



EXPLORE **THE BIBLE.**
Adults

Joshua; Judges; Ruth

QuickSource

Summer 2026



MAKING HISTORY

History never occurs in a vacuum. Any number of forces move individuals toward action. And those actions shape history. It might be tempting to think people know they are making history in the moment, but, in most cases, that's not how it works.

Sure, we can identify times when historical figures knew they were setting a new standard. America's founding fathers probably had a sense of history in 1776. And Neil Armstrong recognized the importance of "one small step for man" as he touched the moon's surface in 1969.

But those moments are the exceptions, not the rule. For the most part, history only becomes history over time. The books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth give us a snapshot of Israel's history and the people who helped make it. Moses, the nation's main history maker since it left Egypt, was gone. Now, Israel looked to Joshua to lead them into the promised land.

Later, in their own way, the judges made their mark on history. Meanwhile, an obscure Moabitess named Ruth rewrote the direction of history—for Israel and for every member of the human race. These people were not perfect, but God used them to make a difference because that's what God does.

God has a plan for your life, as well. He wants to use you to change history. But before you can touch the future, you've got to come clean with Him in the present. You do that through a personal relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus. If you've never made the decision to follow Him, you can do it today. Here's all you need to do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus also rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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MEET THE WRITERS



Argile Smith wrote the Key Words and Dig Deeper features for this quarter. He is a retired pastor and seminary professor who lives in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Janice Meier wrote the Bible Skill activities for Joshua. She is a retired editor at Lifeway Christian Resources and lives in Springfield, Tennessee.

Todd Gaddis wrote the Bible Skill activities for Judges and Ruth. He is a retired pastor and author who lives in Athens, Georgia.

Rick Prall wrote the object lessons for Joshua and Judges. Rick serves as the principle product writer at Ramsey Solutions and lives in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Cynthian Yzquierdo wrote the object lessons for Ruth. Cynthia is a writer and Bible study leader who lives in Houston, Texas.

T.J. Betts wrote the content adapted for the Discussion Plans for Joshua and Judges. T.J. is a professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Craig Hamlin wrote the content adapted for the Discussion Plans for Ruth. He serves as associate pastor at First Baptist Church of Peachtree City, Georgia.

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Amber Vaden
Team Leader

Bob Bunn
Content Editor

Gianetta Thornburg
Production Editor

Darin Clark
Design Team Leader

Hailey Gaar
Graphic Designer

Dwayne McCrary
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to the team
by email:
ETB.adults@lifeway.com
or by mail to:

Team Leader
Explore the Bible QuickSource
200 Powell Place, Suite 100,
Brentwood, TN 37027-7707

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FROM THE TEAM LEADER



“Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses” (Josh. 1:2-3).

From the very first verses of the book of Joshua, God communicated His plans for His people. They would (finally!) cross the Jordan River and enter the promised land. A generations-old commitment God made to Abraham would at long last be realized. Joshua would be their new leader. The next steps of their journey were important ones. Courage would be needed. Deep faith in God, the One who had painstakingly led them thus far, was a requirement. Stepping out in faith would be a daily exercise.

As we study the Israelites’ entrance into the promised land and the years that follow, let’s not miss the details. God’s plans for His people and His faithfulness to His promises shouldn’t be overlooked. He would use faithful men and women to accomplish what He had in mind. The Israelites’ faith would be tested. Through it all, God’s character would be on full display.

I hope this quarter’s study brings you a deeper understanding of God’s Word, preparing you for any “next steps” God has for you. May His promises give you daily strength to faithfully follow where He leads.

In Him,

Amber Vaden

amber.vaden@lifeway.com

Explore

Discover



Being a Trellis for a New Group

G. Dwayne McCrary

Growing tomatoes is easy, they said. All you need is some sunlight, soil, and water. No one shared the necessity for spacing, a trellis or stakes, and adding fertilizer. The plants needed more care and support than I anticipated. The challenge was real, but with the support and knowledge of others, our tomatoes survived and eventually flourished.

