

FRONTIER MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Men of Faith Who Defeated the
Wilderness and Fell the Giants*



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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A FRONTIER MAN?

The Old Testament contains many stories of men who faced wild places, hostile peoples, and seemingly impossible odds — and overcame them by faith.

“Frontier men” is a helpful way to describe these figures: pioneers who pushed into new territory, faced fear, fought giants (literally or figuratively), and trusted God when the path was unknown. This booklet examines several of those men, highlights their defining qualities, and offers practical application for believers today who must confront their own “wildernesses” and “giants.”

ABRAHAM: THE PIONEER OF PROMISE

Scripture: Genesis 12–25

Summary

Abraham was called to leave home and go to an unknown land “that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). He wandered as a sojourner, built altars, negotiated foreign territories, and persevered through doubt and testing. Though not a warrior in the sense of cutting down giants, Abraham models the courageous faith of a pioneer who stakes his life on God’s promise.

Key lessons

- Obedience without full knowledge: Abraham left without seeing the destination.
- Faith that awaits fulfillment: He believed God's promise about descendants and land even when circumstances seemed impossible.
- Relationship over territory: Abraham's frontier was shaped by covenant, not conquest.

Application

- Trust God's call even when the road is unclear.
- Live as a pilgrim, not an owner, in difficult seasons.

MOSES: LEADER THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

Scripture: Exodus–Deuteronomy

Summary

Moses led Israel out of Egypt and through the Sinai wilderness. He faced logistical crises, rebellion, fear, and the challenge of making a nation out of freed slaves. Moses' frontier was long and grueling; his leadership combined intimacy with God, perseverance, and prophetic courage.

Key lessons

- Leadership in the wilderness requires patience and dependence on God (Exodus 16–17).
- Prayerful intercession and obedience are foundational (Exodus 32; Numbers 12).
- Sometimes the journey is longer than expected; faithfulness matters more than immediate success.

Application

- In seasons of testing, practice consistent prayer and rely on God's provision.
- Be patient with your people and process; wilderness shapes character.

CALEB AND JOSHUA: FAITHFUL SCOUTS AND CONQUERORS

Scripture: Numbers 13–14; Joshua 1–24

Summary

When scouts explored Canaan, ten returned afraid, but Joshua and Caleb trusted God's promise and urged immediate possession of the land (Numbers 13–14). Years later Joshua led the conquest, and Caleb claimed the hill country despite giants still living there (Joshua 14:6–15). These men embody the frontier spirit: courage to enter, perseverance to possess, and faith to face giants.

Key lessons

- Courage to act when others panic (Numbers 13–14).
- Persistence: Caleb waited 45 years to receive his inheritance (Joshua 14).
- Taking responsibility: Frontier men claim their portion and fight for it.

Application

- Reject fear-driven consensus; choose faith-driven action.
- Wait faithfully for God's promises, then move decisively when the time comes.

DAVID: THE GIANT-SLAYER AND SHEPHERD-KING

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16–31; 2 Samuel

Summary

David, a shepherd, stepped into Israel's most iconic "frontier" moment when he faced Goliath (1 Samuel 17). His victory was not primarily military technique but trust in the Lord who had delivered him from lion and bear. David later became a unifying leader who expanded Israel's borders, subdued enemies, and established Jerusalem as a strategic and spiritual center.

Key lessons

- Confidence comes from past experiences of God's deliverance.
- The spirit of a frontier man includes both boldness in conflict and tenderness in leadership.
- Battles can spotlight God's glory rather than human achievement.

Application

- Remember past victories to fuel present courage.
- Face your “giants” with faith, skill, and a readiness to give God the glory.

THE JUDGES: GIDEON, SAMSON, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE FRONTIER

Scripture: Judges 6–16

Summary

The era of the Judges produced flawed but effective frontier figures. Gideon's hesitant faith grew into decisive action against Midian (Judges 6–8). Samson brought raw strength to the fight against the Philistines (Judges 13–16). These men were not ideal models in every way, but their stories show that God can use unlikely, imperfect people to push back darkness.

