

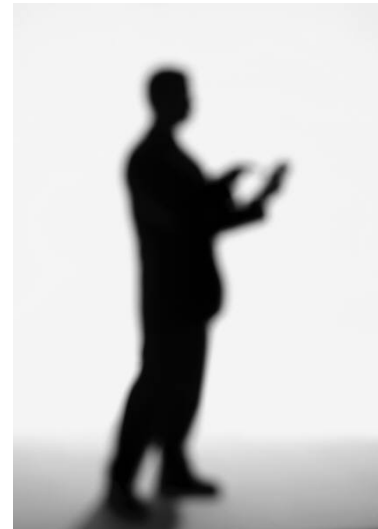
Week Three

Read the story of Daniel's decision to keep on praying even when it meant risking his life. (Daniel 6) What can you learn from his example that will help you make the right decisions in your life?

Week Four

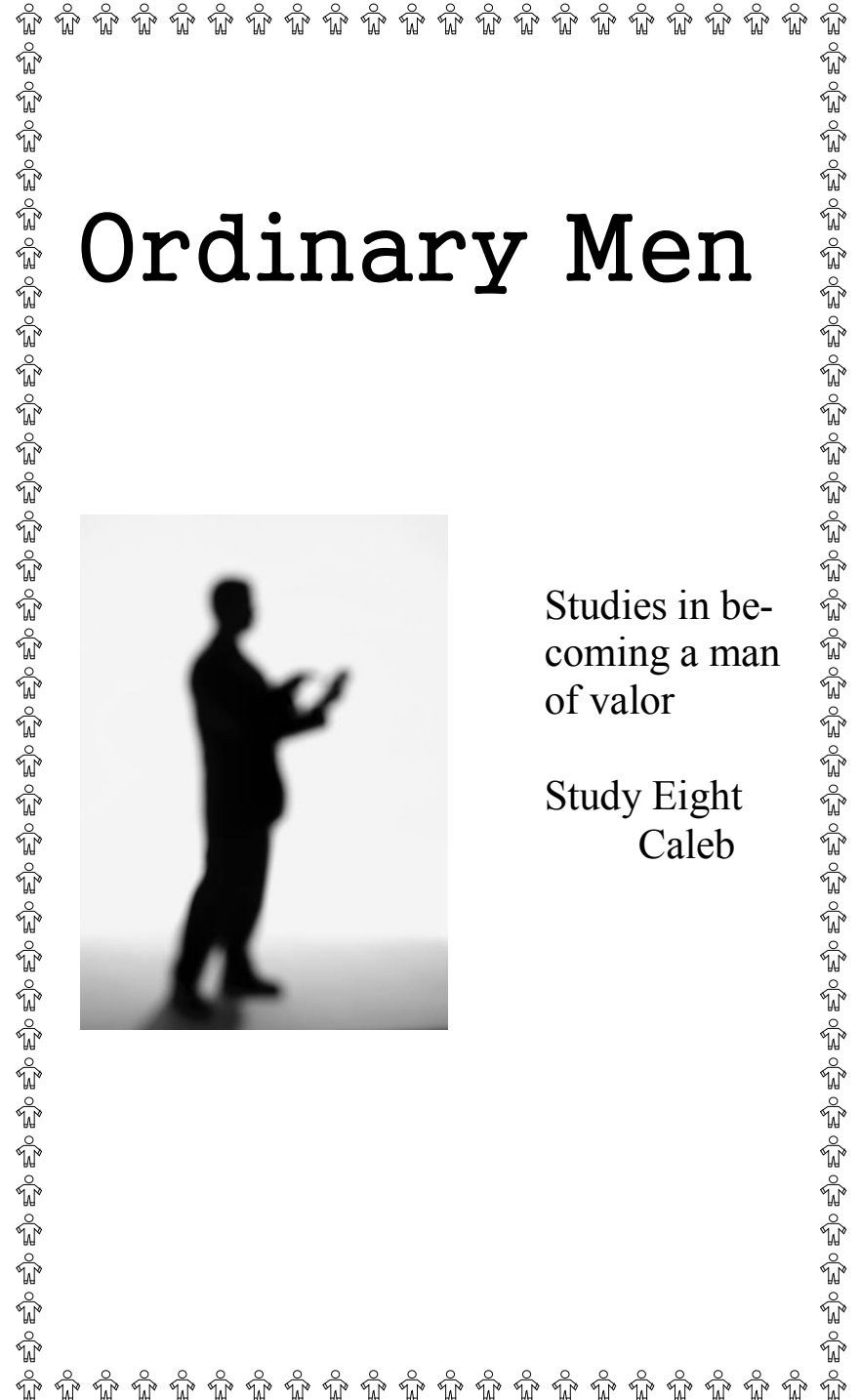
What people and events pressure you to deny God's promises and not obey him in every way possible? Read the following to understand why you should not give in to the fears of others and do all you can to follow God. Ephesians 4:17-20; John 2:15-17; 4:4-5; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; Proverbs 3:1-4