The same can be true of starting a new group. The process may sound simple, but the challenges are real. Facing a room with only you and one other person can be discouraging. Trying to connect with people who seem to have forgotten how to answer their cell phones can feel personal. Attendees who are present one week and gone for the next two can also contribute to the discouragement of starting a new group. Leaders of established groups can help the leaders of new groups survive and thrive in five ways:

1. MENTOR

Just as I needed the expertise of successful tomato gardeners, leaders of new groups also need expertise. Experienced leaders can walk alongside new leaders and help them fine-tune how they prepare, offer tips for reaching out to potential group participants, and share how they overcame some of the challenges new leaders face. One important thing to remember is that they may also notice our less-than-stellar habits, so we want to make sure we are setting a good example.

2. ADOPT

Supplying a new gardener with items like a tomato cage and preferred plant foods is a way to ensure a new gardener gets a good start. We can provide new groups with the tools they need to succeed. An established group can offer a new group a fresh set of dry-erase markers, nametags, and other items they find helpful. We can even present these items to a new leader a couple of weeks before they start their new group, also inviting them to share about their journey in starting their new group.

3. PRAISE

As a novice tomato gardener, having a pro point out what I'm doing right can make a big difference. Affirmation goes a long way for new group leaders as they seek to reach people who aren't part of a Bible study group. We can encourage them when they do the right things, knowing their faithfulness will be honored in time.

4. CELEBRATE

The excitement of the first tomato is worth sharing and celebrating. So, too, is a new group. We can celebrate the start of a new group. We can applaud the growth of the group and the new people who are participating in Bible study. We can celebrate as new groups reach people our current groups have been unable to reach.



5. PRAY

Regardless of how much experience a tomato grower has, some things are beyond their control—weather, pests, diseases, and so on. The same is true with new and established groups.

“WE CAN PRAY FOR EYES TO SEE THE NEED AND COURAGE TO ADDRESS IT IN THE WAY HE DIRECTS, SEEKING HIS HEART AND DIRECTION, AND ACTING ON HIS ANSWER.”

Some things can only be addressed with prayer. We can lead our established group to pray for the new group, encouraging the leaders with our prayers. In some cases, a new leader just needs to know that someone is praying for them. We can be those people.

The group that gave birth to the new group needs prayer as well. The vacuum left by those who moved to the new group will open the door for new opportunities and growth. We can also lead our groups to ask God to help us determine when we need to help start a new group. God may tell us to support other groups who are starting new groups, or He may reveal that we need to start a new Bible study group. Our responsibility is to ask God rather than decide for Him. We can pray for eyes to see the need and courage to address it in the way He directs, seeking His heart and direction, and acting on His answer.

These five actions—mentoring, adopting, praising, celebrating, and praying—serve as a trellis for a new group and provide the needed support so they can be fruitful.

G. Dwayne McCrary is the manager of the adult ongoing Bible study team at Lifeway.

HOW TO USE QUICKSOURCE

Using **QuickSource** as your primary resource for preparing to lead a small Bible study group (with the group using the **Personal Study Guide**).

1. Read the core passage, using the Key Words as a quick commentary on the passage.

2. Review the outline provided on the Talking Points page (page two of each session) to organize your thoughts and identify the key points in the passage.

Tip: You can record your notes on the second page if you desire, giving you a way to remember insights gained.

3. Review the questions with response prompts on the Discussion Plan page (page three of each session), recording your response to the questions as you do so.

Some questions/prompts are included in the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide*. The corresponding PSG page numbers for these questions are noted. These page numbers correlate to the regular print version of the PSG and may differ from large print versions. The prompts are adapted from the comments in the *Personal Study Guide*.

Tip: Additional “Bonus” questions are also provided in the Discussion Plan, along with the For Further Discussion QR codes. These extra questions are found only in *QuickSource*.

