



There's Work to Do

LESSON 10

Topic

Perseverance

Theme

God's faithfulness should encourage perseverance in obedience to Him.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will determine areas of his life that He needs to persevere.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 12

Scripture Focus

Joshua 12–19

Summary

Joshua divided the land, encouraging the tribes to chase out the remaining Canaanites. In the midst of the allotments is the story of Caleb's inheritance. He served as an example to the rest of Israel of what it means to trust and obey God.

Outline

I. Evidence of God's Faithfulness (12)

- A. Kings defeated by Moses (12:1–6)
- B. Kings defeated by Joshua (12:7–24)

II. Opportunities for Faith in God (13–19)

- A. God promised to drive out the enemy (13:1–7)
- B. God divided the land east of Jordan (13:8–33)
- C. God provided an example of faith (14:1–15:19)
- D. God divided the land west of Jordan (15:20–19:48)
- E. God provided another example of faith (19:49–51)

Memory Verse

*"And Moses swore on that day, saying,
Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance,
and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God"*
(Joshua 14:9).

GETTING STARTED

31-0

The University of Connecticut women's basketball team went ninety straight games without a loss. That is an incredible record and a testimony that the program is built on winning principles and is run by incredibly capable people.

ASK: Suppose you were following a sports team that had thirty-one wins and no defeats. Describe your confidence level in that team. (Q1)

ASK: How confident would you be that the team would never lose again? (Q2)

Joshua went undefeated in his fights with the enemy in the Promised Land, going 31-0. He lost a battle against Ai initially but defeated them in the end to keep his streak alive. His record said more about God than it did Joshua. And God used the streak to encourage Israel to have enough faith in Him to take the parts of the Promised Land they had not yet subdued. God's challenge to Israel is the topic of this lesson.

Stirring Speech

ASK: When have you received a stirring speech?

ASK: What made it so motivating?

ASK: What might you put in a speech to motivate the children of Israel to finish conquering the land?

Joshua encouraged Israel to keep moving forward in their conquest of Canaan. God's faithfulness was the motivating factor for their obedience.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. Evidence of God's Faithfulness (12)

A. Kings defeated by Moses (12:1-6)

The message of victory in Joshua 12 begins with Moses. There two reasons why this is so. First, including the Moses' victories with Joshua's highlights the close connection between Moses and Joshua. Second, the Mosaic victories remind the reader that the God who carried the children of Israel through the desert wandering is the same God who delivered the Promised Land into their hand.

The narrative gives two kings defeated by Moses, beginning with Sihon, a king of the Amorites (Josh. 12:2, 3). Sihon lead his army out to try to stop Israel from progressing through his land on their way to Canaan (Num. 21:21-32). After the victory, Moses' army quoted an Amorite war song that touted an Amorite victory over the Moabites and their god Chemosh. The Israelites changed the last two

lines of the song to reflect their own victory over Sihon. Rahab and the Gibeonites mentioned Israel's victory over Sihon as one of the reasons the Canaanites were so afraid of Israel.

The second king defeated by Moses was Og of Bashan (Josh. 12:4, 5; Num. 21:33–35). God assured Moses of victory, and Israel defeated Og with God's help. Not one of Og's people survived. This total victory was another part of the reason the Canaanites feared Israel.

These battles continued to prove to be important throughout the conquest. They showed that Israel could not be stopped as they marched to the Promised Land. They also showed that all land belongs to God. The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh possessed the lands of Sihon and Og as their inheritances (12:6).

B. Kings defeated by Joshua (12:7–24)

The list of kings defeated by Joshua begins with a general outline of the land the kings possessed at one time (12:7, 8).

READ: Joshua 12:9–24. **ASK:** What impresses you about the list of kings? (Q3)

The long list of kings defeated by Joshua is impressive. The author of Joshua utilizes the list inside of his overall narrative strategy to deliver a powerful message of triumph. Note that there is no list of kings Israel lost to. The emphasis is on what was possible when Israel put their faith in God and moved forward with the conquest.

