



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.

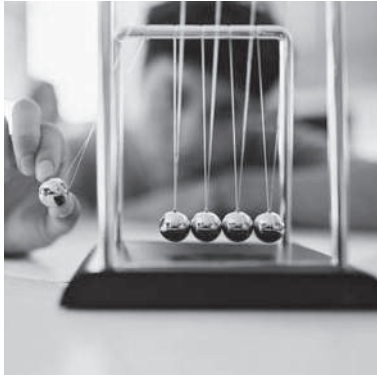
Later, in their own way, the judges made their mark on history. Meanwhile, an obscure Moabitess named Ruth rewrote the direction of history—for Israel and for every member of the human race. These people were not perfect, but God used them to make a difference because that's what God does.

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



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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

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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.

Amazing Grace

GOD USED RAHAB, AN IMPERFECT PERSON,
TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLANS.

Joshua 2:4-21

4 But **the woman** **A** had taken the **two men** **B** and hidden them. So she said, “Yes, the men did come to me, but I didn’t know where they were from. 5 At nightfall, when the city gate was about to close, the men went out, and I don’t know where they were going. **Chase after them quickly**, **C** and you can catch up with them!” 6 But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the **stalks of flax** **D** that she had arranged on the roof. 7 The men pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they left to pursue them, the city gate was shut. 8 Before the men fell asleep, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, “I know that **the LORD** **E** has given you this land and that the **terror** **F** of you has fallen on us, and everyone who lives in the land is **panicking** **G** because of you. 10 For we have **heard** **H** how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings you completely destroyed across the Jordan. 11 When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for **the LORD your God** **I** is God in heaven above and on earth below. 12 Now please swear to me by the LORD that you will also **show kindness** **J** to my father’s family, because I showed kindness to you. Give me a sure sign 13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death.” 14 The men answered her, “We will give our lives for yours. If you don’t report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the LORD gives us the land.” 15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since she lived in a house that was built into the wall of the city. 16 “Go to the **hill country** **K** so that the men pursuing you won’t find you,” she said to them. “Hide there for three days until they return; afterward, go on your way.” 17 The men said to her, “We will be free from this oath you made us swear, 18 unless, when we enter the land, you tie **this scarlet cord** **L** to the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your father’s family **into your house**. **M** 19 If anyone goes out the doors of your house, his death will be his own fault, and we will be innocent. But if anyone with you in the house should be harmed, his death will be our fault. 20 And if you report our mission, we are free from the oath you made us swear.” 21 “Let it be as you say,” she replied, and she sent them away. After they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Rahab (Josh. 2:1). She refused to surrender Israel’s spies to the leaders of Jericho (6:25).
- B** Joshua had sent two spies into Canaan to investigate Jericho and the surrounding area.
- C** Rahab deceived the king and sent his soldiers on a wild goose chase to protect the Israelites.
- D** A plant used to make clothing. Flax was harvested and set out on a flat roof to dry. Then, it was spun into thread.
- E** Despite being a Gentile, Rahab affirmed God’s work. She was confident that He would lead Israel to possess the land.
- F** “Shakes with fear” (CEV); “great fear” (NIV); “fear of you” (ESV).
- G** The Hebrew conveys the image of melting. Jericho’s residents were melting in fear of the Israelites and their God. See verse 11.
- H** Israel’s enemies knew about the miracles in Egypt and the Red Sea decades earlier, as well as the recent victories over the Amorite kings.
- I** Rahab again acknowledged Israel’s God. She reflected devotion and loyalty to Jehovah.
- J** “Deal kindly” (ESV). The Hebrew (*hesed*) usually refers to God’s lovingkindness. The men promised both kindness and faithfulness (v. 14).
- K** The opposite direction of the king’s soldiers. Jordan’s fords were east of Jericho (v. 7), while the hills around the city were to the west.
- L** The Hebrew wording suggests this was different from the rope used in verse 15. Some scholars see a connection between this red cord and the blood on the Israelites’ doors at Passover.
- M** Again, this is similar to Passover, where families found safety inside the homes marked by blood.



A Bold Act (Josh. 2:4-7)

- Joshua sent two Hebrew spies on a mission to scout the land of Jericho. Despite putting herself in danger, a prostitute named Rahab provided shelter and security for them.
- While the agents of the city's king conducted their search, Rahab hid the Israelite men among the stalks of flax on her roof. She also misdirected the king's men as they extended their search outside the city walls.

A Kind Action (Josh. 2:8-13)

- After the king's agents left, Rahab explained why she had shown kindness to the Hebrew spies. She knew about the great things God had done for Israel, and she knew that He had given the land of Canaan to His people.
- In light of the kindness she had shown and her faith in God, she asked for mercy when Israel conquered Jericho.

A Daring Escape (Josh. 2:14-16)

- The men affirmed they would show grace and mercy to Rahab and her family as long as she did not reveal their mission.
- She helped them escape by letting them down through a window in the city wall. She urged them to go in the opposite direction of the king's agents and to hide for three days.

A Firm Assurance (Josh. 2:17-21)

- As they left, the Israelite spies again stated their commitment to the oath they had made to Rahab and her family.
- As a sign of her commitment, they told her to leave a scarlet cord hanging from the window. Rahab did as she was directed.

Summary Statements

God used Rahab, an imperfect person, to accomplish His plans.

- Following God often requires leaving one's comfort zone and stepping out in faith.
- We can be encouraged that God's acts will always demonstrate His character.
- Relying on God's grace leads to security, even in difficult situations.
- We can be assured of God's work in our lives by regularly reflecting on what He has done in the past.



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

Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:31

Key Doctrine

Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Titus 2:11-14.)

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

Bonus: *When have you felt like the wrong person for a job? How did you overcome that?*

- The Bible shows how God often uses flawed, unlikely people to do His will. Abraham and Sarah both laughed when God told them they would have a son in their old age.
- God also made David the greatest king of Israel and established an eternal covenant with him, even though David committed egregious sins. And Paul had been a persecutor of believers before his conversion.
- Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute, is another unlikely person God used to accomplish His plans.

Why does God so often use unlikely, imperfect people to accomplish His purposes? (PSG, p. 19)

EXPLORE

A BOLD ACT (JOSH. 2:4-7)

Bonus: *When have you been forced into taking a step of faith? How was it a good thing?*

- Joshua sent two spies to scout the promised land (Josh. 2:1-3). However, they were reported to Jericho's king. Rahab was sympathetic to their cause and hid them.
- Rahab then lied to the king's agents. She said the Israelites had exited the city and she didn't know where they were going. She encouraged the king's men to chase quickly to catch up with them.
- The Scriptures do not justify Rahab's lying. What is commended in Scripture is Rahab's faith in God. She put her life in danger to help the spies (Heb. 11:31).

What is the relationship between boldness and faith? (PSG, p. 22)

A KIND ACTION (JOSH. 2:8-13)

Bonus: *How would you define "kindness"?*

- Rahab later explained why she hid the spies. She said that she knew God had given Canaan to the Israelites. She believed it was as good as done.
- God's acts at the Red Sea a generation earlier and against the powerful kings Og and Sihon more recently had caused the Canaanites to fear. The Hebrew wording suggested their courage had melted away.
- Rahab showed the men kindness because she wanted them to show her family kindness in return. The Hebrew word translated "kindness" is *hesed*. It appears some 250 times in the Old Testament and is the word most often used in the Old Testament to denote the Lord's faithful, lovingkindness toward His people.

How should our beliefs about God impact the way we treat others? (PSG, p. 24)

A DARING ESCAPE (JOSH. 2:14-16)

Bonus: *What are you are willing to risk for your faith?*

- The spies promised Rahab they would give their lives for her life as long as she did not betray them to her people. Additionally, they promised to show her and her family kindness when Israel did capture Jericho.
- Rahab's house was built into the city's walls, so she could lower the men out a window. She directed them to take refuge in the nearby hill country, which was in the opposite direction of where the king's agents had gone.

Why does faith in God require obedient action? (PSG, p. 25)

A FIRM ASSURANCE (JOSH. 2:17-21)

Bonus: *What are some basic principles you live by? What makes them so important?*

- The spies gave Rahab some vital instructions. If she did not follow these instructions, they would no longer be obligated to their oath. First, they told her to tie a scarlet cord to the window. This would show the Israelites which house was to be spared in their assault.
- Second, she needed to bring her family into the house. Any family members found outside her home would be outside the oath.
- Finally, the men emphasized again her responsibility to protect them. If she betrayed them, they would be free from their promise.

What are some signs that remind us of God's grace in our lives? (PSG, p. 26)

CHALLENGE

As a group, list ways believers can encourage one another, even in difficult times.

How does relying on God's grace lead to security during difficult times? (PSG, p. 27)

Challenge individuals to reflect on God's work in their lives.

How do God's acts in your life demonstrate His character? (PSG, p. 27)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 26)

Focus on a key word to gain a better understanding of a biblical text.

Look up the word “kindness” (Hebrew *hesed*) in a Bible dictionary (Josh. 2:12). ***What special significance does this term have in the Old Testament?*** Read Exodus 15:13 and 2 Samuel 16:17 where the term is used. ***How did Rahab show loyalty to the spies? How did the spies demonstrate loyalty to her?***

Direct adults to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 26 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow the pairs to report on their discoveries. Highlight that the Hebrew word *hesed* often describes God’s unfailing love and loyalty to those who trust in Him. Lead a brief discussion on how that love and loyalty is revealed in today’s session and how adults have experienced it in their own lives.

OBJECT LESSON: SIGNS

Prior to the Bible study session, prepare a short scarlet cord for each adult. Also, print photos of various traffic signs.

During the session, show adults the traffic signs and lead them to identify the purpose of each one. Say: *These signs lead us to act in certain ways on the road.* Point out that when we obey these signs, we increase our chances of getting from one place to another safely. Say: *Ignoring or disobeying the signs only leads to trouble for us and others on the road.*

Distribute the scarlet cords and discuss the significance of the cord in Joshua 2:17-21. Note that this “sign” was important for Rahab and her family because it led them to act in faith rather than ignoring the dangers. Ask: ***How can this small cord remind you that God keeps His promises and offers grace to His people?*** Encourage adults to use the cord as a bookmark.

FACES OF KINDNESS

Throughout this episode in Israel’s quest to make the promised land their home, significant movement swirled around one word: kindness. The Hebrew word used here (*hesed*) had a rich history in Israel. The writers of Old Testament books incorporated the word 250 times, as it served a vital role in conveying distinct aspects—or faces—of God’s relationship with His people. In Joshua 2, kindness displays three faces.

Kindness can look like a tool (Josh. 2:12). Rahab recognized how the Lord empowered Israel in its successful march toward the land that He promised. She also knew the spies were Israelites and reasoned that being kind to them would give her leverage to survive the coming battle. Kindness became a tool in her attempt to win the favor of the Lord and His people.

Kindness also can look like a personal need (Josh. 2:12-13). While Rahab’s kindness would make the spies take her seriously, it could not guarantee that she and her family would be spared. She had no choice but to ask the Israelite spies to meet her need.

Her request reflected the limitations of her position. While she hoped that the Israelites would accommodate her, she understood that she had no guarantees. She *needed* their kindness. For her, it was a matter of life and death. Yet, wanting something would not make it so. Her kind actions and her words were just steps toward seeing her need met.

Finally, kindness can look like a gift of grace (Josh. 2:14). The spies’ response to Rahab’s appeal rendered much more than she could have imagined. She asked for a guarantee, and they graced her with a promise, an oath that secured their word.

In those days, the Lord taught His people that they included Him when they pledged an oath (Num. 30:2). Therefore, the spies swore before the Lord that they would honor her request for kindness with their own lives. In doing so, their oath served as a gift that went well beyond what she expected.

Remembering God's Works

GOD INSTRUCTED THE PEOPLE TO SET UP A MEMORIAL
AS A REMINDER OF HIS POWER.

Joshua 3:14–4:9

3:14 When **the people** **A** broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried the **ark of the covenant** **B** ahead of the people. **15** Now the Jordan **overflows its banks** **C** throughout the harvest season. But as soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge **16** and the water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass that extended as far as **Adam**, **D** a city next to Zarethan. The water flowing downstream into the Sea of the Arabah—the Dead Sea—was completely cut off, and the people crossed opposite Jericho. **17** The priests carrying the ark of the LORD's covenant stood firmly **on dry ground** **E** in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the **entire nation** **F** had finished crossing the Jordan.

4:1 After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, **the LORD spoke** **G** to Joshua: **2** “Choose twelve men from the people, one man for each tribe, **3** and command them: Take **twelve stones** **H** from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place **where you spend the night.**” **1**
4 So Joshua summoned the twelve men he had selected from the Israelites, one man for each tribe, **5** and said to them, “Go across to the ark of the LORD your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one for each of the Israelite tribes, **6** so that this will be **a sign** **I** among you. In the future, **when your children ask** **J** you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ **7** you should tell them, ‘The water of the Jordan was cut off in front of the ark of the LORD's covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan's water was cut off.’ Therefore these stones will always be **a memorial** **K** for the Israelites.” **8** The Israelites did just as Joshua had commanded them. The twelve men took stones from the middle of the Jordan, one for each of the Israelite tribes, just as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the camp and set them down there. **9** Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing. The stones are **still there** **M** today.

Exploring Key Words

- A** The Israelites who had come out of the wilderness and were being prepared to enter the promised land.
- B** Built according to God's design, the ark served as a reminder of His presence with His people (Ex. 25:10-22).
- C** Rainfall and melting snow fed additional water into the river, creating flood conditions.
- D** A city located approximately fifteen miles up the Jordan River.
- E** God had led a previous generation across the Red Sea with a similar miracle (Ex. 14:15-29).
- F** More than 600,000 men, with their families, livestock, and possessions (Num. 26:51).
- G** God had spoken to Joshua before the people crossed the river. He continued to speak once they reached the promised land.
- H** Moses and, later, Elijah used twelve stones to commemorate God's work among His people. See Exodus 28:21; 39:14; 1 Kings 18:31.
- I** The Israelites' first camp in the promised land was at Gilgal (see Josh. 4:19).
- J** The Hebrew word (*'ot*) highlighted a particular event. In this case, the memorial was a reminder of God's miracle.
- K** The Lord highlighted the priority of teaching future generations about Him. (See Ex. 13:14; Deut. 6:7-20; Ps. 78:3-8; Isa. 38:19; Acts 2:39.)
- L** The stones would serve as a lasting physical illustration of God's power and His covenant among the Israelites.
- M** “There to this day” (NIV; ESV). While the book's date is uncertain, the stones were serving their purpose still at the time it was composed.



Dry Ground (Josh. 3:14-17)

- God led the Israelites to cross the Jordan River during flood season.
- When the priests carrying the ark of the covenant touched the water's edge, the Lord stopped the river in its tracks. This allowed the entire nation of Israel to cross into the promised land on dry ground.

Memorial Stones (Josh. 4:1-7)

- Once the Israelites crossed the Jordan, God commanded Joshua to send a man from each tribe to gather a stone from the dry riverbed. These stones were used to build a memorial to God's provision and protection for His people.
- The memorial was intended to point future generations toward a deeper faith in God's trustworthiness.

Lasting Reminders (Josh. 4:8-9)

- Joshua and the people obeyed God's command to establish a memorial using the stones removed from the Jordan River.
- The biblical writer affirmed that those stones still testified to God's power when the book of Joshua was written.

Summary Statements

God instructed the people to set up a memorial as a reminder of His power.

- We can be sure that God never fails to provide perfectly for His people during their time of need.
- We should establish memorials in our lives that consistently remind us of God's work on our behalf.
- God expects believers to remember and testify to what He has done for them.

Memory Verse

Psalm 77:11-12

Key Doctrine

God

To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.
(See Exodus 20:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:17.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com).

ENGAGE

What are some prominent memorials you can think of? Why are they significant, and what impact do they have on people today? (PSG, p. 28)

- Archaeologists have found that ancient cultures erected statues and monuments to memorialize significant people and events. These memorials helped future generations understand their identity.
- In the Bible, God often instructed His people to erect memorials. This was so they would never forget Him or that they belonged to Him.
- God always wants His people to remember that they can trust Him in the present and for the future.

Bonus: What moments in your life deserve a monument because of God’s presence and work?

EXPLORE

DRY GROUND (JOSH. 3:14-17)

Bonus: When have you encountered a flood? What concerned you the most about the water?

- Joshua 3:1-13 highlights the ark of the covenant. Israel had built this sacred box in the wilderness following God’s blueprints. Now, Joshua told the priests to carry it “ahead of the people” as they began crossing the Jordan River.
- God was commanding His people to cross a flooded river. Usually, the Jordan was anywhere from three to ten feet deep and ninety to a hundred feet wide. At flood stage, though, the water was significantly deeper and wider.
- When the priest’s feet touched the water’s edge, the river’s flow stopped. The waters rose up just like the Red Sea. As a result, the entire nation crossed into the promised land on dry ground. No one was left behind.