4. Consider ways of using the Bible Skill and Object Lesson ideas to lead your group.

Look for ways of using these ideas, in addition to the questions included on the Discussion Plan page.

5. Read the Dig Deeper feature (page four of each session), looking for ways of using that information when leading the group.

The information found in the Dig Deeper feature is available only in *QuickSource*.

6. Review and refine.

- Add transition ideas to move from one question to the next.
- Consult the *Explore the Bible* Extra page (goExploreTheBible.com/leaderextras) for an idea about using a current news event to begin and end the group time.
- Listen to the weekly *Explore the Bible* adult podcast to gain further insights about this week’s study. The podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training, or on MinistryGrid (MinistryGrid.com/ExploreTheBible).

7. Gather the items needed to lead the group.

If you plan on using a visual from the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* or creating your own (see p. 65 for a listing of items and suggested sessions for using them), do so early in the week. Be sure to have extra copies of the *Personal Study Guide* on hand to be given to guests.

8. Arrive early.

The group time starts when the first person arrives. Make sure you are that person so you can set the tone and direction for the group Bible study time.

9. Lead the group in a time of Bible study, following your plan.

10. Evaluate the group time.

Note what you learned about the people in the group as well as things you may need to work on to improve as a teacher. Also make sure any follow-up actions promised to the group are carried out.



Using QuickSource as a Supplement.

Leader Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the *Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide*.

After completing your study using the commentary provided in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide*, consult the Key Words section, the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the “Bonus” questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Daily Discipleship Guide + QuickSource

As a supplement to the Leader Helps in the *Explore the Bible Adult Daily Discipleship Guide*.

Look at the Key Words section to identify additional key words not included in the *Daily Discipleship Guide*, the Talking Points page, and the Dig Deeper feature for additional insight or as a review. Reflect on the “Bonus” questions in the Discussion Plan and the extra questions provided in For Further Discussion, and add those to your plan as appropriate.

Other resources that might be helpful.

Leader Guide

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide provides extensive group plans and additional Bible commentary that builds confidence when preparing to lead a group. Additional teaching options based on learning styles are also included. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Pack

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Pack provides ready-made posters and handout masters that add to the learning experience and make it easier on the teacher. DOC files of the Leader Guide commentary and Leader Guide group plans are also included as a digital download. Available at goExploreTheBible.com

Commentary

Explore the Bible Adult Commentary provides an extensive Bible commentary written by recognized conservative Bible scholars. Available at goExploreTheBible.com.

Find out more or order at goExploreTheBible.com

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

JOSHUA

One of the greatest military leaders of the Old Testament, Joshua bears a name meaning “Yahweh delivered” or “Yahweh is salvation.” He succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites after their forty years of wilderness wanderings. Although the book acquired its title from a human personality within its pages, the central character in the account is God. It was the Lord who led His people into the promised land and who drove their enemies out of the land.

Sandwiched between Deuteronomy and Judges, the book of Joshua points backward to the exodus from Egypt and forward to the time of the judges and kings. This account of early Israelite history consists of two major divisions—the conquest of the promised land (chaps. 1–12) and the division of that land among the tribes (chaps. 13–24).

Traditionally, much of the book of Joshua has been credited to Joshua himself or to one of his contemporaries. With that, certain parts of the account, such as the account of Joshua’s death (Josh. 24:29–31), had to be added at a later point. As with every word of Scripture, the book of Joshua was written under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration and provides a faithful, trustworthy account of the conquest and settlement of Canaan.

Several major themes appear in Joshua:

The Lord’s faithfulness: God proved Himself faithful to His covenant. In leading the Israelites into Canaan, He fulfilled a promise made to Abraham hundreds of years earlier.