Why would God not include the specific names of the kings, preferring instead to list their cities and count each of them as just one king? Perhaps because the purpose of the conquest was primarily to take the Promised Land. The land, represented by the cities, is what God was giving to Israel. God judged the Canaanites for their wickedness, but He was not giving them to Israel. The Canaanites were to be destroyed, wiped out while Israel lived on in the territories the kings had once ruled. Furthermore, all of the kings had the same fate. Who they were was of zero consequence as long as Israel continued to trust God and obey Him.

There are thirteen cities recorded in the king list that aren't mentioned in Joshua 1–12. The presence of these cities on the list demonstrates that Joshua 6, 8, 10, and 11 are not intended to record every detail of battles won in the conquest.

II. Opportunities for Faith in God (13–19)

A. God promised to drive out the enemy (13:1–7)

Israel's military leader was aging. Perhaps at that point of his life he was one hundred years old. Joshua 13:1 describes him as *old and stricken in years*. Yet God pointed out to Joshua that a lot of work still had to be done. There was *yet very much land to be possessed* (13:1). Joshua must have felt as if he needed another lifetime to accomplish what yet lay before him. However, God would call him home long before the work could be finished.

The notation about Joshua being old shows that a good deal of time had elapsed since the beginning of the conquest. God's point about much land needing to be possessed lets the reader know that there had been setbacks. Some of the area once controlled by Israel was no longer under their control. How Israel lost

control of some of the land is not recorded. But the principle reason for any loss or gain of territory in the land was whether Israel was walking in step with the Lord.

READ: Joshua 13:2–6a. **ASK:** How do these verses affect the mood of the narrative? (Q4) *They dampen the mood, especially coming on the heels of a long list of kings defeated by the Israelites.*

RESOURCE: Display resource 12 to show the extent of the conquest of the Promised Land.



God was not okay with a partial conquest. He was sure to remind Joshua that the goal had not changed. Being in the land was not the end of the journey. The goal was to be in possession of all of the land to the glory of the Lord. A partial taking of the land brought tarnish to God's glory.

READ: Joshua 13:6b. **ASK:** What would God do for the Israelites if they would serve Him obediently and move forward with the conquest? (Q5) *He would drive the remaining Canaanites from the land.*

Even amidst Israel's failures, the Lord still graciously upheld His promise to fight for Israel.

The next step was for Joshua to divide the land. God reminded him of that yet uncompleted task (13:6, 7). Specifically, God commanded Joshua to *divide this land for an inheritance* to the nine and one-half tribes living west of the Jordan.

B. God divided the land east of Jordan (13:8–33)

At this point there is a review of what God had already done for the two and a half tribes east of the Jordan (13:8–33). Most of that review is good with one exception.

READ: Joshua 13:13. **ASK:** Why would the Israelites not drive out the people referred to in this verse? (Q6) *They failed to move forward by faith in God and thereby disobeyed God.*

God didn't fail the tribes on the east side of the Jordan. He would have driven out all the enemies still in their land just as He promised. Joshua 13:13 is just the beginning of the references to Israel's shortfalls.

C. God provided an example of faith (14:1–15:19)

Joshua 14 moves forward with the division of the land west of the Jordan (14:1, 2). After a short review of what God did east of the Jordan (14:3, 4), there is a summary of what was about to happen. Namely, the children of Israel divided the land (14:5). But before the details of that division unfolded, God provided an example of the strength, courage, and faith it takes to cause Him to drive the Canaanites from the land. Caleb is that example. The conclusion to his story fits nicely into the narrative concerning the allotment of the land.

Caleb went to Joshua and reminded him of what the Lord said to Moses concerning them in Kadesh Barnea. It was at Kadesh Barnea that Israel made the fateful decision to not enter the Promised Land after ten spies brought back word

Note that Balaam, the prophet that king Balak of Moab hired to curse Israel, is listed as a victim of Israel's conquest east of the Jordan. His death is recorded in Numbers 31:8. Revelation 2:15 associated Balaam with Israel's idolatry at Peor (Num. 25:1–5).

of the giants that lived in the land (Num. 13; 14). Israel sought to stone both Joshua and Caleb when the men called on Israel to trust the Lord and take the Promised Land (14:6–10). God promised Joshua and Caleb that they would enter the Promised Land because of their faith in God (14:24, 30).