Why are barriers an important part of our spiritual journey? (PSG, p. 32)

MEMORIAL STONES (JOSH. 4:1-7)

Bonus: What is the danger of not remembering important events in our lives?

- Everything that the biblical writer recorded in Joshua 4 has to be understood in the light of Joshua 3. God’s miracle at the Jordan River sets the tone for what followed.
- God had commanded Joshua to enlist a man from each of Israel’s twelve tribes to take a stone from the dry riverbed. Now, Joshua fulfilled God’s directive. The stones would be a memorial of what God had done that day.
- On the surface, this might seem unremarkable, but it continues to highlight the obedience of Joshua and all twelve tribes of Israel. The obedience of this generation of Israelites stands in stark contrast to their parents.

What are some milestones that could remind people of God’s work in their lives? (PSG, p. 34)

LASTING REMINDERS (JOSH. 4:8-9)

Bonus: What are some “tricks” people use to avoid forgetting things?

- The Israelites’ obedience to Joshua demonstrates how God kept His promise of exalting Joshua in the sight of all Israel so they would know God was with Joshua (3:7). Their obedience also demonstrates that the people recognized Joshua’s commands came from God. Though Joshua is never called a prophet, he would be God’s servant and spokesman to Israel.
- Verse 8 indicates the men set the stones in the camp. Based on verse 9, some scholars think Joshua set twelve more stones in the middle of the Jordan where the priests stood. However, most commentators indicate this was likely a reference to the same twelve stones carried to the west side of the Jordan.
- Regardless, generations to come would have the opportunity to learn the meaning of the twelve stones. The writer of the book of Joshua indicated that they still stood as a memorial at the time the book was written.

How can previous experiences with God strengthen a person’s faith? How can we pass on our faith stories to future generations? (PSG, p. 35)

CHALLENGE

Lead adults to discuss how God has been at work within the Bible study group.

What significant things has God done over the years in your church? How could you as a group share these things with others? (PSG, p. 36)

Challenge adults to think about specific spiritual milestones where God demonstrated His power and faithfulness for them.

How could you make memorials of these events in your life to help you remember what God has done and give you opportunities to testify to others of God’s faithfulness and goodness? (PSG, p. 36)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 35)

Reflect personally on how a biblical passage applies to your own life

Joshua and the Israelites erected a memorial of twelve stones to help them remember and testify to what the Lord had done for them in the past.

What specific memorials help you recall spiritual mountaintops in your experience with the Lord? What do you want to remember from those events? What tangible object can you use to help you remember God's work in your life at that time?

Before the session, create a list of famous monuments. During the session, enlist volunteers to draw one of the monuments on the board. Allow the group to guess what the volunteers are drawing. Emphasize the importance of memorials. Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 35 of the PSG. After a few minutes, discuss the questions included in the activity.

OBJECT LESSON: STONES

Prior to the session, gather enough small, smooth stones for each adult to have one. Provide permanent markers.

During the Bible study, call for a volunteer to read Psalm 77:11-12, the memory verse for this session. Encourage adults to think of a specific incident in which God worked in their lives and to write a one- or two-word description of the event on one side of their stone as a reminder.

Direct the adults to write "Psalm 77:11-12" on the other side of the stone. Challenge them to put their stone in a location where they will see it often and remember God's activity on their behalf. Encourage adults to spend a few minutes in silent prayer, thanking God for His work in their lives and asking Him to help them remember what He has done and is doing around them.

WORTH REMEMBERING

The Hebrew word for "memorial" (*zeker*) sheds helpful light on the value of remembering. It brings to mind our tendency to overlook important people or events. In turn, it beckons us to take the time to memorialize them. God doesn't forget, but He prompts us to establish memorials.

God established memorials long before He led Israel across the Jordan River. After destroying the earth with a flood, His covenant with Noah included a rainbow as a memorial (Gen. 9:1-17). Afterward, when His people saw a rainbow, they would remember His promise.

When God called Moses, He shared His name (*Yahweh*) along with the command to deliver His people from Egypt. His name helped Moses remember that He existed eternally and had complete authority over all existence. Across the decades, Moses came to see that remembering God's name was worthwhile. In a sense, it served as a memorial (Ex. 3:13-15).

As Moses prepared the Israelites for the exodus, God instructed him to establish the Passover meal. The Lord gave specific details about the meal and how His people should eat it. Also, He instructed them to

take the Passover meal every year at the same time. In fact, He told Moses to make Passover a permanent memorial for generations to come (Ex. 12:24-28). Every time the Israelites shared this meal, they would remember how God delivered them from slavery.

Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal mere hours before His arrest. During the meal, He instructed them to remember the bread and the cup in a way that pointed to His death (Mark 14:22-26). Later, the apostle Paul referred to what Jesus did at the Passover meal as the Lord's Supper. Also, he directed believers to take it as a memorial to the crucifixion of Jesus as well as His promise to return (1 Cor. 11:25-26).

As believers, remembering God's works and God's ways is a vital part of our walk with Him.

BONUS CONTENT**Acts of God**

Learn more about the powerful acts of God experienced by the Israelites in the books of Joshua and Judges.

Winning Strategy

GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE VICTORY WHEN
THEY TRUSTED AND OBEYED HIM.

Joshua 6:12-25

12 Joshua got up early **the next morning**. **A** The priests took the ark of the LORD, **13** and the seven priests carrying seven **rams' horns** **B** marched in front of **the ark of the LORD**. **C** While the rams' horns were blowing, the armed men went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the LORD. **14** On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. **15** Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the city **seven times** **D** in the same way. That was the only day they marched around the city seven times. **16** After the seventh time, the priests blew the rams' horns, and Joshua said to the troops, "Shout! For **the LORD has given you the city**. **E** **17** But the city and everything in it are **set apart** **F** to the LORD for destruction. Only **Rahab** **G** the prostitute and everyone with her in the house will live, because she hid the messengers we sent. **18** But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and **make trouble** **H** for it. **19** For all the silver and gold, and the articles of bronze and iron, are dedicated to the LORD and must go into the LORD's treasury." **20** So the troops shouted, and the rams' horns sounded. When they heard the blast of the ram's horn, the troops gave a great shout, and the wall **collapsed**. **I** The troops advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city. **21** They **completely destroyed everything** **J** in the city with the sword—every man and woman, both young and old, and every ox, sheep, and donkey. **22** Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, "Go to the prostitute's house and bring the woman out of there, and all who are with her, just as you swore to her." **23** So the young men who had scouted went in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them **outside the camp** **K** of Israel. **24** They burned the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. **25** However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father's family, and all who belonged to her, because she hid the messengers Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she **still lives** **L** in Israel today.

Exploring Key Words

- A** The day before, God had given Joshua and the people specific instructions for capturing Jericho (6:1-11). Now, they were ready to move.
- B** Known as a *shophar*. Often used to call Israel to battle, these trumpets also were used in worship (Ex. 19:16; Lev. 25:8-10; Ps. 81:3; Joel 2:1,15).
- C** A reminder of the Lord's presence among the Israelites (Ex. 25:10-22; Num. 4:5). It had led the way across the Jordan (Josh. 3:1-4) and was prominent in the strategy against Jericho.
- D** A symbol of God's perfection. Seven appears prominently in Joshua 6 with trumpets (v. 4), priests (vv. 4,13), days (v. 15), and times around the city (vv. 15-16).
- E** Joshua kept the focus on God. He was the One who would fight the battle and conquer the city.
- F** "Devoted" (NIV; ESV); "belongs" (NASB). Everything and everyone in Jericho was given over to God or destroyed.
- G** Rahab had protected Israel's spies from being captured in Jericho. In return, they promised to spare her family (2:1-13; see also 6:22-23).
- H** Disobedience would lead to judgment, as God would reveal in Joshua 7.
- I** "Fell down flat" (ESV; KJV). The Hebrew wording suggests the wall's collapse may have started at its base.
- J** The total destruction of Jericho demonstrated the Israelites' total obedience to God.
- K** As Gentiles, they had to remain outside Israel's main body for a time. However, Rahab became part of Jesus's genealogy (Matt. 1:5).
- L** At least part of Joshua was written during Rahab's lifetime.



Instructions Obeyed (Josh. 6:12-14)

- Following God's directions, Joshua, the priests, and the Israelite army walked around the city of Jericho one time. The army was silent as the priests blew rams' horns and carried the ark of the covenant.
- By God's command, they repeated this march around the city for six days.

Victory Assured (Josh. 6:15-19)

- On the seventh day, the Israelite army circled Jericho seven times. Then, Joshua ordered them to shout because God had given them the city.
- He noted that they should spare nothing because God had set the city apart for destruction. The exception to this command was Rahab the prostitute and her family because they had protected the Israelite spies who had scouted the city (see Josh. 2:4-21).
- The Israelites also were warned not to claim any spoil from the city for themselves.

Walls Destroyed (Josh. 6:20-21)

- When the army shouted, God made the walls of the city collapse.
- The Israelites captured Jericho and completely destroyed everything and everyone as God had commanded. This victory was from the Lord, not the result of human efforts.

Promises Kept (Josh. 6:22-25)

- Joshua sent the men who had spied the city to get Rahab's family and move them outside the Israelite camp.
- The Israelites burned the city and set aside any gold, silver, bronze, or iron for the Lord's treasury. Only Rahab's family was spared, and they still lived among the Israelites when the story was written.

Summary Statements

God gave His people victory when they trusted and obeyed Him.

- We should obey God's directions, even when they don't make sense.
- We experience victory in life when we obey God completely.
- We can trust God to do what only He can do.
- We can live in victory by trusting in God's promises.

Memory Verse

Joshua 6:20

Key Doctrine

Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. (See Deuteronomy 10:14; Psalm 24:1.)



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

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

What is involved in learning to trust someone? (PSG, p. 37)

- Parents want to teach their children to trust them. Some parents build trust by encouraging their children to leap into their arms, even when it seems dangerous. When a parent catches the child, both are exuberant.
- God often calls His children to make some enormous leaps. He does this to demonstrate that they can always trust in Him as they obey Him.

Bonus: When have you taken a “leap” by trusting God about something?

EXPLORE

INSTRUCTIONS OBEYED (JOSH. 6:12-14)

Bonus: When have you felt like you were going around in circles? What makes that so frustrating for us?

- In the “battle” of Jericho, God commanded Joshua and his army to march silently around the city. While some priests carried the ark of the covenant, other priests blew ram’s horns.
- When all was completed according to the word of the Lord and Joshua’s instructions, they returned to their camp for the night. The army did this for six days as God directed.

How do God’s unusual instructions test our faith? (PSG, p. 40)

VICTORY ASSURED (JOSH. 6:15-19)

Bonus: How do you know if you’re “winning” in life? What scorecard do you use?

- Everything Joshua and the army did during the first six days pointed to God’s incredible work on the seventh day. On that day, the Israelites rose at dawn and marched around Jericho seven times.
- After they completed the seventh lap, the priests blew the rams’ horns, and Joshua commanded the army to shout. He also shared that God would give the city to them, that Rahab’s family would be protected, and that everything else was devoted to destruction. The Israelites were not allowed to claim any spoil from the battle.

Why did God set the treasures of Jericho apart for Himself? (PSG, p. 42)

WALLS DESTROYED (JOSH. 6:20-21)

Bonus: Who do you trust most in life? Why?

- When the priests blew their rams’ horns and the soldiers shouted, the wall around Jericho “collapsed.” The Israelites had no problem entering the city and capturing it.

- God’s people obeyed His commands. No person or animal was spared.

What potential victory is God asking you to trust Him to provide? (PSG, p. 43)

PROMISES KEPT (JOSH. 6:22-25)

Bonus: Who is the most famous member of your family tree? Why is that person significant?

- Joshua instructed his men to spare Rahab and her family because she protected the two spies from the king of Jericho. Her faith in the Lord, her kindness to these men, and the promise they made to her would not be forgotten (Heb. 11:31).
- The two men who had made the promise went to her home and moved her family outside the Israelite camp. This likely was a matter of ceremonial cleanness.
- Once Rahab and her family were safe, the Israelites burned Jericho according to God’s commands. Items of silver, gold, bronze, and iron were dedicated to the Lord’s treasury.
- The writer of Joshua noted that Rahab and her family still lived among the Israelites at the time the book was written. In time, she married a man named Salmon and became an ancestor of both King David and Jesus (Matt. 1:5).

What victories does God promise His people today? (PSG, p. 44)

CHALLENGE

As a group, talk about what it means to obey God each day.

Discuss ways that the people of God in general and you as a group in particular can and should unite together to demonstrate their trust in and obedience to God. (PSG, p. 45)

Encourage individuals to reflect on times when it was difficult to trust God fully.

Is there anything happening in your life right now where you are struggling to trust in God’s promises and obey Him? (PSG, p. 45)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 44)

Examine New Testament passages to better understand an Old Testament passage.

The writers of both Hebrews and James referred to Rahab in their letters to first-century believers. Examine Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 to see what these passages say about her. ***What are some key points each writer draws out? What are they trying to emphasize with their readers? How does that help you understand Rahab better?***

Draw two columns on the board: “Hebrews” and “James.” Direct attention to the Bible Skill activity on page 44 of the PSG. Instruct half the group to examine Hebrews 11:31 and the other half to examine James 2:25. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their insights and record them under the appropriate column on the board. Emphasize the impact of Rahab’s faith and how we can imitate her faith today.

OBJECT LESSON: SHOPHAR

Prior to the session, locate a shophar (ram’s horn trumpet) or print a picture of one from the internet.

During the session, encourage adults to share any musical instruments they might play. Lead a brief discussion on why they chose that instrument and how long they have been playing it. Be prepared to share your own responses if applicable.

Display the shophar and allow volunteers to share what they know about this instrument. Ask: ***What was the purpose of the horns? Why was this an unusual “weapon” for battle?*** Note that shophars were used to call people to battle, but they also were used to call people to worship.

Highlight that shophars were a key part of God’s strategy for Israel’s victory over Jericho, even though that might seem odd. Affirm that God can use ordinary, seemingly insignificant things (and people) for His glory.

SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION

Sometimes the ways of the Lord can appear to be odd, or even cruel, to us. Taken at face value, His command to set apart the city of Jericho for destruction certainly qualifies (Josh. 6:17). But digging deeper into His command helps us to see His words in a better light.

In the wilderness, God worked to shape the Israelites’ perspective of Him and His ways. In keeping with His wisdom, He told them that He owned the promised land, along with everything and everyone in it (Lev. 25:23). Even though He was allotting property to each tribe, He retained ownership (Josh. 12:7; 17:1; 18:10). Accordingly, He had sole authority to set apart certain parcels of land for specific purposes.

He intended for Jericho to be set apart exclusively to Him. The Hebrew word for “set apart” (*cherem*) was used to describe devoting something to God or devoting it to destruction. Therefore, the spoils of victory would not belong to Israel. His people could

not take anything for themselves. Instead, the entire city would be placed into a net and given to the Lord. Giving it to the Lord meant storing the riches in His treasury, killing the people as well as the livestock, and reducing the city to ashes.

The annihilation of Jericho and its residents centered on the Lord, but it also had a beneficial impact on the Israelites in the years ahead. The Lord directed Moses to warn them about pagan idols they would encounter in the promised land (Deut. 20:16-18). In the process of destroying Jericho, they completely eliminated that city’s idols. Destroying the pagan gods would remove the temptation to worship them.

The Israelites walked in the light the Lord gave them. Although His ways in those days centuries ago appear to be odd to us today, we still can trust Him to lead us in the light of His eternal wisdom.

Sin Revealed

ACHAN'S ACTIONS WERE DISCOVERED AND JUDGED
BECAUSE HE DISHONORED GOD.

