lordship of Jesus in your life. How does this help you face hardships? If you can't answer these questions, will you seek the help of a Christian friend?

Describe a time in your life when you were faced with having to do the impossible. How did you succeed? What would you have done differently? Rate your reliance on the Lord.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: confidence courage Lordship of Jesus
