



Unwavering Determination

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

Scripture Passage: Joshua 14:1-15 Memory Verse: Joshua 14:8

We called her Grandma Tate. She was a longtime member in the church where I grew up. In my eyes she modeled unswerving loyalty to the Lord, even in her later years. Grandma Tate used her musical talents to express her commitment to God. I still remember well her solo performances of “The Longer I Serve Him.” As she sang those lyrics, her face revealed her sweet fellowship with the Lord.

Grandma Tate went home to the Lord many years ago, but I like to imagine her now in a heavenly choir still faithfully praising God. Like Caleb she demonstrated wholehearted commitment to the Lord and has received her promised reward.

As you prepare to study this session, reflect on your spiritual journey. How would you characterize your spiritual pilgrimage? What changes would strengthen your commitment to the Lord? Ask God to help you and the adults in your Bible study demonstrate unwavering loyalty to Him. And pray for the Lord’s guidance as you seek to follow Him more completely and challenge your group to do the same.



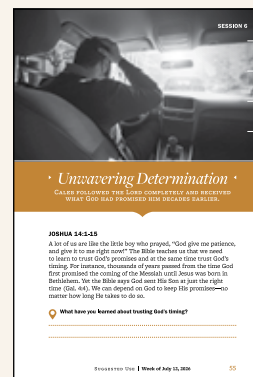
Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training

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A lot of us are like the little boy who prayed, “God give me patience, and give it to me right now!” The Bible teaches us that we need to learn to trust God’s promises and at the same time trust God’s 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. (PSG, p. 55)

What have you learned about trusting God’s timing?



Understand the Context (Joshua 13:1–21:45)

Chapter 13 of Joshua serves as a dividing point in the book. Whereas chapters 1–12 deal with capturing Canaan, chapters 13–24 detail the distribution of Canaan among the twelve tribes. Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River. The remaining tribes (except for the priestly tribe of Levi) were given parcels on land on the west side of the Jordan. Levi received a collection of priestly cities spread out around the nation.

Most of Joshua 14 focuses on Caleb’s inheritance. Caleb was one of twelve spies sent by Moses to scout Canaan. Only he and Joshua brought a positive report that the Israelites could conquer the land with God’s help (Num. 13:30). As a result, God allowed Caleb to enter the promised land and gave him the courage and vigor to capture the stronghold of Hebron at the age of eighty-five (Josh. 14:13-15).

Chapter 15 records the allotment of land to Judah, Caleb’s home tribe (Num. 13:6). Caleb took possession of Hebron by driving out the sons of Anak (Josh. 15:13-14). Chapters 16–17 deal with the land portions given to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph’s two sons whom Jacob adopted (Gen. 48:5). Half of Manasseh lived in the Transjordan, east of the Jordan River. The remaining Manassites took an inheritance west of the river. Chapters 18–19 document the apportionment of land to Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

The Israelites also set up the tent of meeting (or tabernacle) at Shiloh. This act served as a marker for the nation, a confirmation that they now controlled the promised land.

Chapter 20 focuses on six cities of refuge, safe havens for individuals who killed someone accidentally. Three cities of refuge were located west of the Jordan, while three were located east of the river. Fugitives could take asylum from members of the dead person’s family until a trial could determine guilt or innocence. If the city elders found the death was an accident, the suspect was free to remain in the city without fear of harm until the death of the high priest.

The Levites were set aside to serve the Lord. He was their inheritance (Deut. 10:8-9). Still, the tribe was granted forty-eight cities scattered across Israel (Josh. 21:41-42). The location of these cities made the Levites accessible to all the tribes as they taught God’s laws to the people (Deut. 33:8-10).

The final verses of Joshua 21 provide a summary that emphasizes again the book’s major theme. The Lord fought Israel’s battles and fulfilled all His promises to their ancestors. By His power and grace, He gave His people victory over their enemies (Josh. 21:43-45).

Read Joshua 14:1-15. Take note of how Caleb’s faithfulness to God had an impact on others. (PSG, p. 56)

ENGAGE



PREPARE: Prior to the group time, move the colored circles to the appropriate outline point on **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outlines of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*) and to Caleb’s name on **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *Key Characters in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*). Hang **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Verse: Joshua 14:8*) on a focal wall.

