

SETTLED

The rewards of faithfulness come with the expectation of continued obedience.

JOSHUA 22:1-8

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 22:5

PREPARE TO LEAD THE GROUP TIME

- **READ** Joshua 13:1–22:24, First Thoughts (p. 54), and Understand the Context (pp. 54-55). Notice how the Lord affirms that the children of Israel had accomplished His plan.
- **STUDY** Joshua 22:1-8, using the commentary provided (pp. 55-59). Be prepared to discuss how important integrity is to the commitments that we make.
- **PLAN** the group time using ideas under Lead Group Bible Study (pp. 60-61) and More Ideas (p. 62), ideas in *QuickSource*, and ideas online at Blog.LifeWay.com/ExploreTheBible. Look for ways to incorporate the Key Doctrine (Stewardship) in the PSG (p. 59) into the session.
- **GROW** from expert insights on weekly studies through the Ministry Grid (MinistryGrid.com/Web/ExploreTheBible).
- **GATHER** the following items: Personal Study Guides; Various Bible translations for the Bible Skill activity; and **PACK ITEM 5** (*Bookmark: Memory Verses*) as needed. Prepare to display the following Pack Item: **PACK ITEM 6** (*Chart: Cities of Refuge*).



FIRST THOUGHTS

KEY DOCTRINE

Stewardship

Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions.

Most of us grew up with the expectation that we were always to keep our word. Our parents or grandparents no doubt had some phrase they would repeat that reinforced that expectation. Most of us recognized that we were expected to tell the truth even when we were caught misbehaving. A sure way to increase the punishment we faced was to lie about what we had been caught doing. Integrity is built on honesty and trustworthiness.

(In PSG, p. 52) **Why is integrity so important today? What makes many people stop and take notice today when they see a person of integrity?**

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR

For additional context, read "Gad: The Man and the Territory" in the Winter 2016-17 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Available at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator.

Most people would probably agree that a good reputation is built over a lifetime but can be ruined in an instant. The bond of trust between a husband and wife can be ruined when one spouse decides he or she will be dishonest or cheat on the other. Children need trustworthy parents. Employers look for dependable employees who will put in a good solid effort every day.

Prior to Joshua's conquest of the promised land, Moses gave land east of the Jordan River to the tribes of Reuben [RHOO ben], Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh [muh NASS uh]. But Moses charged these two and a half tribes to help conquer the land west of the Jordan. Having been faithful to Moses' charge, and with the conquest complete, Joshua blessed these two and a half tribes and released them to go home. He instructed these tribes to continue to be obedient to the Lord's commandments.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

JOSHUA 13:1–22:24

The Lord commanded Joshua to apportion the land of Canaan (Josh. 13:1-7). The tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh had chosen to settle east of the Jordan (13:8-14). Reuben received the central territory (13:15-23), Gad the southern territory (13:24-28), and Manasseh the northern territory (13:29-33).

As the allotment of Canaan began, Caleb, who along with Joshua was a faithful spy when Israel spied out the land, requested the hill country of Hebron (14:6-15). He received the portion and subdued the area. Judah received a large southern territory (15:1-12) and claimed a significant number of cities (15:20-62). However, Judah could not expel the Jebusites from Jerusalem (15:63). Ephraim's territory lay in Canaan's heartland (16:1-9). The Ephraimites also failed to drive out the Canaanite population (16:10). The large tribe of Manasseh also received territory in Canaan

but could not defeat the Canaanite peoples (17:7-13). Joshua urged the Manassites to claim God's promise and take their portion as their own (17:14-18).

Joshua sent a delegation from Shiloh to survey Canaan's remaining territory (18:1-6). He then determined the remaining seven tribal portions by lot (18:8-10). Benjamin lay north of Judah and south of Ephraim (18:11-28). Simeon received territory within Judah's allotment (19:1-9), while Zebulun's portion sat between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea to the north (19:10-16). Issachar also settled in the northern region (19:17-23), while Asher received the northwestern region along the Mediterranean coast (19:24-31). Naphtali's territory extended above the Sea of Galilee (19:32-39). Dan received land immediately to Judah's north (19:40-46), but lost it to the Canaanites. The Danites moved far north, conquered the city of Leshem, and renamed it Dan (19:47-48). Joshua's portion in Ephraim completed the territorial allotments (19:49-51).