God’s work through human leaders: The Lord worked through Joshua and others (such as Caleb, the spies, and Rahab) to lead His people into the promised land and to drive His enemies out of Canaan. This reminds believers today that He continues to work through His followers. God remains in control, but He often chooses to use His human agents to bring about His purposes.

The importance of obedience: The Lord blesses those who rely on Him and obey the teachings He has revealed in His Word. The book also reminds readers that from God’s perspective, anything less than full obedience is disobedience.

An interesting parallel exists between the book of Joshua and Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. The book of Joshua records the historic nation of Israel entering and possessing the earthly inheritance the Lord had promised the patriarchs. In Ephesians, Paul described the church entering and possessing the heavenly inheritance that Christ has promised believers (the church). Both books also embrace the themes of rest, holiness, and obedience.

JUDGES

The book of Judges derives its name from the key characters in the narrative. However, as with Joshua, the Lord remains the most important actor in the book as He dealt with Israel’s unfaithfulness to Him. Significantly the title of “Judge” is applied to the Lord in Judges 11:27. This further emphasizes God’s work and authority in human affairs.

The human leaders mentioned in this book did not function the same way we think of judges today. Rather than focusing on judicial matters in courts, they primarily served as military deliverers. Scripture records that Deborah did play an important role in settling disputes among the Israelites (Judg. 4:4–5), but her leadership in defeating the Canaanites is the main focus of the passage.

Some scholars view the designation of judge as carrying the broader meaning of governing. Thus, they see all these leaders as functioning as judges in the sense of dealing with external enemies, along with resolving internal conflicts among Israelite citizens.

Six judges play a prominent role in the book: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah (assisted by Barak), Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. We designate



these as “major judges” because the inspired writer provided more information about them than the “minor judges” mentioned in passing. The six minor judges are Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

The main framework for Judges is centered on the “cycle of sin” that occurs throughout the book. Each cycle begins with the Israelites doing evil in the Lord’s eyes. The Lord responds by handing them over to their enemies. Next, the people cried out to the Lord, leading the Lord to raise up deliverers who saved them. As a result, the nation that had oppressed God’s people became subject to them, and the land of Israel experienced peace for a season. Finally, the judge died.

In each case, the judge is presented in a worse light than the previous one so that each cycle spirals the nation deeper in sin. The recurring cycle has sometimes been abbreviated as apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. The final chapters of Judges illustrate the depths of Israel’s religious and moral degeneration (chaps. 17–21).

Two major themes surface in Judges:

God’s mercy: Again and again, the unfaithfulness of God’s people sharply contrasts with His patience and mercy.

God’s sovereignty: In Judges, the Lord used His people’s enemies to discipline them, revealing His rule over all nations. Yet, His primary goal always involved bringing Israel to repentance. In addition, Judges affirms that God can use imperfect human leaders to accomplish His purposes.

RUTH

Events in the book of Ruth occurred during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1). The divinely inspired writer of Judges described the severe moral and spiritual decline that characterized this period of Israel’s history. Nevertheless, Ruth reminds readers that covenant loyalty

still exists, even in a depraved culture. The book’s title is drawn from its main character, a Moabite woman named Ruth.

Because of a famine, Elimelech journeyed with his wife Naomi and their sons from Bethlehem to the nation of Moab. Elimelech died, while the sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. After a decade or so in Moab, Mahlon and Chilion died. Naomi and her two daughters-in-law set out to return to Judah. At Naomi’s urging, Orpah returned to Moab, but Ruth refused to do so. In beautiful words of commitment, she pledged her loyalty to Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17).

Back in Bethlehem, Ruth gathered fallen grain in the fields to provide for Naomi and her. In the providence of God, Ruth chose the field of Boaz, who belonged to Elimelech’s family. Boaz became the family’s kinsman-redeemer.

The term “kinsman-redeemer” identifies a close relative who had several obligations. These included raising up a male heir for the relative who had died without fathering a son. Boaz married Ruth, the widow of his deceased kinsman; and they had a son. This child, named Obed, became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David (Ruth 4:13-17). Thus Ruth the Moabitess appears in both the lineage of King David and of David’s greatest son, Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 1:5-6,16).