ASK:

What have you learned about trusting God’s timing?
(PSG, p. 56)

READ:

Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 56 of the PSG. Affirm that it’s never easy to wait, even on God.

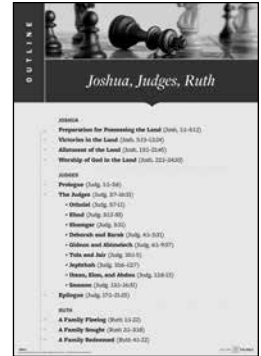
EXPLAIN:

Summarize this content from page 56 of the PSG to highlight the importance of God dividing the land:

“Most allocations of the tribal territories are described using combinations of the listings of towns and geographic features of the land, linking them in order to trace the boundaries. . . . Some scholars believe these similarities suggest these records of tribal allotments would have contained the legal force of a treaty. When new towns sprung up in the various territories, they were added to the document throughout Israel’s history. This procedure would update and recognize the existence of new settlements in those tribal areas for as long as Israel possessed them. Consequently, the tribal allotments served as a record of God’s faithfulness to keep the promises He made in His covenant with Israel.”

TRANSITION:

Point out that today’s session focuses on one person who trusted God for more than forty years. Direct attention to **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *Key Characters in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*) and highlight the description of Caleb. Affirm that Caleb serves as an example of God’s faithfulness to those who trust Him.



Group Activity Option

Music

Write the words *Wholehearted Devotion* on the board or a large sheet of paper. Distribute hymnals and instruct the group to turn to “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (No. 98, *Baptist Hymnal, 2008*). Sing or review the words of the hymn. Ask: **How does this hymn relate to wholehearted devotion to God? What does that kind of wholehearted devotion look like? Why are we prone to wander?**

Obedience (Josh. 14:1-5)

1 The Israelites received these portions that the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes gave them in the land of Canaan. **2** Their inheritance was by lot 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. But he gave no inheritance among them to the Levites. **4** The descendants of Joseph became two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. 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.

(v. 1) Verse 1 introduces the subject of the following chapters—the allotment of Canaan among the tribes. The men responsible for parceling out each tribe’s portion were **Eleazar** the priest, **Joshua**, and the **family heads** of each tribe.

Eleazar was Aaron’s third son and became high priest upon his father’s death (Num. 20:28). His involvement in the land distribution emphasized that this was a sacred activity based on God’s promises, not just a real estate transaction. *Joshua*, of course, led the nation in the conquest. His role in the distribution had long been determined (Deut. 3:28; Josh. 1:6). The *family heads* consisted of leaders from the twelve tribes.



Tribal Allotments of Israel

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

(v. 2) As the Lord directed Moses, the leaders cast a **lot** to decide how the land would be shared by the nine and a half tribes west of the Jordan River (Num. 26:52-56). God was in complete control, so casting lots left nothing to chance (Prov. 16:33). God ensured the outcome He wanted.

While we are not sure about the specifics of the process, a tribe’s name likely was taken from one vessel and matched to the description of a particular set of boundaries pulled from another container. The repeated refrain **as the LORD commanded through Moses** emphasizes the connection between obeying God and experiencing His blessings (Num. 16:40; Josh. 21:8). The Hebrew for *through Moses* occurs a number of times in the Old Testament and always refers to Moses as the human agent God used for His purposes.

(vv. 3-4) Moses already had given land to the **two and a half tribes** east of the Jordan: Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Reuben and Gad in particular sought this land, which was ideal for their livestock. Moses’s blessing was contingent on these tribes crossing the Jordan and assisting the other tribes in conquering Canaan (Num. 32).

Verse 3 also calls attention to the fact that the **Levites** received no land **inheritance**. Instead that tribe acquired forty-eight cities distributed throughout the twelve tribes (Josh. 21:41-42). By scattering the Levites around the promised land, each tribe would have ready access to a teacher of God’s laws (Deut. 33:8-10). The Levites’ special inheritance is elsewhere identified as the Lord Himself and service to Him (Deut. 10:8-9).