Six cities of refuge protected those who accidentally caused a fellow Israelite's death (20:1-9). Israel also allocated 48 cities where the Levites could live and provide instruction for the other tribes (21:1-42). The text highlights God's faithfulness throughout the conquest (21:43-45).

Joshua then dismissed the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to claim their eastern inheritance (22:1-8). As they journeyed home, these tribes built an altar along the Jordan, an action the other tribes viewed with concern (22:9-12). A delegation set out to determine if the eastern tribes had built the altar in violation of the Law of Moses (22:13-20). The eastern tribes replied that they had only built it for memorial purposes as a reminder of their common faith with their relatives in Canaan (22:21-29). The western delegation returned home and shared the good news with their respective tribes (22:30-34).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

A PROMISE KEPT (JOSH. 22:1-3)

VERSE 1

Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and their representatives appeared before him. Numbers 32 records how these tribes requested to settle east of the Jordan as the Israelites moved through the territory east of the Jordan River (Num. 32:1-5). Moses initially had resisted their request (Num. 32:6-15), but after hearing their affirmation of support for their fellow Israelites to conquer Canaan (Num. 32:16-19), he allowed them to settle east of the Jordan (Num. 32:20-42).

Joshua 1 records how Joshua approached these tribes as Israel prepared for the conquest, reminding them of their earlier commitment to Moses (Josh. 1:12-15). The tribes had affirmed their support for Joshua's

BIBLE SKILL

Develop a paraphrase.

Read Joshua 22:5 in various Bible translations. Then write the verse in your own words. Finally, write a couple of sentences stating how the verse can help you to face a tough decision or a difficult situation. How does Joshua 22:5 provide help for your walk with the Lord? List areas where you need to apply the truth of this verse in your life this week.

JOSHUA 22:1

¹ Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh

JOSHUA 22:2

² and told them, “You have done everything Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you and have obeyed me in everything I commanded you.

JOSHUA 22:3

³ You have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the LORD your God.

JOSHUA 22:4

⁴ Now that He has given your brothers rest, just as He promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you across the Jordan.

leadership and for the other tribes and had agreed to assist in the conquest of Canaan (1:16-18). Now that Israel had achieved effective control of Canaan and Joshua had allotted the tribal territories, it was time for the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh to claim their eastern territory. They had kept their commitment fully.

VERSE 2

Joshua gathered the tribes and told them the good news they certainly had been waiting to hear. He began by commending their faithfulness. The words ***you have done everything Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you*** recall the tribes’ initial promise to assist in the conquest of Canaan (Num. 32:16-19). They had made a commitment to Moses perhaps as many as seven years earlier, and they had carried out the task. Further, they had ***obeyed*** Joshua, Moses’ successor, ***in everything*** he commanded them. When Joshua had assumed leadership, he first secured the commitment of these tribes to assist in the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 1:12-18), and the tribes had faithfully executed their commitment. They recognized that their promise was first to the Lord, even more than to Moses or to Joshua.

VERSE 3

Joshua expanded on his commendation with the words ***you have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time***. The tribes had ***carried out the requirement*** they had received. Joshua described their obedience as obedience to ***the command of the LORD***. The tribes had obeyed Joshua as they told him they would. They had fulfilled their word to Moses as they said they would. But above all, they had kept their word to the Lord. They honored God by keeping their commitments.

We honor God when we keep our word. Jesus instructed us to live lives of integrity. We should not have to swear an oath for others to believe us; rather, our word should be sufficient (Matt. 5:33-37). People need to know they can trust us at all times.

People notice when we are faithful to keep even small commitments. In a parable, Jesus commended servants who were faithful in small ways (Matt. 25:20-23). God blessed Daniel for not defiling himself with Nebuchadnezzar’s food (Dan. 1:8-21). The world often says, “Let it go—it’s just a small thing,” but God sees our small acts of faithfulness as opportunities to testify to the perfect faithfulness of our God.