Joshua 7:10-23

10 The LORD then said to Joshua, “**Stand up!** **A** Why have you fallen facedown? **11** Israel has sinned. **They have violated** **B** my covenant that I appointed for them. They have taken some of what was set apart. They have stolen, **deceived,** **C** and put those things with their own belongings. **12** This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They will turn their backs and run from their enemies, because they have been set apart for destruction. **I will no longer be with you** **D** unless you remove from among you what is set apart. **13** Go and **consecrate** **E** the people. Tell them to consecrate themselves for tomorrow, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are things that are set apart among you, Israel. You will **not be able to stand** **F** against your enemies until you remove what is set apart. **14** In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD selects is to come forward clan by clan. The clan the LORD selects is to come forward family by family. The family the LORD selects is to come forward man by man. **15** The one who is caught with the things set apart must be burned, along with everything he has, because he has violated the LORD’s covenant and committed an outrage in Israel.” **16** Joshua **got up early** **G** the next morning. He had Israel come forward tribe by tribe, and **the tribe of Judah** **H** was selected. **17** He had the clans of Judah come forward, and the Zerahite clan was selected. He had the Zerahite clan come forward by heads of families, and Zabdi was selected. **18** He then had Zabdi’s family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected. **19** So Joshua said to Achan, “**My son,** **I** give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and **make a confession** **J** to him. I urge you, tell me what you have done. Don’t hide anything from me.” **20** Achan replied to Joshua, “It is true. I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I did: **21** When I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak from **Babylon,** **K** five pounds of silver, and a bar of gold weighing a pound and a quarter, I coveted them and took them. You can see for yourself. They are concealed in the ground inside my tent, with the silver under the cloak.” **22** So Joshua sent messengers who ran to the tent, and there was the cloak, concealed in his tent, with the silver underneath. **23** They took the things from inside the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and **spread them out** **L** in the Lord’s presence.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Joshua had fallen on his face after the awful defeat at Ai (Josh. 7:1-9). Now, the Lord ordered him to get up and deal with Israel’s sin (v. 11).
- B** “Transgressed” (KJV; ESV); “broken” (NLT). The Hebrew wording suggests stepping over a boundary. The repeated use of “they” indicates that God held the entire nation guilty.
- C** “Lied” (ESV; NIV). Hiding what he stole proved that Achan willfully disobeyed the Lord.
- D** Israel would not experience God’s blessing until the sin was removed from the camp.
- E** The Hebrew word (*qadas*) underscores a call to spiritual purity. It suggests holiness in the Lord’s presence (see Ex. 29:37; 2 Chron. 29:5).
- F** As the defeat at Ai proved, Israel was helpless before any Canaanite without God fighting for them.
- G** Joshua had risen early to lead Israel against Jericho (Josh. 6:12,15). Now, he rose early to deal with Israel’s sin.
- H** Judah was Jacob’s fourth son (Gen. 29:35). This tribe’s inheritance included Jerusalem, and it would produce King David and his heirs.
- I** Joshua used this term of endearment as he talked with Achan.
- J** The Hebrew word (*toda*) relates to praise and thanksgiving (Ps. 26:7; 42:4). God was not glorified by Achan’s sin, but He would receive glory from Achan’s confession.
- K** “Shinar” (NAS; ESV). This area was associated with the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-4). Babylonians were known for beautiful fabrics.
- L** God had laid claim to these items already (Josh. 6:15-19; 7:11). Now, the Israelites returned them to Him.



NOTES

Covenant Violated (Josh. 7:10-15)

- After a disheartening defeat at Ai, Joshua fell facedown before the Lord and questioned His guidance bringing the Israelites across the Jordan (Josh. 7:5-7).
- The Lord responded by telling Joshua that Israel had sinned by stealing items that should have been set apart for the Lord. He would not be with the Israelites until they removed the items.
- The Israelites were to consecrate themselves and present themselves before the Lord who would identify the person responsible.

Achan Revealed (Josh. 7:16-19)

- Following God's instruction, Joshua called forward each tribe, clan, and family before the Lord. Achan from the tribe of Judah was selected as the person responsible for taking the devoted items.
- Joshua instructed Achan to confess his sin and give glory to God.

Confession Made (Josh. 7:20-23)

- Achan admitted to sinning against the Lord by taking some of the spoils from the conquest at Jericho. He told Joshua where he had hidden the items.
- The items were found and placed before all the Israelites and the Lord.
- Ultimately, Achan, his family, and all his livestock were stoned to death in the Valley of Achor (Josh. 7:24-26). His material possessions were also destroyed.

Summary Statements

Achan's actions were discovered and judged because he dishonored God.

- We should recognize that sin always dishonors God and negatively impacts our relationship with Him.
- We should acknowledge that God is always aware of our sins.
- We honor God by repenting and confessing our sins to Him.

Memory Verse

Galatians 6:7

Key Doctrine

God

God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. (See Isaiah 6:1-5; 1 Peter 1:14-16.)



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

ENGAGE

Bonus: *When have you thought you got away with something, only to be caught later?*

- One of the central truths of the Bible is that every human being is a sinner. We sin against others, and every sin is a sin against God. The Bible also reveals that though we may try, we cannot hide anything from God—including our sins.
- What's more, the Bible clearly declares that there will always be negative consequences for one who tries to conceal one's sin from God.
- Nevertheless, there is good news. God's Word teaches that whoever confesses and renounces their sins to God will find mercy and forgiveness.

What should be a person's motivation to confess sin and seek forgiveness? (PSG, p. 46)

EXPLORE

COVENANT VIOLATED (JOSH. 7:10-15)

Bonus: *When have you suffered because of someone else's actions? When have others suffered because of something you did?*

- After having conquered Jericho, the conquest of Ai appeared to be a small thing in comparison. But when Israel attacked Ai, they were soundly defeated. In an act of mourning, Joshua and the elders fell facedown on the ground before the ark of the Lord.
- God's response in verse 10 was a rebuke. Instead of lying facedown on the ground, Joshua needed to stand up and deal with the real problem: sin in the camp.
- Someone had stolen items placed under God's ban at Jericho. Until this sin was identified and removed, God would not move forward with His people, and they would not be able to stand against their enemies.
- God told Joshua to get the people ready to meet with Him the next morning. He would systematically reveal the guilty person and remind His people why they needed to take His holiness seriously.

Why is it important for us to recognize sin's impact on us and our relationship with God? (PSG, p. 51)

ACHAN REVEALED (JOSH. 7:16-19)

Bonus: *When have you been excited to be chosen for something? When have you dreaded being chosen for something?*

- Joshua had Israel's tribes come forward as the Lord instructed. God selected the tribe of Judah. Next, He chose the Zerahite clan, followed by the family of Zabdi. Finally, Achan was selected. It was essential for the people to see God identifying who was guilty.

- God's lengthy process gave Achan plenty of time to come forward on his own. He could have demonstrated sincere confession and repentance. But he refused.
- Once Achan had been revealed, Joshua addressed him as a father speaking to a son. Joshua urged Achan to give glory to the Lord and to confess what he had done.

What might prevent one from confessing and seeking the Lord's forgiveness? (PSG, p. 52)

CONFESSION MADE (JOSH. 7:20-23)

Bonus: *When have you "come clean" about something you did? How did that make you feel?*

- Achan's explanation is similar to what happened in the garden of Eden—he saw, he coveted, and he took. Also reminiscent of the garden is the effect on other people. Both should remind us that our sin always has an impact on others.
- When Achan shared where the banned items were hidden, Joshua sent messengers to Achan's tent. They found the stolen items exactly where he said they would be. The items were spread out before the Lord, the One to whom they rightfully belonged.
- Verses 24-26 indicate that Achan and his entire family were stoned to death. Plus, everything he owned along with the stolen items were buried in stones with them.

Why is it important for us to view sin as seriously as God does? (PSG, p. 53)

CHALLENGE

Encourage the group to consider how one person's sin can have a negative impact on others.

How can you encourage one another and even others outside your Bible study group who might be struggling with sin? (PSG, p. 54)

Challenge individuals to examine their lives and evaluate how their sin is damaging their relationship with God.

How does knowing that God is always aware of your sin affect how you deal with your sin? How does repenting and confessing your sin honor God? (PSG, p. 54)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 53)

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about a biblical principle.

Read the article on “Holy War” in a Bible dictionary. **Why did the Lord sometimes require the Israelites to dedicate everything in a “ban,” which meant that the inhabitants and possessions of an entire city would be set apart to the Lord and destroyed? How would you respond to someone who questioned why a loving God would order the wholesale extermination of the nations that were occupying the promised land?** (Hints: The Lord had given these people time to repent. See Gen. 15:13-16. The Lord is a God of both love and judgment. See Ex. 34:6-7.)

Provide several Bible dictionaries and direct adults to work in small groups to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 53 of the PSG. After a few minutes, lead a brief discussion of the questions in the activity.

OBJECT LESSON: PLAYING CARDS

Prior to the session, remove all the face cards (*jack, queen, king*), joker cards, and the ace of spades from a standard deck of cards.

During the session, allow volunteers to take one of these face cards, keeping it facedown and not showing it to anyone. As you discuss Joshua 7:16-19, lead the volunteers to turn over their cards one at a time. Share that a face card or a joker represents the Israelites who obeyed the Lord, while the ace of spades represents Achan.

Allow adults to compare and contrast this method to what God did through Joshua in these verses. Point out that shuffling playing cards introduces the element of randomness to the activity. Say: *In contrast, God was in complete control of what was happening with Israel. Chance had nothing to do with it. As a result, God identified the right man, and the Israelites could move forward with confidence.*

REAPING WHAT WE SOW

Galatians 6:7, the memory verse for this session, underscores the central truth portrayed in the Old Testament account of Achan and his sin. It drives home the reality that dishonoring the Lord brings painful consequences. Likewise, honoring Him results in spiritual blessings.

In Galatians, the apostle Paul reminded readers that wise people stay alert to the instruction of the Lord and live according to His words. Otherwise, we can fall into the trap of deception easily because our hearts are not set on Him. When we lose sight of the priority of honoring the Lord with our lives, our self-serving interests can mislead us.

The Greek word for “mocked” (*mykterizein*) paints a picture of individuals who turn their noses up at the Lord with contempt. The word appears only in this verse, but it conveys a rock-solid reality that mature followers of Christ take seriously. We simply “cannot fool God” (CEV) or try to make “a fool out of God” (GNT). Instead, we live with the awareness that He’s present in everything we do and say.

However, when we keep our distance from Him, we can deceive ourselves into thinking that He’s blind to our thoughts, words, and actions. That’s when we set ourselves up for disaster. Eventually, we’ll find ourselves ignoring the certainty of His justice. In turn, we discount our accountability to Him for our behavior.

This verse also provides us with a reliable and pertinent fact of life in Him. We harvest what we plant. Farmers put this life principle to work every year during planting season. If they want a harvest of corn, they plant corn seeds.

Growing believers are bound by this principle in our walk with the Lord. We can count on reaping a harvest of His judgment when we plant seeds of sinful behavior that dishonor Him. However, when we listen to Him and obey Him, we can expect His blessings and true meaning in life.

Unwavering Determination

CALEB FOLLOWED THE LORD COMPLETELY AND RECEIVED
WHAT GOD HAD PROMISED HIM DECADES EARLIER.

Joshua 14:1-15

1 The Israelites received these portions that the priest **Eleazar**, **A** Joshua son of Nun, and the **family heads** **B** of the Israelite tribes gave them in the land of Canaan. 2 Their inheritance was **by lot** **C** as the LORD commanded through Moses for the nine and a half tribes, 3 because Moses had given the inheritance to the two and a half tribes **beyond the Jordan**. **D** But he gave no inheritance among them to the **Levites**. **E** 4 The descendants of Joseph became two tribes, **Manasseh and Ephraim**. **F** No portion of the land was given to the Levites except cities to live in, along with pasturelands for their cattle and livestock. 5 So the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses, and they divided the land. 6 The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and **Caleb son of Jephunneh** **G** the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD promised Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. 7 I was forty years old when Moses the LORD’s servant sent me from Kadesh-barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report. 8 My brothers who went with me caused the people to lose heart, but I followed the LORD my God **completely**. **H** 9 On that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land where you have set foot will be an inheritance for you and your descendants forever, because you have followed the LORD my God completely.’ 10 As you see, the LORD has **kept me alive** **I** these forty-five years as he promised, since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, eighty-five years old. 11 I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and for daily tasks is now as it was then. 12 Now give me this **hill country** **J** the LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the **Anakim** **K** are there, as well as large fortified cities. Perhaps the LORD will be with me and I will drive them out as the LORD promised.” 13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as an inheritance. 14 Therefore, **Hebron** **L** still belongs to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite as an inheritance today because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, completely. 15 Hebron’s name used to be Kiriath-arba; Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. After this, the land had rest from war.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Aaron’s third son. He became high priest when his father died (Num. 20:22-29; 26:60-61).
- B** Leaders from each tribe. Previously, they served under the direction of Moses in the wilderness (Num. 32:28).
- C** Casting lots was not a random act. The Israelites trusted the Lord to direct the outcome of the process (Num. 26:52-56; 33:54).
- D** The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh received permission to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan River (Num. 32).
- E** Israel’s priestly tribe. The Levites got no allotment of land. Instead, they received cities scattered across the nation (Deut. 18:1-2).
- F** Jacob had decided that Joseph’s two sons would account for two tribes (Gen. 48).
- G** A family head from Judah. Caleb had served as a faithful spy for Moses forty-five years earlier, and God blessed his faithfulness (Num. 13).
- H** “Wholeheartedly” (NIV); “wholly” (ESV; KJV); “fully” (NASB). The Hebrew wording suggests that nothing is lacking or left out.
- I** At 85, Caleb was as strong as he had been at 40 (v. 11). He enjoyed health and strength because God promised to bring him into Canaan.
- J** Caleb requested specific land from the tribe of Judah (see Num. 14:24). It was not the easiest terrain, but Caleb trusted God to deliver it.
- K** A tribe of fierce warriors, likely giants. They had frightened Israel’s earlier generation (Num. 13:22-33), but Caleb was not afraid.
- L** A leading city in Israel, located nineteen miles south of Jerusalem and fifteen miles west of the Dead Sea. This region had plenty of water and rich soil for agriculture.



Obedience (Josh. 14:1-5)

- The Lord previously had given Moses instructions on how the promised land would be allotted among the Israelite tribes (Num. 34). Following Moses's directives, Joshua, Eleazar the priest, and the selected leaders from each tribe divided the promised land.
- Lots were cast to identify the inheritance of each tribe. This was not a matter of chance. The Israelites were confident that God would reveal His will by determining the result of the lots.

Devotion (Josh. 14:6-9)

- Caleb approached Joshua and reminded him of what Moses promised him in Numbers 14:24.
- Forty-five years earlier, the Lord promised a particular part of Judah as an inheritance for Caleb and his descendants. Caleb was being blessed because he had followed God "completely" (v. 9).

Inheritance (Josh. 14:10-15)

- The land God gave Caleb was hill country and the home of a giant race known as the Anakim.
- Now eighty-five years old, Caleb felt as strong as when he was a young man. He was confident he could defeat any enemy with God's help.
- Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.

Summary Statements

Caleb followed the Lord completely and received what God had promised him decades earlier.

- We will face daily opportunities to obey or disobey God's instructions.
- We can be assured that God knows and rewards those who follow Him wholeheartedly.
- We can be assured of God's presence and aid when we follow Him wholeheartedly.

Memory Verse

Joshua 14:8

Key Doctrine

God

To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.
(See Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Luke 14:27.)



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

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

Bonus: *Would you rate your patience as “high,” “medium,” or “low” in most cases? Why?*

- A lot of people are like the little boy who prayed, “God give me patience, and give it to me right now!”
- The Bible teaches us to trust God’s promises while also trusting His timing. For instance, thousands of years passed from the time God first promised the coming of the Messiah until Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Yet the Bible says God sent His Son at just the right time (Gal. 4:4).
- We can depend on God to keep His promises—no matter how long He takes to do so.

What have you learned about trusting God’s timing? (PSG, p. 55)

EXPLORE

OBEDIENCE (JOSH. 14:1-5)

Bonus: *Do you read instructions or do things on your own? How does that usually work out?*

- Verse 1 introduces the individuals who were central to distributing the land to each tribe. Eleazar was Aaron’s third son and Aaron’s successor as the high priest. Joshua and a leader from each tribe joined him in the work.
- Since Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh received an inheritance east of the Jordan River, this distribution focused on the remaining tribes. By God’s command, each tribe’s inheritance was determined by casting lots. This was not a random event because Israel knew God was in control of how the lots fell for each tribe.
- Israel had thirteen tribes, but Levi received no allotment. Instead, this tribe got forty-eight cities scattered across Israel. This would allow them to teach the law in every tribe.
- Verse 5 emphasizes that all of “the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.” This was a stark contrast to the previous generation’s consistent rebellion against God.

How was the dividing of the land a demonstration of trust in God and His wisdom? (PSG, p. 59)

DEVOTION (JOSH. 14:6-9)

Bonus: *What is a hobby or sport you are “devoted” to following? Why?*

- Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, approached Joshua and reminded him of Moses’s promise at Kadesh-barnea. He had served as a spy the first time Israel approached the promised land (see Num. 13–14). Because he trusted God and gave a faithful report, the Lord blessed him. God promised that he would enter the promised land, unlike most of his contemporaries. He also would receive a particular tract of land in Judah’s territory.