The writer helped readers understand how Israel came to have twelve tribes. Every tribe descended from one of the twelve sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. But two tribes were **descendants of Joseph**: Ephraim and **Manasseh**. Both of these tribes were given their own allotment of land in Canaan. With the Levites’ “landless” situation, allowing Joseph to account for two tribes kept the number of allotments fixed at twelve. The writer again noted that Levi received **no portion of the land**. Instead, God gave them cities and their **pasturelands**.

(v. 5) Verse 5 reiterates the emphasis of verse 2. It offers the summary statement that **the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses**. The people and their leaders did things exactly as the Lord directed them. We daily face opportunities to obey or to disobey the Lord’s instructions. Like them, obedience to the Lord should characterize our words, actions, and attitudes each day.

EXPLORE Joshua 14:1-5



APPLICATION POINT: We will face daily opportunities to obey or disobey God's instructions.

CONTEXT:

Direct attention to "Allotment of the Land" on **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outlines of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*). Share that after detailing the battles Israel fought in the promised land, the writer described the allocation of land to the tribes.

READ:

Invite a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 14:1-5 as the group listens for how many tribes received land in Canaan. Remind adults that the tribes of Gad and Reuben, along with half of Manasseh, had received their inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

RECAP:

Note that these verses reveal that the tribe of Levi received cities rather than a land allotment. Describe the process of distributing land to the remaining nine and a half tribes:

Lots were used to determine God's will in a matter. For example, the high priests used the Urim and Thummim as sacred lots to receive a divine answer (Ex. 28:15-30). . . . No one is sure what lots looked like or how people knew how to interpret them. What is most important is that Scripture indicates the outcome of the lot was not random. . . . God was in control of the procedure and outcomes. (PSG, p. 58)

ASK:

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

DISCUSS:

Encourage adults to suggest why the tribe of Levi (the Levites) did not receive an inheritance of land. Note that God said He was their inheritance. Point out that being spread across the land ensured they could teach the entire nation about God and His ways. Emphasize the summary statement in verse 5 that Israel and its leaders did everything as God directed.



Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Pizza

Prior to the session, cook a frozen pizza but don't slice it. Bring a pizza cutter with you. 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?**

Devotion (Josh. 14:6-9)

6 The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh 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. **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.’”

(v. 6) • **Caleb son of Jephunneh** was one of twelve spies Moses sent to scout Canaan in Numbers 13. Upon the spies’ return, only Caleb and Joshua expressed faith that Israel could conquer the land (Num. 13:30). The Lord rewarded Caleb by allowing him to enter the promised land.

When the time came, the **descendants of Judah approached Joshua** to receive their inheritance, and Caleb got the region of Hebron (Josh. 14:13). He conquered Hebron, even though he was eighty-five years old (15:13-14).

In his speech to Joshua, Caleb recognized **Moses as the man of God**, a designation carrying special honor and respect (see Deut. 33:1; Ezra 3:2). In the following verses Caleb reminded Joshua of the Lord’s promises given to them through Moses when they were faithful spies at **Kadesh-barnea**. The Israelites had camped at this site when Moses sent the spies into Canaan. That’s also where the Lord condemned the Israelites to forty years of wilderness wandering because of their lack of faith.

Only Joshua and Caleb were exempt (Num. 13-14). While they still had to wander for four decades, God promised to give them a place in the promised land.

(v. 7) Caleb was **forty years old** when he scouted the land. Now, he was receiving his inheritance forty-five years later. Caleb depicted the information he had shared at Kadesh-barnea as **an honest report**. In Hebrew, a more literal rendering is that he had brought back the word that was in his heart. He had shared his heartfelt belief that Israel could conquer the land (Num. 13:30).

(v. 8) In contrast to Joshua and Caleb, the report of the other spies caused the Israelites **to lose heart**. Few of the references to the *heart* in the Old Testament designate the physical organ. Instead, most of them relate to the totality of

human beings’ inner or immaterial nature. From the Hebrew perspective, thought functions including wisdom and understanding are located in the heart. The heart represented the seat of the will, the place of decision making.

In Hebrew thought, the heart can convey both positive and negative emotions, including love, joy, grief, envy, and anger. To *lose heart* suggests melting. Rahab had told the Israelite spies that her people had lost heart when they heard about the wonderful things God had done for His people (Josh. 2:11).