Caleb went on to say that the report he brought back from spying out the land came from his heart (Josh. 14:7). His faith in God was genuine. He wholly followed the Lord (14:8). There was no doubt in Caleb's mind that God was stronger than the Canaanites and that God would faithfully keep His word to chase the inhabitants from the land.

READ: Joshua 14:8. **ASK:** What did the ten spies who refused to enter the land do to the children of Israel's hearts? (Q7) *They melted their hearts, meaning they crushed any courage the people had to follow Moses into the Promised Land.*

The effect the ten spies had on the Israelites is the same effect the Red Sea crossing had on the Canaanites (Josh. 2:8–11). Both sides lacked courage. The Canaanites' melted hearts were understandable. They had every reason to fear the Israelites and their God. The Israelites' melted hearts, on the other hand, were inexcusable. They had every reason to be courageous. They had God on their side.

Caleb held onto the promise from God that he would inherit the portion of Canaan on which he had walked (Josh. 14:9; Deut. 1:35, 36). It had been forty-five years since that promise. He was ready to embrace the future with confidence in the Lord. He was prepared to begin a new life in Canaan, one in which he would claim his inheritance, chase out formidable enemies, settle in the land he claimed, and pass along blessings to the next generation. By faith, life would *begin* at eighty-five. A rocking-chair retirement was the furthest thing from his mind. The Lord still had work for him to do.

Caleb did not ask for a portion of the land that he could possess with a minimum of effort. He requested Hebron.

READ: Numbers 13:22, 28, 31–33. **ASK:** Of the inhabitants of the Promised Land, whom did the spies fear the most? (Q8) *The children of Anak, the giants in the land.*

Caleb was eager to take on the Anakim, the people the rest of Israel feared greatly. It would have been understandable for Caleb to forgo his dream and leave the Anakim alone. But he did not hesitate in his request. He boldly asked for the inheritance.

READ: Joshua 14:11. **ASK:** What had God done for Caleb physically during the previous forty-five years? (Q9) *He had not allowed Caleb to diminish physically. Caleb was as strong at eighty-five as he had been forty years earlier.*

Caleb's physical strength at the age of eighty-five was amazing. However, it was not his physical strength that made him a formidable foe. Certainly others in Israel were as strong as or stronger than him. Caleb's real strength resided in his spiritual fortitude. He was deeply devoted to God. His devotion made all the difference.

ASK: How would Caleb's boldness and deep trust in the Lord in the face of a powerful enemy affect others? (See Joshua 15:13–17 and Judges 3:7–11.)
(Q10) *It would embolden them to be courageous too. Othniel led a battle against a strong enemy in Canaan and later was used by God as one of the judges in Israel.*

Caleb's perseverance and fortitude in driving out the Anakim provided an example for Othniel, Caleb's much younger brother (Judg. 1:13). Years later Othniel became Israel's first judge. He was probably around eighty when he judged Israel and delivered them from the king of Mesopotamia. Othniel, like

Caleb, served the Lord all the days of his life.

Joshua blessed Caleb and granted his request (Josh. 14:13). Hebron would become Caleb's home because *he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel* (14:14). Hebron, situated high in the hill country, is about twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem. It seems fitting that Caleb inherited such high ground. After all, he had always traveled the high road in his relationship with the Lord!

Caleb conquered Hebron (14:15), drove out the enemy (15:14), and gave his daughter and son-in-law springs of water in the upper and lower parts of the hill country (15:19). He had not only been blessed by the Lord but had also become a source of blessing to others.

Apparently Caleb eventually gave Hebron to the Lord. Joshua 21:8–13 reports that Hebron became one of the forty-eight Levitical cities. It was also designated as a city of refuge (20:7, 9). Those who sought sanctuary in Hebron would find it, thanks to the faith and generosity of the man who embarked on a new life at age eighty-five.