- The word “completely” in verse 9 means “wholeheartedly.” For decades earlier, Caleb had followed God completely. He was committed to following God completely in this situation.

What does it look like to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? (PSG, p. 60)

INHERITANCE (JOSH. 14:10-15)

Bonus: *How do you respond to challenges in life? What is the greatest challenge you’ve overcome?*

- Caleb received God’s promise when he was 40 years old. Unfortunately, the rebellion of others forced him to wait another forty-five years. Now, at 85, he was ready to take possession of his inheritance with God’s help.
- The confidence Caleb felt was anchored in what he had seen God do in his own life. Despite his age, he felt as strong as he had been forty-five years earlier. As a result, he was ready to take on the most intimidating foes the promised land had to offer.
- The terrain of the “hill country” alone could make it challenging. The presence of the Anakim, a race of giants, presented another major obstacle. But Caleb claimed Hebron, formerly known as “Kiriath-arba” in honor of an Anakim leader, for his own.
- Joshua blessed him; and, based on the writer’s words, Caleb conquered the land. It remained in his family’s possession at the time the book of Joshua was written.

Which of God’s promises do you rely upon when facing unknown challenges? (PSG, p. 62)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss various situations where people have a choice to obey or disobey God.

What can people do to prepare themselves for these situations before they face them? (PSG, p. 63)

Encourage individuals to reflect on areas where they face a choice to obey or disobey God personally.

What should you remember and do in order to make the right decision and obey God? (PSG, p. 63)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 62)

Use a cross reference to learn more about what the Bible says about a particular subject.

The word “inheritance” essentially refers to a “legal transmission of property following death.” However, the Hebrew terms translated “inheritance” did not necessarily presuppose a death; they could be used in other ways. Determine how many times “inheritance” or a similar term appears in Joshua 14:1-15. Then read and reflect on these verses to learn more about how it’s used in Scripture: Joshua 1:15; 13:33; Jeremiah 10:16; Matthew 19:29; 25:34; and Romans 8:17.

Allow volunteers to share inheritances they may have received over the years. Talk about what made those gifts so special. Direct the group to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 62 of the PSG. After a few minutes, discuss similarities and differences between Israel’s inheritance and inheritances we receive today.

OBJECT LESSON: PIZZA

Prior to the session, cook a frozen pizza but don’t slice it. Bring the pizza and a pizza cutter with you to the session.

To supplement the group plan, explain that Joshua 14 describes how the promised land was divided among the Israelite tribes. Display the pizza. Ask: ***What are some different ways we could divide this pizza among the group? Would it be fair for some people to get larger pieces? Why or why not? What would be a good way to determine the order for people to get pieces of pizza?***

Discuss responses. Direct a volunteer to read Joshua 14:1-5 as the group listens for how God decided which tribes would get which land in Canaan. Emphasize that casting lots did not produce a random result. Explain that God was in control of the outcome, so chance played no part in the decisions. Affirm that God still can be trusted with the decisions we make in life.

JOSHUA’S BLESSING

Joshua gave Caleb the inheritance that God had promised. Caleb had followed the Lord fully and had waited forty-five years to receive his inheritance. The depth of his loyalty set an excellent example of faithfulness for God’s people then and now.

Along with the inheritance, Joshua also gave Caleb a blessing. In those days, blessings involved more than wishing someone well. The blessing invoked God’s power on the one receiving it. Joshua’s blessing placed Caleb in the Lord’s hands and under the Lord’s protection. He asked God to grace Caleb and his family with success and prosperity.

When Joshua blessed Caleb, he exhibited the unique bond they shared. Forty-five years earlier at Kadesh-barnea, they stood together when other Israelites stood against them (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). Both of them registered unshakable devotion to the Lord by believing that He would enable them to conquer the promised land. They urged the people of Israel to trust Him too.

Without a doubt, the courageous stand they had taken linked them to one another inseparably. Consequently, Caleb registered no hesitation when

approaching Joshua forty-five years later and making his bold request for the hill country (Josh. 14:12).

Joshua gave a blessing to other Israelites who played a critical role in taking possession of the land and settling it. He blessed the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. After the conquest of the land, they returned to the land that Moses had given to them on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

When he became the leader of the Israelites, these tribes pledged their loyalty to him and to the western tribes of Israel. In keeping with their pledge, they joined the other tribes in conquering the land on the western side of the Jordan River (1:12-18). As they made their way back to their homes, Joshua blessed them (22:6-7).

BONUS CONTENT



The Tribal Allotments of Israel

Learn more about where the Israelite tribes settled in the promised land.

Vital Decision

IN HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS, JOSHUA CHALLENGED THE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE THE LORD OVER THE GODS OF THE CANAANITES.

Joshua 24:14-24

14 “Therefore, **fear** **A** the LORD and worship him in **sincerity and truth**. **B** Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped **beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt**, **C** and worship the LORD. 15 But if it doesn’t please you to worship the LORD, **choose for yourselves** **D** today: Which will you worship—the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the **gods of the Amorites** **E** in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, **we will worship the LORD.**” **F** 16 The people replied, “We will certainly not **abandon** **G** the LORD to worship other gods! 17 For the LORD our God brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. 18 The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because he is our God.” 19 But Joshua told the people, “You will **not be able** **H** to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a **jealous** **I** God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins. 20 If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, he will **turn against you**, **J** harm you, and completely destroy you, after he has been good to you.” 21 “No!” the people answered Joshua. “We will worship the LORD.” 22 Joshua then told the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship the LORD.” **“We are witnesses,”** **K** they said. 23 “Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.” 24 So the people said to Joshua, “We will worship the LORD our God and obey him.”

Exploring Key Words

- A** The Hebrew word (*yare*) expresses terror or awe. In this context, Joshua was calling for Israel to show reverence and respect for the Lord.
- B** The Israelites needed to live with integrity before the Lord. Superficial devotion—or lip service—would not be sufficient.
- C** Abraham lived in a pagan society before God called him to Canaan (Gen. 11:27-28). Israel’s previous generation apparently struggled with Egyptian idolatry even after God rescued them from slavery.
- D** God had chosen Israel, and He longed for them to choose Him. However, He would not force them to worship Him.
- E** Under Moses, Israel defeated the Amorites (Num. 21:21-35). Yet, the Israelites continued to worship Amorite idols throughout their history (1 Kings 21:26; 2 Kings 21:11).
- F** Joshua declared his choice. The Hebrew word for “worship” (*abad*) also can be translated “serve” (ESV; KJV; NIV). Worship and service are like two sides of the same coin.
- G** “Forsake” (NIV; ESV; KJV). Israel vowed to remain loyal to the Lord because of what He had done for them in the past (see vv. 17-18).
- H** A superficial commitment to Him would not sustain them. Israel needed to understand the weight of its choice.
- I** God would not stand for idolatry. He demanded the Israelites’ full commitment (see Ex. 20:5; Deut. 32:16-21; Nah. 1:2; and Zech. 8:2).
- J** God’s favor depended on Israel’s faithfulness. If they refused to serve Him alone, they would suffer curses instead of blessings.
- K** The Israelites placed themselves under an oath to serve the Lord and reject false gods.



Challenge (Josh. 24:14-18)

- After reviewing the evidence of God's faithfulness to the Israelites through the years (Josh. 24:1-13), Joshua exhorted the people to fear and worship only the Lord. He further declared that he and his family would serve the Lord.
- The Israelites responded with their own words of commitment to remain loyal. They recalled what God had done for them in the past, delivering them from slavery, protecting them in the wilderness, and driving out the people in the land. As a result, they would not "abandon" the Lord (v. 16).

Warning (Josh. 24:19-24)

- Joshua warned them that serving only God would not be easy. The Lord would deal with them harshly if they abandoned Him to worship other gods.
- They repeated their earlier claim to worship the Lord alone. Joshua urged them to get rid of any foreign gods among them. Again, they declared their devotion to obey God.
- On that day, Joshua made a covenant signifying their commitment.

Summary Statements

In his farewell address, Joshua challenged the people to choose the Lord over the gods of the Canaanites.

- Each person must consider how he or she will respond to the Lord.
- We're to put away any idols that might demand our devotion that rightfully belongs to the Lord.

Memory Verse

Joshua 24:23-24

Key Doctrine

God's Purpose of Grace

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (See John 5:24; 10:27-29.)



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

ENGAGE

Bonus: When did you last fly? What do you recall about the flight attendant's instructions?

- Crash landings of commercial jets are extremely rare. Yet, before any plane takes off, flight attendants provide instructions for emergency landings on land or water.
- Most passengers seem to ignore the flight attendants. People might get away with that on a plane, but it is always costly when people ignore warnings in the Word of God.

Why are people tempted to ignore warnings of potential danger? (PSG, p. 64)

EXPLORE

CHALLENGE (JOSH. 24:14-18)

Bonus: What are some decisions that require a commitment in your life? Why were you willing to make that commitment?

- Joshua 24:1-13 records how Joshua gathered Israel at Shechem. This place was already significant because it was where God first promised Abraham that He would give his descendants the land of Canaan. So as Joshua was about to die, he stood before the nation at Shechem and proclaimed that they were evidence of and witnesses to the truth that God had kept His promise to Abraham.
- Joshua reminded the people how the Lord had destroyed their enemies and brought the nation out of Egypt. God led them into the promised land and handed Israel's enemies over to them. Based on these truths, Joshua exhorted the people to fear the Lord and worship him in "sincerity and truth."
- Joshua challenged the people to make a choice between the one true God and the false idols their ancestors had worshiped through the centuries. They could not wallow in indecision. Just as the Lord had been unwavering in His faithfulness to His people, He expected them to follow Him without wavering.

Why is it important to consciously choose whom you will serve? (PSG, p. 69)

- Boldly, Joshua left no doubt the choice he and his family would make. Considering what God had done, the decision seemed obvious to him. He was going to serve the Lord, and he urged all of Israel to follow his example.
- With the most emphatic language possible, the people affirmed there was no way they would "abandon" God to worship idols. They promised to do what Joshua had challenged them to do, to cling to the Lord. Like Joshua, they recounted all the great things God had done for them. His faithfulness was the motivation for their faithfulness.

How does your decision to serve the Lord influence people around you? (PSG, p. 69)

WARNING (JOSH. 24:19-24)

Bonus: How do you feel when you're told you can't accomplish some task?

- Joshua's response to the people might seem harsh, but he knew it is easier to make a promise than to keep one. He also had witnessed earlier generations of Israelites make commitments to the Lord that did not last.
- The statement that God would not forgive the people's sins was not absolute or eternal. We serve a God of mercy and grace. Yet, God is not to be taken lightly. He would not overlook Israel's unfaithfulness. They would experience consequences for their sin (see Deut. 28:15-68). This is still how God views sin today (1 Cor. 3:13-14; Gal. 6:7-9).
- Israel doubled down on their commitment, emphatically denying the possibility they would reject the Lord and serve other gods. So, Joshua put them under an oath and made them witnesses against themselves.
- Apparently, some "foreign gods" already had snared the Israelites. So, Joshua challenged them to get rid of those idols and follow through on their promise to serve God alone in the promised land.
- As a conclusion, Joshua recorded the covenant and set up a stone as a reminder of the people's commitment to it (vv. 26-27). Joshua later died at the age of 110 and was buried within the territory of Ephraim. The Israelites remained faithful to God throughout his lifetime (vv. 29-31).

What idols or false ideas compete for your loyalty and attention? (PSG, p. 71)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss ways to encourage one another toward wholehearted devotion to the Lord.

What does it look like in your context to be wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord? (PSG, p. 72)

Urge adults to consider the consequences of allowing idols to remain in their lives.

Who might you influence this week to encourage their devotion to the Lord? (PSG, p. 72)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 71)

Use a Bible study resource to learn more about a biblical principle.

Joshua 24 highlights a renewal of the covenant between the Lord and His people. Use a Bible atlas to locate Shechem on a map of ancient Israel. Look up the word “covenant” in a Bible dictionary. Read and reflect on the following Scripture passages to learn more about ancient covenants: Genesis 9:8-17; 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; Exodus 19:1-8; 2 Samuel 7:1-17. Consider how the Israelites responded to God’s covenants through the years. ***Why was a new covenant sealed by Jesus’s death and resurrection necessary for God’s people?***

Direct adults to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 71 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their discoveries. Highlight the new covenant established by Jesus.

OBJECT LESSON: WATER

Before the session, prepare two clear glasses of water. You will also need a small amount of food coloring.

During the session, display one glass of water. Explain that God wants our worship of Him to be pure and fully devoted to Him alone. Say: *However, we often find ourselves embracing the idols of the world.* Put some food coloring into the water. Say: *Just a little contamination ruins the whole thing.* Share that the Israelites believed they could trust God fully, but they ran into trouble when they tried to mix idolatry into their worship of the one, true God.

Display the second glass of pure water. Emphasize that God calls His people to worship with “sincerity and truth.” Encourage them to spend some time in the coming days examining their lives for any idols that might be “coloring” their walk with God.

COVENANT RENEWAL

God’s covenant with Israel folded into every episode of their lives as they followed Joshua into the promised land. Generations earlier, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham regarding the land that his family would receive (Gen. 15). After, He liberated the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and directed them to Mount Sinai. There, He initiated the covenant with them through His law (Ex. 19-20). Under God’s leadership, Joshua guided Israel to obey the law as they settled in Canaan.

Guiding them involved taking possession of the land and settling in the allotments given to the twelve tribes. It also meant pointing them to God’s law along the way. As Joshua encouraged the Israelites to honor their covenant with the Lord, he led them in two pivotal worship experiences related to covenant renewal.

The first event took place at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Josh. 8). Joshua gathered the people there in keeping with Moses’s instructions (Deut. 27:1-8). Joshua offered sacrifices on an altar that

he constructed. He also copied and read God’s law to everyone. After the Israelites renewed their covenant with the Lord, they continued to conquer and settle the land He had given to them.

The second worship experience happened toward the end of Joshua’s life. He gathered the people again, this time at Shechem (Josh. 24). Because the Israelites would be moving into a future without him, he urged them to renew their covenant with the Lord. He challenged them to give themselves to God wholeheartedly and sincerely.

When they responded by pledging their exclusive loyalty to the Lord, he documented their covenant renewal. Then he set a large stone before them and told them that it would serve as a memorial to what happened there. It would also be a constant witness to them. In a way, it would remind them of their vow and be a witness to their covenant pledge.

Consequences

AFTER JOSHUA'S DEATH, ISRAEL FELL INTO A CYCLE OF SIN, JUDGMENT, CONFESSION, AND RESTORATION.

Judges 2:11-23

11 The **Israelites** **A** did what was **evil** **B** in the LORD's sight. They worshiped the Baals **12** and abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They angered the LORD, **13** for they abandoned him and worshiped **Baal and the Ashtoreths**. **C**

14 The LORD's anger **burned** **D** against Israel, and he handed them over to **marauders** **E** who raided them. He sold them to the enemies around them, and they could no longer resist their enemies. **15** Whenever the Israelites went out, the LORD was against them and brought disaster on them, just as he had promised and sworn to them. So they suffered greatly. **16** The LORD raised up **judges**, **F** who saved them from the power of their marauders, **17** but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they **prostituted** **G** themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the way of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands. They did not do as their ancestors did.

18 Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for the Israelites, the LORD was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive. The LORD was moved to **pity** **H** whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting them. **19** Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act **even more corruptly** **I** than their ancestors, following other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate ways. **20** The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he declared, "Because this nation has violated **my covenant** **J** that I made with their ancestors and disobeyed me, **21** I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. **22** I did this to **test** **K** Israel and to see whether or not they would keep the LORD's way by walking in it, as their ancestors had." **23** The LORD left these nations and did not drive them out immediately. He did not hand them over to Joshua.

Exploring Key Words

- A** God's chosen people. Before Joshua's death, the Israelites had promised they would follow God completely. However, future generations strayed from that vow (Judg. 2:10).
- B** The Hebrew word (*hara*) indicates moral bankruptcy and spiritual sickness. (See Deut. 4:25-26; 9:18; 17:2-7; 31:29).
- C** The word, meaning "master" or "lord," referred to the primary god of the Canaanites. Baal was a god of weather and crops. Ashtoreth was his female consort and ruled war and fertility.
- D** "Was hot" (KJV); "kindled" (ESV). The wording suggests a blazing anger (see also Ex. 32:10). The Lord told the Israelites that He was a jealous God (Ex. 20:5) and would not tolerate idolatry.
- E** "Spoilers" (KJV); "plunderers" (ESV); "raiders" (NIV). Enemies had their way with Israel since God no longer protected the nation (vv. 15,21).
- F** The Hebrew word *shophetim*, from which the book draws its name. These military leaders delivered Israel from its enemies (Judg. 2:18).
- G** God viewed Israel's spiritual infidelity like an unfaithful spouse (2 Sam. 22:7; Job 20:22; Hos. 5:15). Pursuing other gods was like pursuing a harlot.
- H** The wording describes deep emotion that longs to comfort someone. For God, the Israelites' suffering moved Him to compassionate action.
- I** Conveys behavior that leads to corruption or ruin. Each generation drew closer to destruction than the one before.
- J** The Sinai covenant was the key to Israel's prosperity or oppression in the promised land (see Deut. 28-30).
- K** The Israelites' decisions regarding idol worship would test their faithfulness to God.