Unlike the ten fearful spies, Caleb had followed the Lord **completely**. He had not melted. His faith in God had stood firm at the prospect of obstacles in Canaan and when confronting the negative attitudes of his fellow Israelites.

(v. 9) Caleb next recalled how Moses **swore** a lasting inheritance **for you and your descendants**. Moses too had depicted Caleb as a man who had followed the Lord **completely**. The term rendered *completely* also means “fully.” The expression appears three times in Joshua 14:1-15 to denote Caleb’s wholehearted allegiance to the Lord (vv. 8,9,14). Such threefold repetition often indicated completeness.

Throughout his life Caleb kept his focus on the Lord. He followed God with unwavering determination. Today, believers still can be assured that the Lord knows and rewards those who follow Him wholeheartedly.

Key Doctrine

God

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



APPLICATION POINT: We can be assured that God knows and rewards those who follow Him wholeheartedly.

READ:

Call for a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 14:6-9, directing the group to consider how old Caleb might have been at the time of Joshua 14.

RECAP:

Direct attention again to Caleb's name on **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *Key Characters in Joshua, Judges, Ruth*). Review his experiences as a spy when the Israelites had approached the promised land more than four decades earlier:

After the Israelites left Mount Sinai and were readying themselves to go into the promised land, they settled at Kadesh-barnea, an oasis south of Canaan. Then Moses sent twelve spies, one from each tribe, to scout out the land so that they would know what to expect when they entered it. When the spies returned, ten of them said that while the land was everything God had said it was, Israel would not be able to defeat its inhabitants. The two spies who said Israel could defeat them because the Lord would give them the victory were Joshua and Caleb. Nevertheless, the people believed the report of the ten spies instead of Joshua and Caleb (Num. 13–14). . . . It was because of their unwavering faith and devotion to God that Joshua and Caleb, along with their families, were the only ones God permitted to enter the promised land from that generation. (PSG, p. 60)



ASK:

What does it look like to follow the Lord wholeheartedly? (PSG, p. 60) Encourage volunteers to share the names of people they believe demonstrate wholehearted devotion to God. Discuss what qualities stand out with those people. Compare those qualities to the life of Caleb.

DISCUSS:

Lead the group to discuss the obstacles Caleb may have faced in his decision to obey God wholeheartedly. Point out **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Verse: Joshua 14:8*). Note that this is the memory verse for this session. Encourage the group to read the verse a couple of times and to continue reviewing it and asking God to help them apply it during the week ahead.



TRANSITION:

Though it had been 45 years since Caleb had scouted out the land, he was still not afraid to tackle any problems that might come up. If anything, his longstanding relationship with God gave him even more confidence of what the Lord could do.

Inheritance (Josh. 14:10-15)

10 “As you see, the LORD has kept me alive 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 the LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the Anakim 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 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.

(v. 10) Caleb continued his testimony to the Lord’s faithfulness. **Forty-five years** had passed since he scouted Canaan, and he had reached the age of **eighty-five**. The Lord had faithfully kept His promise that the two faithful spies would enter the promised land. Moses had recorded this promise from God to Caleb in Numbers 14:24.

The time periods mentioned in verses 7 and 10 provide insight into the time period covered by most of the book of Joshua. Verse 7 alludes to when the Lord condemned the Israelites to forty years of wilderness wanderings for accepting a negative report given by ten of the spies (Num. 14:33-34). Meanwhile, verse 10 reveals that forty-five years had passed since that judgment. Therefore, the conquest to that point had occupied at least five years.

(v. 11) Caleb’s words revealed the eagerness and vigor of a younger man. He claimed to be **as strong** at eighty-five as he was when Moses had sent him to scout out Canaan. The descriptive term rendered *strong* typically reflects power. The word rendered **strength** later in the verse can designate both action and endurance.

Caleb’s reference to **battle** reveals his positive attitude about the conquest. The Hebrew phrase translated **for daily tasks** literally means “for going out and for coming in.” While the expression certainly can mean the Lord provides strength for each day’s work, it also can have a military connotation. Because of his faith, Caleb felt equal to the challenges of conquering Canaan.