Key lessons

- God often chooses the weak to shame the strong (Judges 6:15–16; 1 Corinthians 1:27).
- The frontier is messy; courage and grace often coexist with weakness.
- Reliance on God, not merely on strength or numbers, secures victory (Gideon’s 300).

Application

- Expect to be used despite imperfections.
- Rely on God’s wisdom and timing rather than human methods alone.

CHARACTER TRAITS OF FRONTIER MEN

Across these stories, several recurring traits emerge:

- Faith: Trust in God’s promises and power.
- Courage: Willingness to act in the face of danger and uncertainty.
- Persever

TOOLS OF A FRONTIER MAN

Purpose

Frontier men survive and prevail not only by courage but by what they carry and practice. Tools are

physical, mental, and spiritual — each necessary for clearing new ground, facing “giants,” and caring for a community.

I. Tools of Old Testament frontier men (examples and uses)

- Staff: walking aid, weapon, symbol of authority (Moses, shepherds).
- Sling and stones: light, portable weapon (David vs. Goliath).
- Bow and spear: hunting and warfare (patriarchs and warriors).
- Knife or flint blade: butchering, craft, sacrifice (Abraham’s knife, daily utility).
- Tent, tent-peg, and cloak: mobile shelter and basic bedding (nomadic life).
- Wineskin/waterskin: carry water on journeys across arid lands.
- Altar and fire-making kit: worship, sacrifice, and cooking.
- Herd animals (sheep, goats): food, wealth, mobility, and livelihood.
- Provisions: cured meat, grain, salt — for long journeys and drought.
- Signet or covenant tokens: identity and promise-keeping (covenant seals, oaths).

II. Tools of American/frontier-era men (practical kit)

- Axe/hatchet: felling trees, splitting wood, building.
- Fixed-blade knife: all-purpose cutting and carving tool.
- Rifle or musket (and ammunition): hunting, protection, and signaling strength.
- Flint and steel or matches; tinder box: fire-making.
- Rope/cordage and tarred twine: hauling, lashings, snares.
- Compass, map, and knowledge of the stars: navigation.
- Wagon, saddle, harness: transport of people and goods.
- Lantern and oil or lamp: night work and warning signals.
- Anvil, hammer, tongs; basic blacksmithing tools: tool and gear repair.
- Plough, hoe, spade: land working and planting.
- Traps, snare wire, fishing tackle: food procurement.
- Cooking pot, pan, kettle: communal meals and hospitality.
- Canvas/tarp, blankets, skins: shelter and insulation.
- First-aid basics: salves, bandages, needles — field medicine.
- Trade goods and scales/ledger: commerce and fair exchange.

III. Skills, habits, and practices as tools

- Tracking and scouting: read the land and anticipate

danger.

- Carpentry and repair: keep shelter and gear serviceable.
- Foraging and seasonal food knowledge: stretch provisions.
- Blacksmithing and basic mechanics: self-reliance.
- Diplomacy and negotiation: handle strangers, traders, and neighbors.
- Leadership and organization: marshal people in crisis (like Moses/Reverend Morris).
- Patience and perseverance: steady work through long journeys and waits.
- Courage coupled with prudence: know when to press on and when to retreat.
- Teaching and mentorship: train the next generation (Tom's plough lesson).
- Community-mindedness: share tools, labor, and faith.

IV. Spiritual tools (how frontier men in Scripture and your tales were equipped)

- Faith (trust in God's promises): the operative "tool" for every venture (Abraham, Caleb).
- Prayer and intercession: seeking God's guidance and protection (Moses' prayers).
- Scripture and covenant memory: anchoring decisions in God's revealed promises.
- Worship and sacrificial obedience: altar, praise, and

obedience as community glue.

- Confession and repentance: restore relationships and strengthen teams (Tom’s confession).
- Mercy and hospitality: practical faith expressed toward strangers (Sam the blacksmith).
- Humility and dependence on God rather than self-sufficiency (Gideon, Caleb).
- Fellowship: the gathered people who supply manpower, counsel, and mutual aid.

V. Practical checklist for a modern “frontier” believer (combine preparation and devotion)

Physical essentials:

1. Reliable knife and small axe/hatchet.
2. Means to make fire (flint/steel or lighter) and tinder.
3. Rope/cordage and a tarp or emergency shelter.
4. Water container and knowledge of purification.
5. Small first-aid kit and basic repair materials.