NOTES

The Evil (Judg. 2:11-15)

- Despite their earlier pledge to Joshua (Josh. 24:14-24), the Israelites abandoned the Lord and worshiped the gods of the Canaanites following his death.
- Because of their rebellion, God handed His people over to their enemies. They suffered greatly at the hands of their oppressors.

The Cycle (Judg. 2:16-19)

- God had compassion on His people and raised up leaders (called “judges”) to deliver them from their enemies.
- However, when each leader died, the people returned to their evil practices. The Israelites continued in a downward spiral, as each generation acted more corruptly than the previous one.

The Declaration (Judg. 2:20-23)

- Because the Israelites consistently violated the covenant with the Lord, God declared that He would no longer drive out their enemies.
- The Lord did this to test whether Israel would be obedient to Him.

Summary Statements

After Joshua’s death, Israel fell into a cycle of sin, judgment, confession, and restoration.

- God’s people must guard against the danger of forgetting what the Lord has done for them.
- Believers can be assured that God’s faithfulness to act on behalf of His people is rooted in His character, not in ours.
- Believers can expect their obedience to God to be tested.

Memory Verse

Judges 2:10

Key Doctrine

Salvation

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God.
(See Luke 3:8; Romans 2:4-5.)



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

ENGAGE

What factors might cause people to break their commitments, and how can we guard against this in our own lives? (PSG, p. 73)

- Intending to do well doesn't always result in something being well done. We recognize this to be true regarding the people of Israel when Joshua died and the era of the judges began.
- Before Joshua's death, the Israelites insisted they would be faithful to the Lord and never worship the gods of the Canaanites. However, after Joshua and the elders who served alongside of him died, Israel broke their promise.
- As a result of the rebellion, they suffered the consequences of their infidelity to the Lord.

Bonus: When have you seen someone's good intentions fall flat?

EXPLORE

THE EVIL (JUDG. 2:11-15)

Bonus: What are some things you never want to forget? Why are they so important?

- After Joshua's death, Israel did "what was evil in the Lord's sight." Specifically, this "evil" involved an egregious sin against God: idolatry. Rather than following the Lord alone (Josh. 24:14-24), they chased Canaan's gods.
- "Baal" literally means "lord" or "master" and referred to the supreme god of the Canaanites. He was the storm god whose worshipers believed provided rain for their crops.
- Ashtoreth was a goddess of fertility, love, and war. Prosperity depended on the sexual activities of Baal and his consort. So, the false religion incorporated flagrant sexual immorality into its practices. The worship of Baal and Ashtoreth became a snare to Israel until the days of the Babylonian exile.
- Just because the people took their eyes off God does not mean He took His eyes off of them. Israel's unfaithfulness angered the Lord and prompted His judgment. They would experience the consequences of their infidelity.
- Though the enemies are not identified specifically, the Lord raised up "marauders" to plunder Israel. Without God's help, His people were defenseless against these Canaanite oppressors and "suffered greatly."

What factors contribute to a person or group abandoning God? (PSG, p. 77)

THE CYCLE (JUDG. 2:16-19)

Bonus: When have you felt stuck in a rut? How did you get out of it?

- While the Lord was acting against the Israelites (v. 14), He was actually working for them. He "raised up judges,"

military leaders who could deliver the people from their enemies. God's compassion led to a demonstration of God's power on behalf of the Israelites.

- Unfortunately, the people did not turn to God permanently. Despite all He did for them, they returned to "prostituting" themselves, serving false gods instead of Him. Their cycle of sin looked like this: (1) abandoning God for Canaanite idols, (2) God sending enemies to oppress them, (3) Israel crying out to the Lord, (4) God providing judges out of His compassion, (5) a period of peace, and (6) a fall into deeper corruption once the judge passed from the scene.

What does God's providing a deliverer tell us about His character? (PSG, p. 79)

THE DECLARATION (JUDG. 2:20-23)

Bonus: When you hear the word "test," what comes to mind? When can a test turn out to be a good thing?

- The ancient writer noted again that God grew angry with His people. Their infidelity violated His covenant and alienated them from His protection. God withdrew His hand of blessing from them.
- Ultimately, God did this to "test" the Israelites. He wanted their suffering to draw them back to Him once and for all. So, he continued allowing their cycle of sin to run its course and produce its consequences.

When and how has God tested you? How is your faith stronger as a result? (PSG, p. 80)

CHALLENGE

As a group, talk about the importance of faithfulness to God.

Discuss as a group how you might help one another guard against the danger of forgetting what the Lord has done for you. (PSG, p. 81)

Challenge individuals to reflect on ways to avoid forgetting God's work in their lives.

Why is it essential that you always remember that God's faithfulness to act on behalf of His people is rooted in His character, not in ours? (PSG, p. 81)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 80)

Learn more about a person in the Bible.

The “angel of the LORD” appears in Judges 2:1, the first of four times in the book of Judges (see also 5:23; 6:11; and 13:1-24). Many scholars believe this was a “christophany,” an appearance of Jesus prior to His incarnation in the Gospels. Read and reflect on other possible christophanies in the Old Testament, such as Genesis 32:24-30 and Daniel 3:24-25. **Why do you think Jesus appeared in situations like these? How does the presence of Jesus affect your life each day?**

Encourage adults to work on this question in small groups: **Was Jesus in the Old Testament?** After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their responses. Direct the groups to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 80 of the PSG. When they are done, affirm that Jesus was active in the Old Testament. Share that some believe He was the “angel of LORD” in Judges 2.

OBJECT LESSON: A YO-YO

Prior to the session, secure a yo-yo. If possible, spend some time practicing with it before the Bible study session.

During the session, attract attention by flicking a yo-yo up and down several times. Allow volunteers to show their yo-yo skills as time allows. As you continue playing with the yo-yo, share that in Judges the Israelites were like spiritual yo-yos.

Say: *They would plummet down into sin and cry out to God. God would send a judge to deliver the people, and they would move back up in their relationship with God.* Challenge adults to consider how they are spiritual “yo-yos” at times. Allow a time of prayer and reflection, encouraging the group to talk with God about areas of their lives where they keep slipping into sin. Remind them that sin carries consequences, but God’s grace can free them from any cycle of sin.

PAGANS IN CANAAN

The book of Judges provides an account of Israel’s struggles with idolatry. The pagan clans living in the promised land presented a formidable temptation to God’s people. The Canaanites worshiped their false gods, and they tempted the Israelites to embrace them as well. Eventually the Israelites gave in to the temptation and betrayed their covenant with the Lord.

Pagans had been living in the promised land for centuries. Even before Canaan was the name of a place, it was the name of a person. Noah had a son named Ham, and he had a son named Canaan (Gen. 9:18). In Hebrew, the name (*kena’an*) meant “merchant.”

Later on, it came to be identified with Abraham. According to Genesis 15:12-18, the Lord promised the land to Abraham and vowed that his descendants would live there. At that time, ten pagan clans lived in the region: the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites (Gen. 15:19-21).

Following Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, Moses pointed Israel to the promised land, which he referred to as “the land of Canaan” (Num. 32:32). When Joshua followed Moses as the nation’s leader, the Lord directed his steps in conquering Canaan. God intended for Israel’s twelve tribes to settle the land and to wipe out the seven pagan clans who lived there at that time: the Canaanites, Hethites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites.

The Lord commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites and to tear down the altars these pagans had built for their idols. The Israelites did not succeed in getting rid of the idolatry of the Canaanites completely. Generations later, Israel still was breaking their covenant with the Lord by worshiping the pagan gods of the Canaanites (1 Kings 14:23-24; 2 Kings 16:3-4). They even followed the Canaanites in practicing perversions like immorality and human sacrifice. Eventually, their idolatry led to their exile in Babylon.

Called

THOUGH GIDEON CONSIDERED HIMSELF INADEQUATE, GOD CALLED HIM TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE FROM THE MIDIANITES.

Judges 6:1-4,7-16

1 The Israelites did **what was evil** **A** in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD handed them over to **Midian** **B** seven years, **2** and they **oppressed** **C** Israel. Because of Midian, the Israelites made **hiding places** **D** for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. **3** Whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the **people of the east** **E** came and attacked them. **4** They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. [. . .] **7** When the Israelites **cried out** **F** to him because of Midian, **8** the LORD sent **a prophet** **G** to them. He said to them, “This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I brought you out of Egypt and out of the place of slavery. **9** I rescued you from the power of Egypt and the power of all who oppressed you. I drove them out before you and gave you their land. **10** I said to you: I am the LORD your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites whose land you live in. But you did not obey me.’” **11** The **angel of the LORD** **H** came, and he sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat **in the winepress** **I** in order to hide it from the Midianites. **12** Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “The LORD is with you, **valiant warrior.**” **13** Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened? And where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about? They said, ‘Hasn’t the LORD brought us out of Egypt?’ But now **the LORD has abandoned us** **J** and handed us over to Midian.” **14** The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. I am sending you!” **15** He said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and **I am the youngest** **K** in my father’s family.” **16** “But I will be with you,” the LORD said to him. “You will strike Midian down as if it were one man.”

Exploring Key Words

- A** Several judges had already served across Israel (Judg. 3–4). Yet, the nation generally continued to embrace idolatry and the cycle of sin.
- B** Descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:2). They lived east of the Jordan River to the south of Moab.
- C** Israel’s suffering mirrors what Moses described in Deuteronomy 28:15–57.
- D** The Israelites’ deprivation was matched only by their fear. The Midianites forced them out of their homes and into the hills for shelter.
- E** The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12). They and the Midianites joined forces with nomadic tribes from the Arabian desert to steal or destroy everything Israel had.
- F** After suffering seven years of terror and deprivation (v. 1), Israel finally turned to God.
- G** Instead of a judge, God sent a prophet (Heb., *nabi*). Prophets were empowered to share the Lord’s message. This was another message of chastisement for ignoring God.
- H** A special messenger from God. Some believe this was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
- I** Threshing made use of the wind, so doing it in an underground winepress would have made the task much more difficult.
- J** “Man of valor” (ESV); “mighty warrior” (NIV). An odd statement considering what Gideon was doing—and why—at that moment.
- K** Gideon blamed God for Israel’s troubles. His sentiments likely reflected many in Israel.
- L** Like Moses (Ex. 3–4), Gideon had plenty of excuses for not leading God’s people. But the Lord assured him that he would not fight alone: “I will be with you” (v. 16).



Oppression (Judg. 6:1-4,7-10)

- Because the Israelites again did what was evil in the Lord's sight, He handed them over to the Midianites for seven years. The enemies invaded the land and destroyed their crops, leaving nothing for them to eat.
- When the Israelites cried out to God, He sent an unnamed prophet to tell them they were suffering because of their disobedience.

Commission (Judg. 6:11-14)

- While God sent a prophet to the nation, He met with Gideon in a more personal way. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon as he was threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from the Midianites.
- Gideon questioned why the Israelites were being oppressed, believing that God had abandoned them. He failed to see the impact of Israel's sin.
- Through the angel, the Lord called and commissioned Gideon to deliver His people from the Midianites.

Reassurance (Judg. 6:15-16)

- Gideon reasoned that he couldn't possibly deliver the people, since he was the youngest member of the weakest family in the tribe of Manasseh.
- Despite his excuses to the contrary, the Lord assured Gideon of His presence.

Summary Statements

Though Gideon considered himself inadequate, God called him to deliver His people from the Midianites.

- We can anticipate that when people turn their backs on God, they will experience undesirable consequences.
- We can be encouraged to know that God calls unlikely people to do great things for Him.
- Believers should trust God when being called upon to take a specific action for Him.

Memory Verse

Judges 6:16

Key Doctrine

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. (See Judges 14:6; Acts 1:8.)



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

ENGAGE

When have you felt inadequate for a task? Where did you turn for help? (PSG, p. 82)

- We often compare ourselves to others. But this rarely has a positive result. It either leads to pride because we think we are better than others, or it leads to discouragement because we believe others are better than us.
- All of this feels especially confounding when God calls a person to serve Him in some capacity when someone else seems like a better fit. God does this so that when the task is accomplished, He will receive the glory for it. Such was the case with Gideon.

Bonus: What are some words you would use to describe yourself? Why do those words apply?

EXPLORE

OPPRESSION (JUDG. 6:1-4,7-10)

Bonus: How do people respond to desperate situations? How do you respond?

- Once again, the Israelites abandoned the Lord and began worshiping other gods. And as before, the Lord handed them over to their enemies. This time it was the Midianites.
- The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through Keturah. They had been Israel's enemies since Moses led the nation into the region east of the Jordan River (Num. 25:1-18). Like swarming locusts, the Midianites used camels to make decimating, swift strikes on their enemies, leaving little of value behind.
- For seven years, the Israelites existed in constant fear, living in "mountains, caves, and strongholds" because of Midian's lightning strikes. The Midianites were allied with the Amalekites (descendants of Esau) and "people of the east," likely nomads from the Arabian desert region.
- The invaders timed their raids to coincide with Israel's harvest. They would plunder everything they could and lay waste to everything else. Israel's deprivation mirrored Moses's warnings in Deuteronomy 28.
- After seven years, Israel finally cried out to the Lord for help. Rather than a judge who would deliver, He sent them a prophet to rebuke. This unnamed prophet reminded God's people of all that He had done for them—and how they had abandoned His covenant. In His grace, God exposed Israel's sin and the reasons for their suffering, while giving them a chance to repent and be restored.

What outcomes should we anticipate if we live in disobedience to God? (PSG, p. 87)

COMMISSION (JUDG. 6:11-14)

How might our circumstances impact our response to God's calling? (PSG, p. 88)

- Verse 11 introduces Gideon, the judge whose name meant "to mutilate" or "to hack." God found Gideon "threshing wheat in the winepress." The winepress would have been a safer place than a more exposed threshing floor, but it would have made the job more difficult. Apparently, Gideon shared the same fear the rest of the Israelites had.
- The "angel of the LORD" called Gideon a "valiant warrior." This was an amazing statement considering where Gideon was at that moment. But the angel (possible a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus) knew how God would use this timid farmer.
- Hearing the angel's greeting, Gideon's frustrations bubbled over. He demanded to know why God had abandoned His people after doing such great things for their ancestors. The angel simply told Gideon to "go in the strength you have" to rescue Israel from the Midianites.

Bonus: Why do people get frustrated with God? How do you think God feels about that?

REASSURANCE (JUDG. 6:15-16)

Bonus: What is the benefit of tackling hard jobs?

- Gideon's fear accentuated his sense of inadequacy. How could he deliver Israel? He was the youngest child in one of Manasseh's most obscure families. From his point of view, he did not have the credentials or the ability to deliver Israel.
- However, Gideon did have the promise of God's presence: "I will be with you." With God's help, an overwhelming enemy would be cut down to size.

How does the assurance of God's presence negate our excuse of inadequacy? (PSG, p. 89)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss ways to encourage one another to do great things for God.

How can believers be encouraged by the truth that God calls unlikely people to do great things for Him? (PSG, p. 90)

Challenge individuals to reflect on what it means to trust God.

How can doubting God be turned into trusting God? (PSG, p. 90)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 89)

Do a word study to gain a better understanding of a passage.

Scripture is full of “calling” experiences where God selected servants to carry out kingdom work. Study the following passages: Genesis 12:1-4; Exodus 3-4; 1 Kings 19:19-21; Isaiah 6:1-9; Jeremiah 1; Jonah 1; Luke 1:26-38; Mark 1:16-20; and Acts 9:1-9. Identify similarities and differences. Note the particular ways each person was called and how they responded. Examine your own calling from God. ***Have you experienced a specific call from Him? How have you responded?***

Instruct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 89 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow them to share what they found. Discuss the questions at the end of the activity. Challenge adults to talk with God about His calling on their lives.

OBJECT LESSON: FLOWERPOTS

Prior to the session, find two small clay flowerpots: one that is new and one that is cracked. Also, secure some potting soil and a small plant.

