

## “Frustrated but Faithful”

How many times have we desired something and did not get it when we wanted it? I would say probably a lot of times. It becomes even more frustrating when you feel you deserve it but because of a few other things you were denied. We see and have experienced this many times, haven't we? It actually starts early in childhood when, if you have siblings, you end up paying the price for the disobedience of your older brother or younger sister or both. You were innocent and obedient to your parents yet because you were part of the clan at the time of the offense, you went down with the ship! Or in my case, on the High School football team, I can recall when I knew I'd had a good practice or played hard in the game, yet because we lost or the team did not hustle hard enough, we all had to do extra laps. Fast forward to corporate America, where I performed well at my job but when the department did not, we all suffered the loss of bonuses. All these real life common scenarios seemed so unfair. Why did I have to bear the grunt of my siblings' disobedience? or have to run extra laps because of a few lazy pinhead teammates? or miss out on bonuses because of other's lack of commitment? After all, I was the good guy. The one that obeyed, believed, worked hard, and gave it my all. Could we not all ask questions like these at one point or another? I'm sure that we have because they are as common today as they were back in the days of Caleb. If there was ever a guy who had reason to ask all these questions and more, Caleb would be a good candidate. Nevertheless, he provides for us today a wonderful peek at the attitude that we should embrace in times like the ones he faced. Let's examine why.

Caleb was one of the twelve spies that Moses sent to explore the land of Canaan which the Lord had given to the Israelites (Numbers 1:1-6). Upon their return, they gave a good report on the land (vs. 27). Imagine how excited and full of anticipation Caleb must have been to have seen the promise land that the Lord had sworn to give them! Now Caleb, like all Israelites, lived in ghetto-like conditions under slavery and bondage in Egypt. So, the idea of living as a free man in a quality land would have been a dream for any Israelite and Caleb was certainly looking forward to it. In fact, when ten of the other spies gave a report of fear (vs.28, vs. 31-32) Caleb urged the people to forget the fear and bad report and “go up and take possession of the land”. This faithful servant's valiant battle cry (vs.30, Ch. 14: 8-9) fell on deaf ears for the Israelites allowed their lack of faith, disobedience and fear overcome them. While Caleb showed great faith in the Lord the people did not and even went as far as complaining and demanding change (Ch.14: 1-4, 10). Caleb's opportunity for a good life was lost for the time being because, as a result of God's anger, the Israelite community was punished and the Lord kept them in the desert for forty years (vs. 26-35). Eventually, Caleb did get to the promise land but it was 45 years later when it could have been much sooner. Imagine how Caleb must have felt. He did everything right and because of a few faithless and visionless people, he lost his opportunity for immediate quality living and was succumbed to the desert with a bunch of complaining, faithless, negative people. Might we say that Caleb might have been just a little bit frustrated? I submit to you that he was. Did he remain faithful throughout? We can surmise that he did. In fact, God recognizes Caleb's faithfulness and that is the reason why Caleb eventually enters the promise land (vs.24). The Bible does not speak of any frustration, disappointment, or bitterness that Caleb might have felt throughout the next desert-wandering forty years. Yet, what we do see is an individual, who much like us, went through a period of time where things did not seem fair, but throughout he never allowed his frustration to overcome his faith.

*By Jesus Maymi*

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