Three major themes appear in Ruth:

God’s sovereignty: Ruth’s story includes both joys and sorrows, yet God’s presence remains constant and active.

Lovingkindness: The blessings of showing such loyalty and compassion to others often exceeds anything one can imagine.

God’s grace: Ruth was a foreigner and an outsider. Yet, the Lord’s grace extends beyond the religious and ethnic boundaries we might set.



JOSHUA

- I. **Preparation for Possessing the Land** (Josh. 1:1-5:12)
- II. **Victories in the Land** (Josh. 5:13-12:24)
- III. **Allotment of the Land** (Josh. 13:1-21:45)
- IV. **Worship of God in the Land** (Josh. 22:1-24:33)

JUDGES

- I. **Prologue** (Judg. 1:1-3:6)
- II. **The Judges** (Judg. 3:7-16:31)
- III. **Epilogue** (Judg. 17:1-21:25)

RUTH

- I. **A Family Fleeing** (Ruth 1:1-22)
- II. **A Family Sought** (Ruth 2:1-3:18)
- III. **A Family Redeemed** (Ruth 4:1-22)

Strong and Courageous

JOSHUA'S COURAGE WAS GROUNDED
IN THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S TRUSTWORTHINESS.

Joshua 1:1-11,16-18

1 After the death of **Moses** ^A the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to **Joshua** ^B son of Nun, Moses's assistant: 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to **cross over** ^C the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. 3 I have given you every place where the **sole of your foot** ^D treads, just as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates River — all the land of the Hittites — and west to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 No one will be able to **stand against you** ^E as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or **abandon** ^F you. 6 Be strong and **courageous**, ^G for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. 7 Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully **the whole instruction** ^H my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. 8 **This book of instruction** ^I must not depart from your mouth; you are to **meditate** ^J on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. 9 Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." 10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get provisions ready for yourselves, for **within three days** ^K you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit.'" [. . .] 16 They answered Joshua, "Everything you have commanded us we will do, and everywhere you send us we will go. 17 We will obey you, just **as we obeyed Moses** ^L in everything. Certainly the LORD your God will be with you, as he was with Moses. 18 Anyone who rebels against your order and does not obey your words in all that you command him, will be put to death. Above all, **be strong and courageous!**" ^M

Exploring Key Words

- A** God had used Moses to deliver His people and to lead them through the wilderness to the edge of the promised land (Ex. 7:7; Deut. 34:1-8).
- B** In Hebrew, the name means "Yahweh saves." The Greek translation is rendered "Jesus."
- C** God gave Joshua a specific mission: leading Israel across the Jordan River and conquering the land He had promised to their ancestors (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-22).
- D** Moses never got to set foot in Canaan. Joshua, however, would lead the people into the land.
- E** The Hebrew literally refers to a person's face, but it can also mean "presence." God would force Joshua's enemies away from him.
- F** "Forsake" (KJV; ESV; NIV). The Hebrew (*azab*) implies being left to solve one's own problems. God would not do this.
- G** "Confident" (NLT); "Brave" (CEV).
- H** To God, partial obedience is disobedience. Full obedience would be key to Joshua's success.
- I** "Book of the Law" (ESV; NIV; KJV). God's words given to Moses and placed in the ark of the covenant by the Levites (Deut. 31:26).
- J** Literally, "muttering." The image is repeating the words to oneself until they are internalized.
- K** In the past, the people had faltered on Canaan's border (Num. 13-14). Here, Joshua immediately challenged them to fulfill God's commands.
- L** The tribes east of the Jordan River had promised to help their brothers defeat their enemies in Canaan (Num. 32). They affirmed this commitment to Joshua.
- M** The eastern tribes echoed God's challenge to Joshua (see vv. 6-7).