Spiritual essentials:

6. Regular time of prayer and Scripture reading.
7. A small pocket Bible or key verses memorized.
8. A trusted community for counsel and mutual aid.
9. Habit of confession, forgiveness, and hospitality.
10. A willingness to act practically when others are in need.

VI. How to use these tools in ministry and daily life

- Match tools to mission: use practical skills to meet physical needs and open doors for gospel witness.
- Practice in peace: rehearse skills and spiritual disciplines before crisis hits.
- Share tools: lend gear, trades, and time — the frontier is won by communities, not lone heroes.
- Remember the ultimate tool: prayerful dependence — physical tools support a spiritual mission, not replace it.

Short Closing Note

Tools without skill or faith fail; faith without tools can be impractical. The frontier man of Scripture and of these tales combined practical readiness with spiritual dependence. Prepare your hands, steady your heart, and trust the Lord to guide you through whatever wilderness or giant you face.

APPENDIX A: TEN SHORT TALES AND FABLES ABOUT FRONTIER MEN (retain original stories)

Here are ten short original tales and fables about frontier men whose Christian faith shapes their choices. Each is brief and can be expanded if you'd like longer versions or a particular tone (humorous, solemn, sermon-like, etc.).

1. The Lost Bible

A trapper named Eli found a leather-bound Bible snagged on a briar while following a beaver trail. He knew the Bible belonged to the preacher from the next settlement. At night he read by stars, learning the preacher's favorite psalms. Instead of keeping it, Eli trudged ten miles to return it. The preacher welcomed him with coffee and a place by the stove; soon a small Sunday meeting gathered in Eli's cabin. The returned book fed souls twice over.

Moral: Faith is kept alive by sharing, not hoarding.

2. The Blacksmith and the Stranger

Sam, the smith, nursed the wounded stranger brought by hunters even though the man had no coin. Months later the stranger—once a soldier—saved Sam's daughter from a raging barn fire. When asked why he'd stayed, the stranger said Sam had shown him Christ's mercy in the forge. Sam always said the bellows warm both iron and hearts.

Moral: Mercy repays itself in ways we cannot predict.

3. The Reverend on the Ridge

Reverend Morris rode to a remote ridge to baptize a new believer but found flood-swollen creeks and stranded families. He spent the day organizing a chain of men, pulling wagons and bringing food, and he preached as they worked. His sermon was simple: faith without works is like a seed that won't sprout.

Years later many on that ridge recalled the day faith showed up with hands.

Moral: True faith acts when people are in need.

4. The Knotted Rope

Old Ben's rope snagged on a cliff while hauling provisions. He cut it loose to throw to a boy trapped on a ledge, losing his means to haul for a season. The boy later grew into a strong man who, when Ben's cabin burned, rebuilt it plank by plank. Ben always kept an extra knot in his rope for emergencies.

Moral: Sacrifice for another plants a harvest you might not live to reap, but others will.

5. The Lantern and the Storm

During a winter blow, a lone prospector, Jonah, refused to leave his post at a river ford. He stood with a lantern as sleet filled the valley, warning travelers of hidden shallows. One night a coach neared, and when the driver ignored Jonah's warning, Jonah ran into the water and guided them through. The passengers later asked why he stood alone in such weather.

Jonah shrugged: "We are lights for one another." The coachman later paid for Jonah's winter wood.

Moral: Be a steady light; others may follow when storms come.

6. The Broken Plough

Young Tom accidentally cracked Mr. Rivers' plough.

Terrified, he ran to confess. Mr. Rivers calmly invited him to sit and taught him to mend the plough and tend the furrow better than it had been before. Tom took to the work and years later became the one neighboring boys sought for counsel.

Moral: Forgiveness paired with teaching builds character.

7. The Trader's Measure

When a season's furs brought gold and the temptation to cheat on scales came, Jacob the trader kept honest measures despite rivals. Business was slow at first, but word spread of his fairness. His ledger later showed steady growth, and at church he gave tithes others called generous for a man of his trade. Jacob would say he slept easier for honoring God in small weights.