(v. 12) Caleb expressed confident faith in requesting **this hill country**. He wanted the very land that had caused the other ten spies to melt in fear, the land of the **•Anakim**. This designation means

“longnecked” or “strongnecked.” The *Anakim* were giants that many scholars associate with the Nephilim, another group of powerful people who lived before the flood (Gen. 6:4). In addition to being a race of giants, they lived in **large fortified cities**. Such cities were strategically important because they were almost invincible until the Assyrians developed better siege techniques centuries later. Caleb possessed confident faith in God and wanted the biggest challenge available.

(v. 13) After he **blessed** Caleb, Joshua **gave him •Hebron as an inheritance**. The Hebrew verb translated *blessed* means “to grant power for success or to accomplish a purpose.” Blessing is transmitted from a greater party to a lesser party. The Old Testament recognizes God as the only true Source of blessing, so a blessing in His name was an affirmation of His strength and provision.

Hebron became an important city in Judah, situated about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. By the time Moses sent the spies into Canaan, the Anakim occupied Hebron.

(vv. 14-15) Verse 14 offers the third reference to how Caleb **followed the LORD . . . completely** (see vv. 8,9). In the days of the writer, Caleb’s family remained in possession of Hebron just as the Lord promised. Hebron previously was known as **Kiriath-arba**. This ancient name was derived from Arba, **the greatest man among the Anakim**.

The account ends with the summary statement that **the land had rest from war**. Like Caleb we can be assured of the Lord’s presence and aid when we follow Him wholeheartedly.



APPLICATION POINT: We can be assured of God’s presence and aid when we follow Him wholeheartedly.

READ:

Call for a volunteer to read Joshua 14:10-15 as the group listens for what Caleb requested from Joshua.

ASK:

What was significant about what Caleb asked of Joshua?

DISCUSS:

Allow volunteers to share their responses to the question. Highlight Caleb’s faith despite his advanced age. Also, note that his request involved the territory with the most difficult terrain and the most intimidating enemies.

RECAP:

Point out Caleb’s attitude as he embraced the challenge:

Not only did the Lord keep Caleb alive at eighty-five years old, but He also kept Caleb as strong as he was forty-five years prior. . . . Caleb was not too old or too weak to do what God had promised him he could do. Moreover, Caleb was eager to go to the hill country, the location of the fortified cities of the Anakim. Caleb was eager to take on the same giants that had terrified the other ten spies who caused Israel to be too frightened to trust God and conquer the land. Joshua 11:21-22 indicates Israel had already defeated the Anakim, but some had gotten away only to return later. Caleb was ready and eager to go in and finish them off. (PSG, pp. 61-62)

ASK:

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

REFLECT:

Draw two columns on the board. Encourage adults to share things that keep believers from a wholehearted devotion to God. List those in the first column. In the second column, make a list of ways believers can stay focused on the Lord each day.

Group Activity Option

Bible Skill

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, so 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.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE:

Review these points from Apply the Text on page 63 of the *Personal Study Guide*:

- *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.*

REVIEW:

Point out **Pack Item 4** (Poster: Key Verse: Joshua 14:8) again and lead the group to read the verse together at least twice.

ASK:

What did Caleb mean in the second part of this verse? What does that mean for us as believers today?

DISCUSS:

Guide the group to discuss the first question set on page 63 of the PSG. Direct attention back to the suggestions listed in the second column of the chart. (Leader Guide, p. 77) Challenge them to identify one suggestion they can apply this week to help them follow God with all their heart.

PRAY:

Read the second question set on page 63 of the PSG. Encourage adults to identify silently one area where they are currently wrestling with a choice to obey or disobey God. Provide time for them to talk with God about those struggles. Close in prayer, thanking God for keeping His promises and asking Him for the strength to live in complete obedience.

AFTER THE SESSION

During the week, send a text or email to the entire group. In the message, share a promise from God in Scripture and explain why this promise is meaningful to you. Share the verse and reference. Encourage the group to “reply all” and to share their favorite promise and what it means to them. Assure the group that you are praying for each of them as they seek to follow God with a whole heart.

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