God's Promise (Josh. 1:1-5)

- God told Joshua that Moses had died, making him the new leader of the Israelites. His first assignment was to get the people ready to begin the conquest of Canaan.
- The time had come for God to give His people the promised land. No enemy would be able to stand against them.

Joshua's Assignment (Josh. 1:6-11)

- God challenged Joshua to be strong and courageous in his new responsibilities.
- The Lord also emphasized the importance of studying and obeying His commands in the law of Moses. The new leader's success and the nation's prosperity would depend on faithfulness to God's words.
- God then directed Joshua to begin preparing the people to take possession of the land He had promised to give them.

Israel's Response (Josh. 1:16-18)

- Joshua received overwhelming support from the Israelites. They promised to follow his instructions from the Lord just as they had followed such instructions from Moses.
- They also promised to hold each other accountable. They challenged Joshua to be strong and courageous, just as God had directed him.

Summary Statements

Joshua's courage was grounded in the assurance of God's trustworthiness.

- We can find courage in the truth that God keeps His promises.
- We can discern God's best for our lives by studying His Word.
- We can encourage the kingdom work of others by supporting them and partnering with them.

Memory Verse

Joshua 1:8

Key Doctrine

The Scriptures

The Holy Bible is a perfect treasure of divine instruction.
(See Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

What makes a person trustworthy? (PSG, p. 10)

- Russell Kelso Carter was a professor at the Pennsylvania Military Academy in 1886 when he wrote “Standing on the Promises.”
- For well over a century, this great hymn has been sung by believers all over the world. Why? Because its lyrics remind believers that God is trustworthy and His promises “cannot fail.” Consequently, those who are trusting in God “cannot fail.”
- Joshua discovered these truths and grounded his courage in the assurance of God’s trustworthiness.

Bonus: What is the relationship between confidence and courage? How can trust in someone else encourage one toward action?

EXPLORE

GOD’S PROMISE (JOSH. 1:1-5)

Bonus: How can leadership change cause instability? How can a new leader make the transition easier?

- Deuteronomy 34:1-8 records Moses’s death. Moses had led Israel for forty years. Now, God called Joshua to fill the shoes of his mentor.
- Centuries earlier, God had promised Abraham that He would give his descendants the land of Canaan. Now was the time for it to happen. God told Joshua that the land Israel was about to conquer and inherit was His gift to them. This is a major theme in the book of Joshua. But they needed to understand that they would not and could not take it by themselves. God would make it happen.
- To encourage Joshua personally, the Lord promised to be with him as He had been with Moses. Joshua’s memories of seeing what God did through Moses surely helped him grasp the weight of this promise. Joshua’s success depended on God’s presence.

How have you experienced God’s faithfulness (PSG, p. 14)

JOSHUA’S ASSIGNMENT (JOSH. 1:6-11)

Bonus: How do you define success in life? Why?

- Earlier, the Lord instructed Moses to encourage Joshua (Deut. 1:38; 3:28). Now, the Lord Himself was encouraging Joshua. In fact, three times God commanded Joshua to “be strong and courageous.”
- More importantly, Joshua needed to “observe carefully” all of God’s commands. He could not deviate from the Lord’s plans and purposes. Obeying God was at the heart of Joshua’s success, more important than any military strategy.

- In Hebrew, the word “meditate” literally means to read in an undertone or to mutter. The idea is that Joshua should repeat God’s Word to himself so he would know it and obey it thoroughly. If he obeyed, God promised that he would “prosper and succeed in whatever” he attempted. This was not about material wealth, but fulfilling God’s purposes.
- God challenged Joshua to avoid feeling “afraid or discouraged.” The obstacles would be substantial, but God’s presence made everything possible. In response, Joshua set about preparing the people to move out.

How does God’s Word provide courage and direction for our lives? (PSG, p. 16)

ISRAEL’S RESPONSE (JOSH. 1:16-18)

Bonus: Who are some people you lean on for support? What makes them so valuable to you?