ASK: What might an article in the Hebron newspaper say about Caleb? (Q11)
That he believed God and did amazing things by faith in Him.

ASK: More importantly, what might an article in the Hebron newspaper say about Caleb's God? (Q12) *That God is faithful to His promises and is worthy of one's deep trust.*

D. God divided the land west of Jordan (15:20–19:48)

The allotment of the land resumed in Joshua 15:20. It is no accident that the allotment of the land of Canaan began with the tribe of Judah and that it is the tribe with the most narrative space devoted to its allotments (14:6–15:63 comprise 69 verses). Caleb was from the tribe of Judah, so the account of his inheritance counts as part of Judah's allotment narrative. Judah was the first to receive a portion of the land west of the Jordan because it was the most prominent of the tribes of Israel. Judah was the most blessed from the start (Gen. 49:8–12) and would continue to hold this most-favored status throughout the history of Israel. Most importantly, God chose Judah to be the tribe through whom *Shiloh* would come (49:10). *Shiloh* is a reference to Christ.

The allotments of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are next (Josh. 16; 17). Joseph's favored status in Jacob's family is likely the reason God identified their allotments second and third.

Apparently more time passed before Joshua called the remaining seven tribes together to rebuke their complacency (18:1–3). They had not gone to the rest of the land to conquer it. Joshua sent three men from each tribe to survey the remaining land and then divide it into seven parts. Joshua then cast lots to determine which tribe received which plot (18:4–10). The narrative picks up with the allotment for the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was favored by Jacob because he was as the only other son of Rachel besides Joseph. But perhaps his allotment is given fourth because Israel's first king came from the tribe of Benjamin. The rest of the tribes receive their allotments without much note (19:1–48) other than that Simeon's allotment fell inside Judah's territory (19:9). Simeon was cursed to live among the other tribes (Gen. 49:7) because of their violent treatment of the Shechemites (Gen. 34).

Sprinkled throughout the divisions of the land are reminders that Israel had not yet driven the Canaanites from their land (Josh. 15:63; 16:10; 17:12, 13; 18:3). Given the record of Joshua's victories and the example of Caleb, Israel had no excuses. God had proven Himself faithful to them time and time again. The lengthy section of the land allotments along with the careful and precise descriptions of the parceled territories proved the faithfulness of the Lord to His word.

E. God provided another example of faith (19:49–51)

The allotment section ends with Joshua's inheritance. He asked for and received Timnath Serah in the territory of Ephraim (19:49, 50). The examples of Caleb and Joshua provide bookends for the allotment of the land west of the Jordan. They are proof that God could indeed be trusted to chase the Canaanites from the land if the Israelites will be obedient to Him and trust in Him.

The final note of the allotment section mentions again that Israel had set up the tabernacle in Shiloh (18:1; 19:51). The tabernacle had previously been in Gilgal near the place Israel entered the land. Shiloh was in the midst of the land. God had taken possession of Canaan. His tabernacle was in the middle of it all as a testimony to the world of His power and glory.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Coastin'

ASK: What happens to a believer who tries to coast along in his walk with God? (Q13) *He will begin to digress and loss ground.*

ASK: Have you come to a point in your Christian life where you thought you could coast along? Explain. (Q14)

ASK: What might be some evidence of coasting along in your walk with God? (Q15)

Back in the Game

ASK: How does a fresh look at God's faithfulness through the book of Joshua encourage you to persevere? (Q16)

● God's Faithfulness

1.	8.
2.	9.
3.	10.
4.	11.
5.	12.
6.	13.
7.	

ASK: What are some areas of your life in which you need to persevere? (Q17)

Summary and Memory Verse

RESOURCE: Display resource 1. Add the following statement about God's faithfulness: God faithfulness encourages perseverance.

Encourage learners to memorize Joshua 14:9. Give them an opportunity to say the verse in class next week.