During the session, put the new pot inside a pie pan and pour water into it. Do the same for the cracked pot. Say: *Some of you may feel like this cracked pot. Your flaws and mistakes keep you from being used by God.* Fill the broken pot with soil and a small plant. Pour some more water into the pot. Say: *Sometimes the things we consider flaws and mistakes are the things God uses for His glory.*

Encourage volunteers to share times when God used something they considered a weakness to make a difference in their lives or the life of someone else. Affirm that Gideon knew exactly how they felt. Remind them that God’s opinion matters more than anything we think about ourselves. Challenge adults to allow God to use them, despite their brokenness and their feelings of inferiority.

GOD AND GIDEON

A closer look at the episode that begins in Judges 6:16 helps us to understand more about the Lord’s presence in Gideon’s life. The account also enables believers to appreciate the value of worshiping Him.

The Lord made Himself known to the nation through a prophet, but He appeared to Gideon in a more personal way. He revealed Himself through an angel who actually spoke to Gideon. The conversation focused on God’s call for Gideon to liberate the Israelites from their oppressors. In response, Gideon displayed apprehension, telling the Lord that he did not measure up to the criteria of a successful military leader. When he looked at himself, Gideon fell far short of the “valiant warrior” that God saw.

The presence of the Lord made all the difference to Gideon. Granted, he still struggled with his weaknesses. Only toward the end of the story did he see himself as a leader who could defeat Israel’s enemies. But, each step of the way, the Lord assured him with the promise of His presence.

In time, Gideon proved that the presence of the Lord was more than enough to earn the victory. In fact, his concerns about himself faded as his eagerness to worship the Lord took hold of him. He didn’t want the Lord to leave him.

While the Lord waited, Gideon rushed to prepare food as an offering. When he returned, he offered it, and the Lord accepted it. Fire gushed from the stone on which the food had been placed, consuming the food in its flames (Judg. 6:19-21). Worshiping the Lord that day gave Gideon the confirmation that he needed to move forward, albeit hesitantly, in his call.

Spending time with God had a lasting effect on Gideon. He showed it in the way that he followed the Lord’s instruction about destroying his father’s altars. He lived up to the meaning of his name—cutter—by cutting them down. Then he built an altar to the Lord. From there, he continued to serve God faithfully.

Trust

GOD PROVIDED VICTORY AND BROUGHT HIMSELF
GLORY THROUGH GIDEON'S ARMY.

Judges 7:1-8,19-23

1 Jerubbaal **A** (that is, Gideon) and all the troops who were with him, got up early and camped beside the **spring of Harod**. **B** The camp of Midian was north of them, below the hill of Moreh, in the valley. **2** The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many troops for me to hand the Midianites over to them, or else Israel might **elevate themselves** **C** over me and say, 'I saved myself.' **3** Now announce to the troops, 'Whoever **is fearful and trembling** **D** may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand of the troops turned back, but ten thousand remained. **4** Then the LORD said to Gideon, "There are **still too many** **E** troops. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you, 'This one can go with you,' he can go. But if I say about anyone, 'This one cannot go with you,' he cannot go." **5** So he brought the troops down to the water, and the LORD said to Gideon, "Separate everyone who **laps water with his tongue** **F** like a dog. Do the same with everyone who kneels to drink." **6** The number of those who lapped with their hands to their mouths was three hundred men, and all the rest of the troops knelt to drink water. **7** The LORD said to Gideon, "**I will deliver you** **G** with the three hundred men who lapped and hand the Midianites over to you. But everyone else is to go home." **8** So Gideon sent all the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred troops, who took the provisions and their rams' horns. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley. [. . .] **19** Gideon and the hundred men who were with him went to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the **middle watch** **H** after the sentries had been stationed. They blew their **rams' horns** **I** and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. **20** The three companies blew their rams' horns and shattered their pitchers. They held their torches in their left hands and their rams' horns to blow in their right hands, and they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" **21** Each Israelite took his position around the camp, and the entire Midianite army began to run, and they cried out as they fled. **22** When Gideon's men blew their three hundred rams' horns, the LORD caused the men in the whole army to **turn on each other** **J** with their swords. They fled to Acacia House in the direction of Zererah as far as the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath. **23** Then the men of Israel were called from **Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh**, **K** and they pursued the Midianites.

Exploring Key Words

- A** In Hebrew, the name meant "let the Baal contend." Gideon earned the name when he tore down Baal's altar (Judg. 6:25-32).
- B** In Hebrew, "Harod" relates to "trembling." The Midianite army camped about four miles north near the hill of Moreh.
- C** "Vaunt themselves" (KJV); "boast over me" (ESV); "boast against me" (NIV).
- D** "Trembles with fear" (NIV). God had said fear was a reason soldiers could stay home during a war (Deut. 20:5-9). It would affect overall morale and displayed a lack of faith in God.
- E** Despite losing 22,000 soldiers to fear, God said the remaining 10,000 still needed to be reduced. God's test would whittle the number down to three hundred (vv. 7-8).
- F** Most likely this test focused on vigilance. Soldiers who brought the water to their mouths could stay alert. Those who put their face down to the water could not.
- G** God reduced the army to prove that He would bring victory. This is a common Old Testament theme (Deut. 20:4; 2 Chron. 20:15; Prov. 21:31; Isa. 41:14-16; Jer. 42:11; Zech. 8:13).
- H** Between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. Only a few sentries guarding the camp's perimeter would be awake.
- I** The Hebrew word is *shophar*. The noise of these trumpets and the crashing jars, along with the torches disoriented the Midianite soldiers.
- J** God used the enemy to destroy itself in chaos, while the Israelites watched.
- K** Possibly the soldiers back at Harod or men called from nearby tribes. Some scholars believe Gideon was violating God's directions by enlisting help beyond the three hundred.



Too Many (Judg. 7:1-3)

- As Gideon and his army prepared to attack the Midianites, the Lord told him he had too many troops. God didn't want the Israelites to think they could save themselves by their own might.
- When Gideon told the troops that whoever was afraid could leave, twenty-two thousand men went home and only ten thousand remained.

Still Too Many (Judg. 7:4-8)

- The Lord ordered a test to reduce the troops even more. He instructed Gideon to lead his remaining troops to the water and to separate those who drank by kneeling down to put their faces in the water from those who used their hands to bring water to their mouths.
- The three hundred men who lapped water from their hands would compose Gideon's army.

Just Right (Judg. 7:19-23)

- Gideon's army defeated the Midianites with only rams' horns, jars, torches, and shouting. In the noise and chaos, the Midianites started killing one another as the Israelites watched.
- After the battle, men from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh joined the pursuit of the Midianites. Still, God made it clear that He was the One who brought the victory to Israel.

Summary Statements

God provided victory and brought Himself glory through Gideon's army.

- Believers dishonor God when they seek the glory that belongs to Him alone.
- Believers need to trust that God's way of doing things is always best.
- Believers should pray for God to do what only He can do.

Memory Verse

Judges 7:2

Key Doctrine

God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. (See Psalm 47:8; Job 42:2.)



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

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

Why do stories of people rising from humble circumstances to achieve success resonate so strongly with us? (PSG, p. 91)

- A “Cinderella story” refers to someone who has come from obscurity to surprisingly gain significant recognition or success.
- Most people enjoy a good Cinderella story. Someone like Abraham Lincoln, who came from a humble background to become president, is an example of a Cinderella story.
- In the Bible, God often used unlikely people to do extraordinary things so He would receive the glory.

Bonus: What is your favorite “Cinderella story,” either real or fictional? Why?

EXPLORE

TOO MANY (JUDG. 7:1-3)

Bonus: How often does fear determine your decisions? Why is that dangerous?

- In Judges 7:1, the writer referred to Gideon as Jerubbaal. This name meant “Baal contends” and refers to Gideon destroying an altar to Baal in Judges 6:25-32.
- Later, Gideon enlisted an army of thirty-two thousand men and camped at the spring of Harod. This was about five miles south of the Midianite camp at the hill of Moreh.
- Despite being outnumbered four to one by Midian, God said Israel’s army was too big. He knew that if He gave the Israelites the victory with thirty-two thousand troops, they would boast about their own power and abilities. They would steal the credit that only God deserved.
- So, God told Gideon to release any man who was “fearful and trembling.” When he did, Gideon saw twenty-two thousand of his thirty-two thousand men walk away. With only ten thousand, Israel was now outnumbered twelve to one.

In what ways might we try to do God’s work by our might and for our glory? (PSG, p. 94)

STILL TOO MANY (JUDG. 7:4-8)

Bonus: What makes it hard to believe that God always has our best interests in mind?

- God wasn’t done downsizing Gideon’s army. He was going to leave no doubt as to who was bringing the deliverance to His people.
- To whittle the numbers down further, God told Gideon to “test” the remaining men based on how they drank water. The three hundred who scooped up the water in their hands and brought it to their mouths could stay. The ninety-seven hundred who put their faces into the water were sent back to the camp.

- Some scholars suggest this was a test of vigilance. The main thing to remember, though, is that God reduced the army to demonstrate His power and glory.

When have you had to trust God despite not understanding what He was doing or asking? (PSG, p. 96)

JUST RIGHT (JUDG. 7:19-23)

Bonus: What is something only God can do in your life right now? What keeps you from trusting Him with that?

- Gideon divided his men into three groups of one hundred. He equipped each man with a rams’ horn (known as a *shophar*) in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside of it in the other hand.
- During the third watch (between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.), Gideon’s men blew their trumpets, smashed their pitchers, held up their torches, and screamed.
- The confused Midianites thought they were surrounded by a massive army and fell into chaos. In the ensuing bedlam, the Lord caused all of the Midianites to begin attacking each other with their swords.
- As the enemy fled, Gideon called upon men from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh to pursue the fleeing Midianites. It is not clear if God had given Gideon His blessing to call these new men. It is possible that Gideon called these men into service despite God’s directions to use only three hundred.

How should knowing that God acts in unpredictable ways impact how we live? (PSG, p. 98)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss what it looks like to do God’s work by one’s own might and for one’s own glory.

What results from such an approach? (PSG, p. 99)

Challenge individuals to examine their lives and to identify areas where they are struggling to trust God.

Why is it sometimes difficult to trust that God’s ways of doing things are always best? (PSG, p. 99)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 98)

Respond emotionally to a passage from Scripture.

Gideon had his doubts when God said He would deliver Israel through him. He also may have wondered why God so drastically reduced his army. Prayerfully consider times when you had questions about what God was doing. ***How do you tend to respond when God doesn't make sense in your life? What can you do to trust Him more fully?***

Write "PREDICT" on the board as an acrostic. Encourage adults to share words related to predicting using the letters in the word. Record their responses. Point out that we like knowing the path of our lives, but God often sends us in unpredictable directions. Direct adults to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 98 of the PSG. After a few minutes, talk about how they respond when God doesn't make sense. Remind them that trust is vital in our relationship with Him.

OBJECT LESSON: FLASHLIGHT

Prior to class, secure a small flashlight. During the session, turn on the flashlight while the lights are still on in the room. Ask: ***Does this seem like a significant source of light right now? Why?*** Discuss responses.

Enlist a volunteer to turn off the lights. Turn on the flashlight and note how a small light can illuminate an entire room. Encourage adults to share how even a little light makes them feel after being in the dark.

Explain that Gideon had three hundred men equipped with torches. Share this from page 97 of the PSG: *In a normal nighttime military maneuver, only someone at the front of a company would have been carrying a lit torch. Gideon's three hundred men appeared to be three hundred companies surrounding the Midianites.*

Discuss what that might have looked like and felt like when all those men broke their jars and shouted at the top of their lungs. Affirm that God can always be trusted to help His people.

THE "WEAPONS" OF WAR

The tools used by Gideon's army glorified the Lord because they were not impressive weapons of war. Under the Lord's leadership, Gideon and his three hundred troops attacked the massive Midianite army with everyday items, like torches and clay pitchers.

Each soldier also carried a ram's horn trumpet, known as a *shophar*. The *shophar* produced no more than two or three notes, but the Israelites associated it with worshiping God. For example, a *shophar* announced the return of Moses from Mount Sinai and caused the Israelites to tremble (Ex. 19:16-19). In the wilderness, priests sounded the trumpet on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:9), at the beginning of the new moon festivals (Ps. 81:3) and during the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10).

The Israelites also used rams' horn trumpets in other pivotal situations. In times of war, they blew a *shophar* as they engaged in battle. When Joshua led the Israelites to march around Jericho, he directed each of them to blow a ram's horn (Josh. 6:4). As noted, the

trumpets played a critical role in the battle between Gideon's troops and the much larger Midianite army (Judg. 7:19-23). And the Israelites heard it when they celebrated the rule of King Solomon (1 Kings 1:34). They also blew the ram's horn when they declared Jehu as king (2 Kings 9:13).

After the Babylonian exile, Nehemiah ordered the people to be vigilant against their enemies as they rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. The signal for trouble that would bring the people running involved blowing a ram's horn trumpet (Neh. 4:18-20).

God used the sensory onslaught of blaring trumpets, shattering pitchers, flaming torches, and screaming soldiers to confuse and terrify the Midianites. God still takes pleasure in using simple things (and common people) to accomplish His purposes.

Compromise

SAMSON'S PHYSICAL STRENGTH COULD NOT SAVE HIM FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS WEAK MORAL CHARACTER.

Judges 16:16-31

16 Because **she** **A** nagged him day after day and pleaded with him until she wore him out, 17 he told her the **whole truth** **B** and said to her, “My hair has never been cut, because I am a **Nazirite** **C** to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man.” 18 When Delilah realized that he had told her the whole truth, she sent this message to the **Philistine leaders**: **D** “Come one more time, for he has told me the whole truth.” The Philistine leaders came to her and brought **the silver** **E** with them. 19 Then she let him fall asleep on her lap and called a man to shave off the seven braids on his head. In this way, she made him helpless, and his strength left him. 20 Then she cried, “Samson, the Philistines are here!” When he awoke from his sleep, he said, “I will escape as I did before and shake myself free.” But **he did not know that the Lord had left him**. **F** 21 The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to **Gaza** **G** and bound him with bronze shackles, and he was forced to grind grain in the prison. 22 But **his hair began to grow back** **H** after it had been shaved. 23 Now the Philistine leaders gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god **Dagon**. **I** They rejoiced and said: Our god has handed over our enemy Samson to us. 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god and said: Our god has handed over to us our enemy who destroyed our land and who multiplied our dead. 25 When they were in good spirits, they said, “Bring Samson here to **entertain us**.” **J** So they brought Samson from prison, and he entertained them. They had him stand between the pillars. 26 Samson said to the young man who was leading him by the hand, “Lead me where I can feel the pillars supporting the temple, so I can lean against them.” 27 The temple was full of men and women; all the leaders of the Philistines were there, and about three thousand men and women were on the roof watching Samson entertain them. 28 He **called out** **K** to the LORD, “Lord GOD, please remember me. Strengthen me, God, just once more. With one act of vengeance, let me pay back the Philistines for my two eyes.” 29 Samson took hold of the two middle pillars supporting the temple and leaned against them, one on his right hand and the other on his left. 30 Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” He pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the leaders and all the people in it. And those he killed at his death were **more than those he had killed in his life**. **L** 31 Then his brothers and his father’s whole family came down, carried him back, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. So he judged Israel twenty years.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Delilah, a woman who Samson loved. The Philistines bribed her to tell them the source of his strength so they could weaken him (vv. 4-5).
- B** “All his heart” (KJV; ESV). On three occasions, Samson had given Delilah faulty information (vv. 6-14). This time, though, he did not.
- C** The Hebrew term *nazir* identified one separated or consecrated. Nazirites were dedicated to God (Num. 6:1-21). Their vow meant abstaining from wine or beer, avoiding dead bodies, and never cutting their hair.
- D** The Philistines occupied the southwestern part of Canaan, along the Mediterranean Sea. The leaders of the five major Philistine cities ruled over them together.
- E** The Philistines paid Delilah 5,500 shekels of silver to pass along the secret of his strength to them. By comparison, a slave was worth thirty shekels of silver (Ex. 21:32).
- F** Ultimately, Samson’s strength depended on God’s presence. But ongoing compromise left him unaware of the Lord’s absence in his life.
- G** Earlier, Samson had ripped this Philistine city’s gate off its hinges (Judg. 16:1-3). Now, it was the site of his captivity.
- H** Some scholars see this as a ray of hope, a reminder that God was not done with Samson.
- I** The primary deity of the Philistines. It possibly was a sea god since its name meant “fish.”
- J** “Make us sport” (KJV); “amuse us” (NASB). They wanted to mock their humiliated enemy.
- K** Though his motives may have been selfish, Samson finally turned to God for help.
- L** Some interpret this as an indictment on Samson for wasting his life and his calling.