- When Moses was still alive, the tribes of Gad and Reuben, along with half of Manasseh, had asked to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Moses agreed, as long as they were willing to cross the river and help the other tribes drive the Canaanites out of the promised land.
- Joshua reminded the eastern tribes of their promise, and they affirmed their earlier words. They also vowed to follow Joshua as they had followed Moses and, like God, urged him to be “strong and courageous.”

How does a shared commitment to God’s purposes encourage other people? (PSG, p. 17)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss how you can encourage, support, and partner with one another in kingdom work.

What are the advantages to having a commitment to working together with other believers over having an individualistic mentality toward kingdom work? (PSG, p. 18)

Challenge individuals to reflect on the promises God has made to them.

How does remembering the promises of God in day-to-day life help prepare you for the challenging or difficult seasons in life? (PSG, p. 18)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week’s study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 17)

Note repeated words and phrases to gain additional insights.

Biblical writers sometimes used repetition of key words or phrases to emphasize a theme or message. Identify and examine the repeated message or challenge in Joshua 1:6,7,9,18. **Who was the speaker in each instance? Who was the recipient of the challenge in each verse?** Think about what this phrase's repetition helps communicate in Joshua 1:1-18. **What message does the repeated phrase convey to Bible readers today?**

Ask: **When you're reading something, how much attention do you pay to repeated words or phrases?** Discuss responses. Affirm that repeated terms often indicate significance or importance. Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 17 of the PSG. After a few minutes, discuss the importance of "be strong and courageous."

OBJECT LESSON: RINGS

Encourage volunteers to show their engagement rings or wedding rings. Ask: **What do these rings represent? What is the difference between giving a ring and getting a ring?** Share that when we give this type of a ring, we make a promise for the future.

Encourage the group to list the common promises included in most wedding vows. (*Examples: sickness and health, richer and poor, forsaking all others, and so forth*) Note that those getting the ring expect us to keep the promises we make on that wedding day. Compare this to how we expect God to be faithful in fulfilling His promises.

Direct a volunteer to read Joshua 1:8, this session's memory verse. Point out that while we trust God to be faithful to us, He also expects us to remain faithful to Him by reading and studying His Word. Say: *Just like Joshua, knowing and obeying God is the key to living this life well.*

THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION

The Lord directed Joshua to meditate on His instruction (Josh. 1:8). In doing so, He emphasized a critical spiritual discipline that would be essential for the new leader of Israel. By meditating on God's Word daily, Joshua would be more capable of leading the Israelites effectively. God's instruction to Joshua reflected the priority of a robust devotion to His Word.

God's command about meditating on His instruction continues to resonate with His people. As we give ourselves to the Lord daily, we do well to keep His instruction in mind. The focus of our meditation separates it from the practices of religions that seek deeper spirituality by simply repeating words and phrases over and over again. When believers meditate, we focus our attention on a Bible passage with an eye toward practical obedience to what God reveals.

The Hebrew wording invokes the picture of someone muttering. When people mutter, they whisper words, but only to themselves. Observers may not hear what they're saying, but they can see their lips move

as they utter the words quietly and persistently. The image of a person muttering a Bible passage helps us grasp the spiritual discipline of meditation.

Think about a Christian who embraces meditation by focusing attention on a Bible passage. The passage itself can be a single word, a verse, a paragraph, a chapter, or even a larger portion of Scripture. Whispering the words opens the door to memorizing and internalizing the passage under consideration. Throughout the day, the passage comes to mind. Reflecting on the passage gives way to interpreting it and applying it as the Lord directs.

Along the way, something remarkable takes place. As we dig into God's Word, His Word takes root in a way that affects us spiritually. Meditating on God's Word nourishes an intimate and enduring relationship with Him. In turn, we become stronger and more courageous as we serve Him.