Ordinary Men



Studies in becoming a man of valor

Study Eight
Caleb



From the Diary of Caleb (Numbers 14, Joshua 14-15:20)

How often do we take time to reflect back on the decisions that we have made and the consequences of those decisions. I can think of two such times in my life and each of them meant taking risks to do what was right.

I have never thought of myself as someone special or any different than the next man. I have a wife and a family and do everything I can to care for them, protect them and provide the kind of leadership that one would expect from a follower of God.

To this day I do not know why I was chosen for the scouting party that was sent into the promised land to identify its boundaries, its resources, and of course, the nature of the enemies we would be facing when we entered the land.

It was very clear from the beginning that this group of twelve was going to be a divided group; those who would only see the dangers and difficulties and those who would see the blessings and possibilities. Actually there were only two of us that saw the good and believed that God could give us this land. Joshua and I did everything we could to convince the others. We even carried a huge bunch of grapes back with us in the hope that it would somehow sway the rest of the group or at least influence the people to see what God was ready to give us.

But before we could even begin to share the wonders of the land the others shouted us down and began to poison the people against us and against entering the land. They spread their poison by focusing on stories of giants and fortified cities. They convinced the people that we would be better off returning to Egypt and slavery than entering this land and risking defeat and death.

No matter what Joshua and I said the people would not listen. They threatened to kill us. Even our families began to doubt us. I remember those moments and wondering when I would feel an arrow or spear in my chest. But we did not back down. God could give us the land, we could defeat the people. We were right and the others were wrong.

We paid dearly for that and ended up not being allowed to enter the promised land. Now after forty years of wandering only the two of us remain. God punished all those who did not trust him then and we, after

a long hard journey, made even more difficult as we watched those who did not trust God and rebelled against him die. So many who were friends are no longer here.

But yesterday, now that was a day to remember! There before us lay the stronghold of Anak. My family thought I was crazy when I asked Joshua for the privilege of attacking this haven of the enemy. I knew in my heart that this land should be the inheritance for my children. All agreed that it was a beautiful, rich land and would provide abundantly for us. As I spoke I reminded my family of all that had happened before and that this time we needed to trust God. They began to see the truth of those words and joined me in the battle for Hebron.

It was a day of vindication for the words of faith spoken so many years ago. Those other ten spies had been so afraid of the fortified cities and the giants. The mighty warriors of the sons of Anak. Yet they were no match, no match for me and my group of warriors. I felt like I was a youth of 25 again, with boundless energy and agility instead of my 85 years of age. The enemy had no idea what was happening. Our small clan defeated the giants that so terrified our nation those many years ago. Such a victory celebration will not be seen for years to come.

Now it is time to hand over the leadership of my clan to another, to Othniel the husband of my daughter Acsah. She is so much like me. She has convinced her husband to ask for extra land that includes springs. She is already planning ahead. As long as they keep their eyes on God nothing will be able to stop them from leading His people in victory and in service.

Week One

Read the following scriptures Isaiah 41:10-16; Jeremiah 20:1-2; 1 Samuel 14:27-29. How does one make the right decision when others oppose them?

Week two

Enoch walked with the Lord (Genesis 5:21-25). Caleb believed that God could give them the land (Numbers 14). Elijah defied King Ahab to preach the word of God (1 Kings 18). What do we need to do to keep our eyes focused on God so that we can see what is right, obey God, and not be controlled by the fears of others?