Strength Departed (Judg. 16:16-20)

- Delilah coaxed Samson into telling her the secret of his strength—his long hair, which was a symbol of his consecration to God.
- He explained that his hair had never been cut because of a Nazirite vow. If it were cut, his strength would be gone.
- While he slept in her lap, she called a Philistine to cut Samson's hair. As a result, his strength left him. Due to his consistent compromise, Samson was not aware that God had left him as well.

Samson Defeated (Judg. 16:21-25)

- Without God's favor on his life, the Philistines easily seized Samson. They gouged out his eyes, bound him, and put him in prison.
- While in prison, Samson ground grain like an animal. Yet, unnoticed by the Philistines, Samson's hair began to grow back.
- Samson's captors celebrated his capture by praising their god, Dagon, believing it had handed him over to them. For their entertainment, they brought Samson out of prison so they could humiliate him. He stood between the two pillars supporting the structure.

Philistines Destroyed (Judg. 16:26-31)

- Samson called on God to strengthen him once again, and the Lord honored his prayer. When Samson pushed against the supporting pillars of the Philistine temple, the temple collapsed.
- The writer of Judges stated that Samson killed more Philistines at his death than he had while he was alive. His family came, carried his body home, and buried him in the tomb of his father.

Summary Statements

Samson's physical strength could not save him from the consequences of his weak moral character.

- Believers should avoid putting themselves in situations that will tempt them to sin.
- Believers who compromise their faithfulness to God will eventually be put to shame.
- Believers can be confident that God does not abandon them, in spite of their sin.

Memory Verse

Psalm 28:7

Key Doctrine

God's Purpose of Grace

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (See John 10:27-29; Colossians 1:12-14.)



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

ENGAGE

How has understanding the principle of cause and effect influenced the choices you make in life? (PSG, p. 100)

- Parents, teachers, and anyone who has spent time with children recognize the importance of teaching about cause and effect. The idea is that for every cause there is an effect and that for every effect there was a cause.
- In other words, there are consequences to every person's thoughts, behaviors, and actions. In the Bible, Samson is one example among many of someone who suffered the consequences of a weak moral character.

Bonus: How would you describe spiritual compromise to someone outside the church?

Bonus: What are some common examples of cause and effect in our lives?

EXPLORE

STRENGTH DEPARTED (JUDG. 16:16-20)

Bonus: How does sin desensitize us to God's work in our lives?

- Judges 16:4 states that Samson, a judge called to deliver Israel from the Philistines, fell in love with a woman named Delilah. When the leaders of the Philistines heard this, they promised to pay Delilah 5,500 pieces of silver if she could get Samson to reveal the source of his strength.
- Three times, Delilah asked Samson about his strength. Each time, he toyed with her. Over time, though, her persistence won out. He shared the "whole truth" with her.
- Samson's strength came from his relationship with God as a Nazirite. As part of the Nazirite vow, his hair was not to be cut. It was a sign of his special calling from God.
- Confident that she now knew the truth, she told the Philistine leaders to come back and bring the silver. As Samson slept on Delilah's lap, a man shaved his head.
- When Delilah woke Samson, he did not realize the Lord had left him. Without God's favor, he no longer had his physical strength.

How can the people with whom we choose to associate impact our ability to remain faithful to God? (PSG, p. 104)

SAMSON DEFEATED (JUDG. 16:21-25)

Bonus: How have you seen God bring restoration out of a devastating situation?

- Ironically, the man who lived his life by the lust of his eyes had his eyes gouged out. The man who could not be restrained was bound in bronze shackles. The man who proudly went wherever he pleased was now forced to grind grain in prison.

- Meanwhile, God was still working in Samson's life—his hair began to grow back. The Lord was restoring Samson and completing the work He had begun in him.
- The Philistines served Dagon as their primary god. Believing Dagon had delivered Samson to them, they gathered to celebrate in their temple. As part of their festivities, they called for Samson to be brought from prison. They wanted to amuse themselves at his expense.

What do you think was Samson's greatest loss, and why? (PSG, p. 106)

PHILISTINES DESTROYED (JUDG. 16:26-31)

Bonus: Do you believe that God responds to imperfect prayers? Explain.

- Samson asked a servant boy to lead him to the pillars supporting the temple. Once he was in position, Samson called out to God. He asked the Lord to remember him and to allow him to avenge his two eyes.
- Samson's motivation was selfish. He was not concerned about the Lord's reputation or even the well-being of his own people. But God answered his prayer.
- Samson toppled the supporting pillar, sending the temple crashing down on itself. The writer noted that he killed more Philistines at his death than during his life.
- His family retrieved his body and buried it in a family tomb. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

In light of Samson's story, how would you counsel someone who is experiencing the consequences of sinful choices? (PSG, p. 107)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss some areas where many adults are prone to temptation and compromise.

How can your Bible study group encourage one another to avoid putting yourselves in situations that will tempt you to sin? (PSG, p. 108)

Challenge individuals to reflect on times when they realized God had not abandoned them, despite their sin.

How does God's faithfulness to you affect your faithfulness to Him? (PSG, p. 108)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 107)

Memorize a verse and apply it to a real-life situation.

Memorize Psalm 28:7, then write the verse in your own words. Reflect on ways Samson's life illustrated this verse and ways that he fell short. Write a brief prayer, asking God to help you trust Him more, celebrate His work in your life, and show gratitude for all He has done.

Point out that Psalm 28:7 is the memory verse for this session. Lead the group in reading the verse two or three times aloud. Then, direct them to read and reflect on the Bible Skill activity found on page 107 of the PSG. After a few minutes, lead a brief discussion on the Bible Skill activity. Allow a few volunteers to share their paraphrase of the verse and how it resonates with them. Encourage the group to use Psalm 28:7 as a prayer prompt during the week, asking God to help them depend on Him and to avoid the temptation to compromise their faith.

OBJECT LESSON: HOLLOW LOG

Prior to the session, locate a small section of a hollow log or a picture of a hollow log.

During the session, display the log and explain that the tree can look healthy on the outside, but it might crumble under the slightest pressure. Say: *Decay starts from the inside and works its way out. It may be slow and go unnoticed, but it is still destructive.*

Encourage adults to compare decay in trees to spiritual compromise. Emphasize that putting ourselves in dangerous situations where we can give in to temptation will hinder our walk with God. Discuss how Judges 16:20 reflects that Samson wasn't aware of his spiritual slide. Challenge adults to examine their lives and to determine if they are lacking the sensitivity they need to stay in touch with God and His leading.

If time allows, review the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Assure adults that you are willing to speak with anyone who needs to know more about starting a personal relationship with Jesus.

THE PHILISTINES

Of Israel's enemies, the Philistines played an extended role in the history of God's people. Genesis 10:14 states that they descended from Ham, one of Noah's three sons, though the details surrounding their migration to Canaan has been the subject of speculation. They lived in the region during the days of Abraham (Gen. 21:32-34) and were there when Joshua led Israel to conquer the land (Josh. 13:1-3). They come into view more prominently in the book of Judges, as Samson contended with them for twenty years (Judg. 15:20).

During Samuel's ministry, the Philistines defeated Israel and took the ark of the covenant. However, they returned it after the Lord punished them. Eventually, the Israelites recovered their land (1 Sam. 3-7). Years later, a shepherd boy named David killed a Philistine giant named Goliath (1 Sam. 17). After he became king, David subdued the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17-25), as did Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:6) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8).

The Philistines proved to be a formidable enemy. Their army included horses and chariots, along with foot soldiers and archers. They also had access to

metal and crafted weapons with it (1 Sam. 13:5-23). For example, when Goliath taunted the Israelites, he was covered with armor that included a helmet and a shield. He also carried a spear (1 Sam. 17:5-7).

Instead of having a single king, the Philistines had a system of governance that resembled a federation. Five Philistine cities composed the federation, and each city state had a leader. The cities included Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (1 Sam. 6:17).

Idol worship permeated Philistine culture. Dagon was their primary deity, but they also worshiped a pagan fertility goddess named Ashtoreth too. Among the other gods in the Philistine pantheon, they worshiped Beelzebub because they believed that he protected them from plagues and insect infestations. His name meant "lord of the flies."

Faithfulness

IN THE MIDST OF NAOMI'S TRAGEDY, GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS CARE AND SOVEREIGNTY.

Ruth 1:11-18; 2:5-12

1:11 But **Naomi** **A** replied, “Return home, **my daughters**. **B** Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any **more sons** **C** who could become your husbands? **12 Return home**, **D** my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, **13** would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? No, my daughters, my life is **much too bitter** **E** for you to share, because the LORD’s hand has turned against me.” **14** Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth **clung** **F** to her. **15** Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law.” **16** But Ruth replied: Don’t plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be **my God**. **G** **17** Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. **18** When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her. [. . .] **2:5 Boaz** **H** asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, “Whose young woman is this?” **6** The servant answered, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the territory of Moab. **7** She asked, ‘Will you let me **gather fallen grain** **I** among the bundles behind the harvesters?’ She came and has been **on her feet since early morning**, **J** except that she rested a little in the shelter.” **8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Don’t go and gather grain in another field, and don’t leave this one, but **stay here close** **K** to my female servants. **9** See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven’t I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled.” **10** She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?” **11** Boaz answered her, “**Everything you have done** **L** for your mother-in-law since your husband’s death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn’t previously know. **12** May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the Lord God of Israel, **under whose wings** **M** you have come for refuge.”

Exploring Key Words

- A** The wife of Elimelech, an Israelite. Her family moved to Moab during a famine.
- B** Naomi’s sons married Moabite women. Elimelech and both sons died in Moab, leaving the three women with choices to make.
- C** In levirate marriage, a dead man’s relative married his widow to protect the family line.
- D** Naomi was returning to Israel, but she believed her daughters-in-law should stay in Moab.
- E** “Grieveth” (KJV); “more bitter” (NASB). Naomi complained that God had turned His hand against her, making life unbearable.
- F** Hebrew wording (*dabaq*) indicates extreme loyalty, like attaching one object to another. It highlights a contrast between Ruth and Orpah.
- G** Moabites worshiped Chemosh, but Ruth embraced the God of Israel. She even used His covenant name in verse 17.
- H** A relative of Elimelech and “a prominent man of noble character” in Bethlehem (2:1). Ruth gathered grain in a field that he owned (2:3).
- I** The law encouraged “gleaning,” allowing the poor to gather grain that fell during the harvest. Often, workers were told to drop grain on purpose (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19-22).
- J** Ruth’s impressive work ethic was a tangible demonstration of her loyalty to Naomi.
- K** Impressed by Ruth’s character, Boaz promised to take care of her and Naomi.
- L** Ruth had earned respect around Bethlehem because of her integrity and loyalty to Naomi.
- M** Old Testament writers often used the image of God’s wings to describe His protection. See Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; and 91:4.



NOTES

Loss (Ruth 1:11-15)

- After the deaths of her husband and two sons, Naomi determined to leave Moab and return to her tribal home in Judah.
- She encouraged her two Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to their own families where the prospects of remarriage were better. Orpah finally relented to this plan, but Ruth did not.

Loyalty (Ruth 1:16-18)

- In a moving speech, Ruth expressed a deep commitment to Naomi. She desired to live, die, and be buried among her mother-in-law's people.
- Ruth also made an oath of commitment to Naomi's God, asking the Lord to punish her if she separated from Naomi.
- Ultimately, Naomi stopped trying to persuade her.

Provision (Ruth 2:5-12)

- The women returned to the village of Bethlehem at the beginning of the harvest season (1:22). Ruth set out to glean grain that was left behind by harvesters in a field.
- Boaz, the owner of the field and a relative of Naomi's husband Elimelech, issued instructions to ensure Ruth's safety as she gathered grain. God divinely orchestrated this provision for Ruth and Naomi.

Summary Statements

In the midst of Naomi's tragedy, God demonstrated His care and sovereignty.

- Believers will suffer loss.
- We need to allow others to minister to us.
- Believers can be confident in God's sovereign ability to provide for our needs.

Memory Verse

Ruth 1:16

Key Doctrine

God

God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. (See Proverbs 16:33; Romans 8:28.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com).

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

Bonus: How are grief and fear connected? What do we fear most in times of loss?

- In his book, *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid.”¹ People who face tragedy feel both grief and fear.
- When grief and fear cloud your path, nothing comforts a heart and provides courage like knowing that God cares and controls every moment of your life.

How might faith in God’s care and control help a person navigate grief and fear? (PSG, p. 109)

EXPLORE

LOSS (RUTH 1:11-15)

Bonus: How can bitterness affect our decisions?

- Naomi had experienced unimaginable loss. Her family had moved to Moab during a famine, and her sons had married Moabite women. But the three men died there.
- In ancient times, widows and orphans were the most vulnerable people in society. While her own future seemed bleak, Naomi likely felt the weight of providing for her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. She was moving back to Israel, but she believed the best option was for them to find husbands and raise children in Moab.
- Naomi’s words probably refer to levirate marriage, where a close family member married a relative’s widow to preserve the family line (Deut. 25:5-6). But Naomi was not interested in finding a new husband or having more sons, even if Orpah and Ruth were willing to wait.
- Orpah chose the reasonable route of returning to Moab. But Ruth “clung” to Naomi (see “Key Word F,” p. 57). Still, Naomi urged her to go back home.

Why does loss draw some people closer to God, while others struggle with anger toward God? How can the church community be a source of compassion to both? (PSG, p. 113)

LOYALTY (RUTH 1:16-18)

What role does loyalty play in our relationships with God and others? What value does society place on loyalty? (PSG, p. 113)

Bonus: How would you define loyalty? What person best defines loyalty in your life?

- Rather than leaving, Ruth fully committed herself to Naomi. She also pledged to embrace Naomi’s country, home, people, and God. She promised to stick with her mother-in-law until death.
- Ruth’s words capture the beauty of true love. She opened her heart to her mother-in-law without hesitation and

begged for Naomi to accept her decision. Naomi did, and the two widows continued their journey to Bethlehem.

How can loyalty be a way to view God’s provision and protection? (PSG, p. 114)

PROVISION (RUTH 2:5-12)

Bonus: Why is it important to nurture solid character and a good reputation?

- In Bethlehem, Ruth gained permission to glean in the field of a man named Boaz. In gleaning, poor people would follow harvesters and pick up grain that fell to the ground. The law ensured that workers would not pick up anything that was dropped, either accidentally or on purpose.
- Boaz, a relative of Naomi’s husband, noticed Ruth. Hearing his servant’s report about her, Boaz promised to take care of her if she would only glean in his fields.
- Ruth was astounded by Boaz’s kindness. When she asked him why he was extending such favor to a poor Moabite widow, he pointed to her character and her unshakable loyalty to Naomi. He also encouraged her to continue taking refuge under the wings of Israel’s God.

How does God’s provision impact the way you view the needs of your family during life’s uncertainties? (PSG, p. 116)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss how loss has had an impact on the personal faith of adults in the group.

What specific ways could your group minister to others most effectively during difficult seasons? (PSG, p. 117)

Encourage individuals to consider how times of loss and uncertainty has shaken their faith.

Who has walked alongside you through the pain? What are some life lessons you have learned from God and those He has graciously placed in your life? (PSG, p. 117)

1. Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed* (HarperCollins, 1961) 3.

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 116)

Use Bible study tools to learn more about a place in the Bible.

Using a Bible atlas, locate Moab and note its proximity to Israel. ***Why would Elimelech take his family to Moab during the famine in Israel?*** Read an article about Moab in a Bible dictionary. Use a concordance to find other times Moab is mentioned in the Bible. For each verse, write a summary statement that describes the role Moab played in the biblical narrative.

Encourage adults to share what they know about the nation of Moab in Scripture. Direct them to work in groups of three or four to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 116 of the PSG. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they learned from their research. Record their responses on the board. Challenge the group to consider the sacrifices Ruth was making by leaving Moab and resettling in Bethlehem.

OBJECT LESSON: AN APPLE

Bring an apple to the session. Lead a brief discussion on how we get apples and other fruits and vegetables. Highlight the need for a farmer to care for the trees and plants so they can produce everything we need to eat.

Emphasize that God is our ultimate Provider, but He uses others to serve as His hands and feet along the way. Ask: ***How does this compare to how God used Boaz to meet the needs of Ruth and Naomi?*** Discuss responses.

Point out that Boaz was a man of character, so he recognized the importance of Ruth's character as she struggled to provide for Naomi. Emphasize that while God can use anyone to accomplish His plans, He leans toward those who demonstrate loyalty to Him and to others. Challenge the group to examine their character and to make any changes necessary to make them more effective as God's servants in the world.

USING POWER APPROPRIATELY

The book of Judges provides the setting for Ruth's story. She is introduced as a powerless person, a Moabite woman resettling in the Israelite town of Bethlehem. In addition to being a foreigner, she is a widow. Politically, Moab was a longstanding enemy of the Israelites, including during the days of the judges (Judg. 3:12-30).