Moral: Integrity in small things steadies the soul and the community.

8. The Two Canoes

Two men argued about how to cross a swollen creek; arrogant Rowe insisted his plan was best and pushed out alone, while humble Caleb listened to the old ferryman and guided his canoe with care. Rowe's canoe capsized; Caleb helped rescue him. Rowe never forgot the taste of humility mixed with river water.

Moral: Pride risks more than it saves; humility saves lives.

9. The Widower's Winter

After Ruth's death, John the widower kept to his chores and seldom spoke at meeting. The men and women he had once helped with fence mending and sermons brought wood, mended his roof, and sat with him at supper. Their presence thawed his grief and drew him back to the table of fellowship. John learned that giving and receiving are two sides of the same grace.

Moral: Community nourishes the grieving; charity returns to the giver.

10. The Old Hymn

A grizzled hunter named Isaac heard a hymn drifting from the chapel one Sunday and stood outside the window until it ended. The words pried open a place in him he'd sealed with years of hard living. He came in the next week with muddy boots and a solemn face. The congregation didn't ask for stories; they simply welcomed him. In time Isaac sang loudest of all and kept watch for lost hunters on lonely trails.

Moral: Worship can soften the hardest heart; welcome matters more than interrogation.

APPENDIX B: FRONTIERSMEN FROM THE TALES AND NOTABLE HISTORICAL AMERICAN FRONTIERSMEN

The frontiersmen from the ten tales

- Eli — the trapper who returned the lost Bible.
- Sam — the blacksmith who showed mercy to a stranger.
- Reverend Morris — the preacher who organized rescue and service on the ridge.
- Old Ben — the man who cut his rope to save a boy.
- Jonah — the prospector who kept a lantern at the ford.
- Tom — the youth who confessed and learned to mend the plough.
- Jacob — the honest trader who kept true measures.
- Rowe — the proud man whose canoe capsized.
- Caleb — the humble man who listened and rescued Rowe.
- John — the widower restored by community.
- Isaac — the grizzled hunter softened by an old hymn.

Notable historical American frontiersmen (short list; available to expand)

- Daniel Boone (1734–1820) — Kentucky pioneer and explorer who helped open the western frontier.
- Davy Crockett (1786–1836) — Tennessee frontiersman, soldier, and folk hero; died at the Alamo.
- Kit Carson (1809–1868) — mountain man, guide,

and Indian agent in the Southwest.

- Jim Bridger (1804–1881) — trapper, guide, and prominent mountain man in the Rocky Mountains.
- Jedediah Smith (1799–1831) — explorer and mountain man who opened trails to California and the Pacific.
- John Colter (c.1774–1813) — member of the Lewis & Clark expedition; one of the first mountain men in the Rockies.
- Hugh Glass (c.1783–1833) — fur trapper famed for surviving a bear mauling and crawling to safety.
- James Beckwourth (1798–1866) — mountain man of mixed African–European ancestry, explorer of the Sierra Nevada and founder of Beckwourth Pass.
- Simon Kenton (1755–1836) — scout and pioneer on the Ohio frontier, contemporary of Daniel Boone.
- Thomas “Broken Hand” Fitzpatrick (1799–1854) — trapper, guide, and Indian agent active on the Plains.

APPENDIX C: PRACTICAL CHECKLIST FOR A MODERN “FRONTIER” BELIEVER

(Repeat of Practical checklist and short instructions for ministry and daily life as provided in Tools section)

Physical essentials

1. Reliable knife and small axe/hatchet.
2. Means to make fire (flint/steel or lighter) and

tinder.

3. Rope/cordage and a tarp or emergency shelter.
4. Water container and knowledge of purification.
5. Small first-aid kit and basic repair materials.

Spiritual essentials

1. Regular time of prayer and Scripture reading.
2. A small pocket Bible or key verses memorized.
3. A trusted community for counsel and mutual aid.
4. Habit of confession, forgiveness, and hospitality.
5. A willingness to act practically when others are in need.

How to use these tools in ministry and daily life

- Match tools to mission.
- Practice in peace.
- Share tools.
- Remember the ultimate tool: prayerful dependence.

Written By Elder Keith Joel Walker