

Wholly Following the Lord



Caleb: Lessons from a Dog's Life (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

The thing that angers God most is when we don't believe what He said He will do. I've made a little observation of this theme and I found the thing that angers God most is not people who sin. That's bad enough. But it's people who despise God's grace. Then He's angry. Then He casts them off.

That is what happened to Esau. He despised his birthright. And God says latter on, "Esau I have hated." Not because he was a sinner, but because he despised the offer of God's grace. We need to pray for Israel today that they will not despise the promise of God. To me this is a terribly contemporary issue. I believe the Israelites were sinners—most of them. And God does not bless sin. But the sin that angers Him most is rejecting His grace. When God has gone to infinite pains to provide something and He offers it to you and you said, "I don't think I want it," you make God angry. Very, very angry. I think it's the sin that angers God most. We're all sinners. We all need God's mercy. But when we deliberately look God in the face and say, "God, thank you, but I don't think I want it," I don't know how much mercy is left.

I feel God prompted me to say this. I feel there are people here tonight who are in danger of saying, "No thank you, God. I'm not interested." I hope you will not make that terrible mistake. Jesus said in the New Testament, "By your words you will be justified, by your words you will be condemned" [Matthew 12:36–37]. Every idle word that men speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment.

I've heard people say many times, "Well, I didn't really mean it. I know it was a foolish thing to say, but I didn't really mean it." That's just the words that Jesus is talking about. Idle words. Words that don't have a real meaning. He said, "Every idle word that you speak, you will give account of it in the day of judgment."

Sometimes I fight against something that God wants me to say and He told me before this meeting to say what He gave me. You may think this is ridiculous, but it's true. I was meditating on the fact that when God forgives us our sins He doesn't necessarily cancel the consequences. Let me give you an example, which certainly doesn't glorify me. I've had

about thirty skin cancers removed from my face in various stages. Sometime back I went to an Orthodox dermatologist and we were talking to one another. I went to him for treatment. I said, "Of course, for years I used to lie in the sun and expose myself to the sun and get all the sun I could." And he said, "Sun worshiper!" And I said, "Well, I suppose you could say so." He said, "Thou shall have no other gods before me." There was nothing I could say. It was absolutely true.

And I realized God's forgiven me but I have not, up till now, been delivered from the consequences. If you don't know about it, it takes 25 years for a skin cancer to develop. When I first went to a dermatologist in Florida, I said, "I don't know why I have all these things." He said, "You had all the sun you needed 25 years ago." So I calculated where I was 25 years ago at that time, I was living on the equator in Africa. And to prove how macho I was, I never wore a helmet. See, pride is really the root of most of our sins.

Well, that wasn't what I was going to tell you. That's just by the way. I mean, you will think it's crazy, but it happened. I've been a Christian so long some people cannot imagine what I was like when I was not a Christian. But I was not a Christian, when I was not a Christian. I began to get this acute nerve pain in my left toe. I would struggle with it, rebuke the demon of pain and get delivered, but after a while it came back. I was lying one night awake and just not thinking about anything. And you will think this is crazy, but I was crazy with the craziness of my generation which was between the two world wars. And I was not saved. I was far from being saved. In fact, when I went back to Cambridge and they discovered I was saved, they said, "It could have happened to anybody but you!"

Anyhow, this is the idiom of that period. You have to understand. When people said something I thought was silly or I didn't agree with, I would say, "My left foot! My left foot!" And God brought that back to me. He said, "You put a curse on your left foot." I said, "Lord, I repent. Forgive me. Deliver me." I've never had another moment's pain since then. Can you believe that? It's very new thinking for some of you.

Let me give you good news. On the cross Jesus became a curse for us, with every curse that could come upon us, that we might be redeemed from the curse and inherit the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things! That's the exchange. Jesus became the curse, that we might receive the blessing. So if there is a curse over your life that you brought upon yourself, you can be delivered. But you have to humble yourself. You have to say, "Lord, I'm sorry I said a foolish thing. I said something I didn't mean. I repent. Forgive me and deliver me."

Now, we'll go on with Caleb. What was the essence of Caleb? Why was he called a dog? What was the dog nature in Caleb? Shall I tell you? Five times it says, "He wholly followed the Lord." Totally. Five times. I'll just read that and then we'll think about a dog. In Numbers 14:24 the Lord is speaking and He says,

> "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."

So he had a different spirit. And the spirit that he had caused him to follow the Lord fully or wholly. And then you can look on in Numbers 32:11–12. Again the Lord is speaking,

> "Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly [fully] followed [Me] the Lord."

And then in Deuteronomy 1:35–36, again this is the Lord speaking,

> "Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh: he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord."

And then in Joshua 14:8–9. I find that there's a power in not just saying that he said it, but reading the Word. Joshua 14:8–9, this is Joshua's own testimony.

> "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'"

And then again in the same chapter, verse 14.

Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

Now there's a lot of discussion about Hebron. It's one of the burning issues. I'll tell you who is going to get it in the end. The descendants of Caleb. That was settled about 3,400 years ago. Why? Tell me. Because he wholly followed the Lord. So the question is, are you wholly following the Lord?

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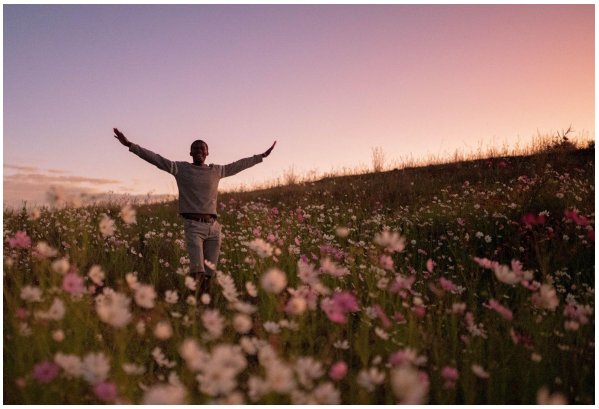
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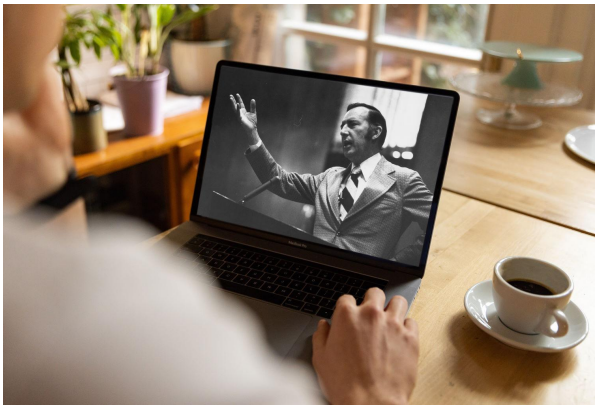
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