In addition to these sizable obstacles, Ruth also had to deal with a harsh family dynamic. Physically, Naomi had little to offer her daughter-in-law. Spiritually, Naomi ached with bitterness, blaming God for the losses she had suffered.

On the other side of the power spectrum, Boaz stood tall. He owned fields and had servants whose work enhanced his wealth. When he noticed Ruth, he could have treated her miserably, with little concern of being held accountable for his actions. Instead, he honored her with respectful courtesy. He noticed that she was powerless. He appreciated the way she worked tirelessly to gather some grain for her equally powerless mother-in-law.

The kindness of Boaz astonished Ruth. She pointed out to him the number of ways in which he had been attentive to her. When she asked him about the reason for his kindness, he affirmed her respect for Naomi. Then he turned Ruth's attention to the Lord.

Ruth had vowed to Naomi that she would worship and serve the God of Israel. With the kindness of Boaz, she experienced the blessing of being in the company of an Israelite who showed her the Lord's goodness. Boaz used his power in a way that honored the Lord.

The apostle Paul also wrote about the ways believers should utilize power. He instructed powerless Christian slaves in Ephesus to treat their masters with respect. He also directed powerful Christian masters to respect and protect their slaves (Eph. 6:5-9). Powerful and powerless disciples each have a responsibility to honor God with their lives.

Redemption

BOAZ PLAYED THE ROLE OF KINSMAN-REDEEMER BY MARRYING RUTH, POINTING TO JESUS AS THE ULTIMATE REDEEMER.

Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17

3:8 At midnight, Boaz was **startled**, **A** turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman!
9 So he asked, “Who are you?” “I am Ruth, **your servant**,” **B** she replied. “Take me **under your wing**, **C** for you are a **family redeemer**.” **D** **10** Then he said, “May the LORD bless you, my daughter. You have shown **more kindness** **E** now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. **11** Now don’t be afraid, my daughter. **I will do** **F** for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of noble character. **12** Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer **closer than I am**. **G** **13** Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that’s good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn’t want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will. Now lie down until morning.” [. . .]

4:13 **Boaz took Ruth** **H** and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD **granted conception** **I** to her, and she gave birth to a son. **14** The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is **better to you than seven sons**, **J** has given birth to him.” **16** Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became a mother to him. **17** The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him **Obed**. **K** He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Boaz was shocked to find a woman at his feet when he woke up in the middle of the night at his threshing floor.
- B** The Hebrew wording describes a position of service to another. It implied personal humility.
- C** “Spread the corner of your garment” (NIV); “spread your wings” (ESV). Boaz had used the “wings” imagery in his earlier blessing of Ruth (2:12). Now, she was seeking his shelter.
- D** “Near kinsman” (KJV); “guardian-redeemer” (NIV). The kinsman-redeemer (Heb., *ga’al*) was a close relative who could continue a family line through levirate marriage.
- E** The Hebrew word *hesed* describes loyalty, faithfulness, and goodness. Often used of God, Ruth was known for displaying *hesed* toward Naomi. Now, Boaz experienced this kindness.
- F** Boaz was enthusiastic about honoring Ruth’s request and accepting the role of the family’s kinsman-redeemer.
- G** One relative was closer to Elimelech than Boaz. Still, whether this man became the redeemer or not, Boaz vowed (“as the LORD lives”) that Ruth and Naomi would be secure (v. 13).
- H** The closer relative declined to marry Ruth and allowed Boaz to become her redeemer.
- I** Ruth had not been able to conceive with Naomi’s son, Mahlon. But God, in His providence, gave her a son with Boaz.
- J** In a culture where male offspring were highly prized, the women emphasized Ruth’s profound impact on Naomi’s life.
- K** Hebrew name meaning “servant” or “serving.” Obed became the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5-6).



Future Unclear (Ruth 3:8-10)

- When Naomi found out where Ruth had been working, she told her daughter-in-law that Boaz was a near relative. As such, he could be in line to serve as a kinsman-redeemer according to the Jewish custom of levirate marriage.
- One evening after the harvesting work was done, Ruth followed Naomi's instructions and lay at Boaz's feet while he was asleep on the threshing floor. After Boaz got over the initial surprise of finding a woman at his feet, Ruth inquired about his willingness to fulfill the role of kinsman-redeemer by marrying her.

Future Secured (Ruth 3:11-13)

- Boaz commended Ruth, recognizing her reputation as a woman of noble character.
- However, he explained that another man was a closer relative. According to the law, this man had a prior claim as a kinsman-redeemer.
- Boaz assured Ruth that he would marry her if the other man did not. Either way, he was determined to make sure that Ruth and Naomi would be cared for.

Future Redeemed (Ruth 4:13-17)

- The next morning, Boaz approached the would-be kinsman-redeemer. The man was interested in Elimelech's property, but not in marrying Ruth. So, he deferred to Boaz.
- Once the agreement was made, Boaz took Ruth to be his wife. She later gave birth to a son named Obed. This child was a blessing and comfort to Naomi in her old age.
- Obed later became the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David. Centuries later, Jesus the Messiah was born from this family's lineage.

Summary Statements

Boaz played the role of kinsman-redeemer by marrying Ruth, pointing to Jesus as the ultimate Redeemer.

- When believers face times of uncertainty, we will have to step out in faith.
- We can turn to God with our fears and trust Him to respond.
- We can be assured of God's continual care for us since He demonstrated it in His redemptive plan.

Memory Verse

Colossians 1:14

Key Doctrine

God the Son

In His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. (See Romans 5:6-10; Ephesians 1:7.)



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

DISCUSSION PLAN

ENGAGE

What has provided you a sense of hope when everything seemed out of control? (PSG, p. 118)

- Nobody likes feeling helpless and insecure during crises. People often struggle to ask for help. Some isolate and withdraw from others, making things worse.
- Crises challenge our faith and make us wonder if God is in control or cares about our situation. Social media allows people to pretend like they have it all together, but everyone knows they need more than what society offers.
- God answered the world's cry with the ultimate solution.

Bonus: What constitutes a “crisis” in your life? What does it take to turn your focus to God?

EXPLORE

FUTURE UNCLEAR (RUTH 3:8-10)

Bonus: If you're married, how did you meet your spouse? How did you get engaged?

- Having heard where Ruth had been gleaning, Naomi initiated a plan for asking Boaz to accept his responsibility as the family's kinsman-redeemer. This included urging Ruth to get cleaned up and sleep at Boaz's feet on his threshing floor (Ruth 3:1-7).
- Ruth's actions were not immoral or seductive. Boaz's response further validates her noble character. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz each acted with integrity and honor.
- Once Boaz got over the shock of finding a woman at his feet, Ruth explained why she had come. With humility, she urged Boaz to take her (and Naomi) under his wing as the family's redeemer. The phrase “take me under your wing” was a beautiful way to express a redeemer's actions.
- Boaz responded with enthusiasm to Ruth's request. Most likely, he was several years older than her, so he appreciated that she did not pursue younger men who may have been in the same economic class as Boaz.

How has God's guidance through moments of uncertainty influenced your faith? (PSG, p. 122)

Bonus: Where do you see God working in the events that brought Ruth and Boaz together?

FUTURE SECURED (RUTH 3:11-13)

Bonus: How does insecurity give rise to fear? How do you find peace in chaotic times?

- Boaz assured Ruth of his willingness to help her. He commended her for her noble character, which all the people in Bethlehem had witnessed. Ruth's story impacted everyone who heard it.
- Boaz knew he was not the closest redeemer for Ruth and explained the circumstances to her. A closer family redeemer had the right to their land and Ruth.

- Boaz promised to talk to the closer relative the next morning. If the man was willing to marry Ruth, that would secure her future. If not, he would step into the role of family redeemer and marry her. Either way, she and Naomi would be taken care of.

What might keep us from trusting God with our fears? (PSG, p. 122)

FUTURE REDEEMED (RUTH 4:13-17)

Bonus: When has a season of suffering led to joy and peace in your life?

- The closer relative declined to marry Ruth, so Boaz kept his promise and became the family's redeemer. He married Ruth, and they had a son named Obed.
- Children were considered a blessing in Israel, and Naomi was thrilled to have a grandson. But the women of the community also reminded her of the blessing she had found in Ruth. While sons and grandsons were important, Ruth had been “better . . . than seven sons.”
- The crisis had passed, and the future held hope. The biblical writer noted that Obed became the grandfather of King David. Later, Matthew would share that he also was an ancestor of Jesus, the world's ultimate Redeemer.

In what ways does God's redemptive work change the way you live daily and give you confidence for the future? (PSG, p. 125)

CHALLENGE

As a group, make a list of situations that can cause people anxiety and fear?

How can your group encourage them to trust in the Lord? How can you communicate this week God's redemptive love as their source of strength? (PSG, p. 126)

Challenge individuals to identify ways they can surrender their fears and doubts to God.

How can knowing God's providential care defeat fear's domination and renew your faith so you experience God's peace and joy through seasons of uncertainty? (PSG, p. 126)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



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

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 125)

Create a compare/contrast chart to study a passage.

In ancient Israel, the kinsman-redeemer pointed to the coming Messiah. Review these passages from Ruth again and consider how Boaz served as an illustration for what Jesus would do centuries later. Record your comparisons on the chart below:

Boaz as Redeemer

Jesus as Redeemer

Briefly discuss the importance of family redeemers in Israel's history. Affirm that Boaz acted nobly when he took on the role for Ruth and Naomi. Direct adults to take a few minutes to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 125 of the PSG. When they are done with their work, draw the chart on the board or a large sheet of paper and record their findings. Emphasize Jesus as the ultimate Redeemer for humanity.

OBJECT LESSON: SCRAPBOOKS

Bring a scrapbook to the session. Flip through a few pages and share the significance of the photos and clippings. Allow adults to share what they have kept in scrapbooks over the years.

Affirm that digital scrapbooks have started replacing the old-fashioned books, but the idea and the purpose are still the same. Encourage adults to consider what kind of scrapbook Naomi might have kept. Ask: ***How would it have changed from the time she got back to Bethlehem to the time she held Obed on her lap?***

Highlight God's ability to rewrite our stories. Point out that the prophet Isaiah predicted that Obed's ancestor, Jesus the Messiah, would provide beauty from ashes and rebuild rubble (Isa. 61:1-5). As time allows, review the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Let the group know that you are willing to speak with anyone who needs to accept Jesus as their Redeemer today.

OUR REDEEMER

The kinsman-redeemer in Israel foreshadowed God's redemptive work through Christ. For the Israelites, the family redeemer maintained the lineage and protected an inheritance. Even more important, God alone had redeemed His people physically and spiritually with His "outstretched arm" (Ex. 6:6). Moses sang about the Lord's mercy and how He delivered His people from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 15:13). Likewise, the psalmist wrote that God's people should remember Him as "their Redeemer" (Ps. 78:35).

Thirteen times in Isaiah 41-63, the prophet glorified God as Israel's Redeemer. God encouraged the Israelites to live without fear because He had redeemed them, and they belonged to Him (Isa. 43:1). He also called attention to His redemptive power when He revealed Himself as "the LORD of Armies" (Isa. 44:6).

In the New Testament, God's redemptive work became more focused when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The prophecy of Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, had rejoiced at how God "provided redemption for his people" (Luke 1:68).

Of course, that redemption centered on Christ. The Father sent His Son into the world to become the

necessary sacrifice for our salvation. When we place our faith in Him, He saves us and sets us free from the prison that our sins have built.

Later, Paul affirmed that Christ made redemption possible "through his blood" (Eph. 1:7). In Colossians 1:14, he used "redemption" again as he pointed to Jesus. The Greek word for redemption (*apolytrosis*) describes the payment of a ransom so a prisoner could be released. Paul affirmed that when Jesus paid our ransom on the cross, His sacrifice made it possible for us to be released from the guilt and penalty of our sin.

When Boaz became Ruth's family redeemer, she started a new life brimming with hope. Even more remarkable, when Jesus redeems us, we enjoy new life in which our hope in Him will never end.

BONUS CONTENT



Family Tree of Boaz and Ruth

Discover more about the remarkable lineage of Boaz and Ruth.

LEADER PACK IDEAS



These items are available in the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* (print and digital).

Visit goExploreTheBible.com to purchase the pack.

Pack Item 1: Map: The Conquest of Canaan (Sessions 1-7)

- Locate a map that highlights Israel's conquest of the promised land. Highlight cities and actions related to the Central, Southern, and Northern Campaigns.

Pack Item 2: Poster: Outlines of Joshua, Judges, Ruth (Sessions 1-13)

- Refer to page 9 of the PSG to create a poster that outlines the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.

Pack Item 3: Poster: Key Characters in Joshua, Judges, Ruth (Sessions 1-13)

- Create a chart that highlights important figures in the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Include names and brief details about their roles in the books. Names could include Joshua, Rahab, Achan, Caleb, Gideon, Samson, Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

Pack Item 4: Poster: Key Verse: Joshua 14:8 (Session 6)

- Create a poster with the text of Joshua 14:8.

Pack Item 5: Map: The Judges of Israel (Session 5)

- Locate or create a map that highlights where each of the judges of Israel ministered.

Pack Item 6: Poster: The Oppressors in Judges (Sessions 8-11)

- Create a chart listing the enemies that oppressed God's people in the book of Judges. Include the name of the oppressor, the reference in Judges, and the judge who defeated each enemy.

Pack Item 7: Poster: Key Verse: Ruth 1:16 (Session 12)

- Create a poster with the text of Ruth 1:16.

Pack Item 8: Handout: Joshua, Judges, Ruth Time Line (Sessions 1-13)

- Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events related to the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Include both biblical and non-biblical historical references for context.

Pack Item 9: Handout: Praying Scripture in Joshua, Judges, Ruth (Sessions 1-13)

- Create a handout to help adults pray through key Scriptures in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Focus on the following questions: *What does this passage teach me about God and His character? How should I respond to what He is showing me about Himself?*

Pack Item 10: Handout: The Life of Joshua (Sessions 1-7)

- Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a chart that highlights key events in the life of Joshua. Include biblical references from the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua.

Pack Item 11: Handout: Memorial Stones (Session 3)

- Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create an article that describes the significance of the stones taken from the Jordan River after God miraculously led His people into the promised land.

Pack Item 12: Handout: Winning Strategy (Session 4)

- Create an application handout that encourages adults to hear and obey God as Joshua and Israel did when conquering Canaan. Include columns for the following: *What situation are you praying about? What is God saying to you about that situation? What practical steps can you take to obey Him? How are you seeing God move in that situation?*

Pack Item 13: Handout: The Cycle of Judges (Sessions 8-11)

- Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create an article that describes the recurring "cycle of sin" found in the book of Judges. The cycle should include sin, punishment, supplication, and deliverance.

Pack Item 14: Handout: The Kinsman-Redeemer (Session 13)

- Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create an article that explains the various roles of the kinsman-redeemer in ancient Israel. Connect the concept to the events of the book of Ruth.

COMING **NEXT QUARTER**



ROMANS

Session 1: **True Power** (Romans 1:13-25)

Session 2: **Coming Judgment** (Romans 2:1-13)

Session 3: **Saving Faith** (Romans 3:21-4:5)

Session 4: **Restored Relationship** (Romans 5:1-11,18-21)

Session 5: **Freedom** (Romans 6:1-14)

Session 6: **Struggle** (Romans 7:4-6,14-25)

Session 7: **Indwelt** (Romans 8:14-27)

Session 8: **Believe** (Romans 9:30-10:3,9-17)

Session 9: **Kindness** (Romans 11:11-24)

Session 10: **Sacrifice** (Romans 12:1-13)

Session 11: **Represent** (Romans 13:1-14)

Session 12: **Unity** (Romans 14:5-20)

Session 13: **Purpose** (Romans 15:14-21,30-33)

Explore

“You will seek me and find me when you search for me
with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

The Conquest of Canaan



"The Conquest of Canaan" is adapted from "The Conquest of the Promised Land," *The Old Testament Bible Handbook* (Holman Reference, 2023), p. 79. Used with permission.

JOSHUA; JUDGES; RUTH

In this life, leaders come, and leaders go. No matter who we are or what we do, we answer to a leader one way or another. In fact, the question really isn't if we will follow a leader, but what kind of leader we will choose. The biblical history books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth examine the highs and lows of leadership. While Joshua celebrates the blessings of leadership at its best, Judges offers a cautionary tale of leadership gone wrong. And Ruth reminds us that even in the worst of times, God is still at work, raising leaders from the most unlikely of places. By studying Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, we see leadership from every angle—and we're challenged to reserve our ultimate loyalty for our ultimate Leader.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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