What happens when people break their promises? How does our faithfulness to our commitments—even our small commitments—bring honor to the Lord?

AN ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY (JOSH. 22:4-5)

VERSE 4

Joshua's words stress God's role in the conquest, as we have seen earlier (Josh. 11:20; 21:43-45). The words **given your brothers rest** highlight God's blessing in helping His people conquer the land. Likewise, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had served as God's instruments by assisting the other tribes in conquering Canaan. God worked His purposes through their faithfulness. It was **just as He promised them**. The word translated *promised* literally means "spoke," but any word of assurance such as God made to His people would have the effect of a promise. The New Testament affirms that God keeps all His promises (2 Cor. 1:20). We can count on His perfect faithfulness, and He calls us to be as He is (Matt. 5:48).

Joshua commanded the eastern tribes: **return to your homes** (literally "tents") **in your own land**. The literal reference to tents may suggest the eastern tribes had not yet completely settled the eastern territory. Nonetheless, the translation *homes* was likely quite accurate in many circumstances, since the people had already conquered cities east of the Jordan (Num. 21:21-25,33-35). The reference to **Moses the LORD's servant** stresses two truths. First, the eastern tribes' right to the land extended back to the promise Moses had given them (Num. 32:20-24). Second, Moses' title *the LORD's servant* was a different Hebrew expression than the description of Joshua in Joshua 1:1. Joshua ultimately would receive this blessed title at the end of his life as he finished a long and successful ministry (Josh. 24:29). The words **across the Jordan** designate the territory east of the Jordan River. The text thus reminds us that the west side of the Jordan was the primary portion of Israel's inheritance.

VERSE 5

The word translated **only** is translated "above all" in Joshua 1:7, where God encouraged Joshua to follow the instruction of Moses. The same sense is present here; what Joshua was about to say was supremely important. The words **carefully obey** highlight the seriousness of his words. The command does not designate one commandment in particular but points to all the commands of God as a group. **Instruction** translates the Hebrew word *torah* that **Moses the LORD's servant** had received on Mount Sinai and had given to God's people. Again, Joshua's words stress the continuity between his generation and the generation of Moses. God used Moses, and God used Joshua, and His word applied to every generation.

Joshua summarized the Lord's instructions to the eastern tribes with five commands. First, they were to **love the LORD their God**. The word translated *love* is the same word that occurs in Deuteronomy 6:5, where Moses instructed the Israelites to love the Lord supremely, with all their heart, soul, and strength. Second, the tribes were to **walk in all His ways**. They needed to demonstrate their love for the Lord by faithful obedience to His commands. Merely talking about it was not enough; their relationship with God needed to display itself in their lifestyle. Third, they needed to **keep His commands**. This particular admonition relates to the prior one

JOSHUA 22:5

⁵ Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD's servant gave you: to love the LORD your God, walk in all His ways, keep His commands, remain faithful to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul."

regarding maintaining a faithful lifestyle. God's people demonstrate their love and commitment to Him through obedience. Fourth, the people were to **remain faithful to Him**. Elsewhere, the words describe the relationship of a husband to his wife (Gen. 2:24). Finally, the people were to **serve Him with all** their **heart** and with all their **soul**. The words *heart* and *soul* highlight the need for Israel to be "all in" in terms of their commitment to the Lord. Intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, they needed to serve God faithfully. Nothing else than total commitment would suffice.

Joshua's solemn charge to the eastern tribes provides a wonderful guideline for believers today. We can fulfill no greater commandment than to love the Lord our God with all we are (Matt. 22:35-38). Walking in His ways and keeping His commands demonstrate the faith in our hearts, for the faith that saves is the faith that demonstrates itself in good works (Jas. 2:18). We remain faithful to Him when we take our relationship with Him seriously and cling to Him. We need to surrender every aspect of our beings to Him. Such a commitment is more than a calling; it is our sacred duty. God expects no less of His children.

Sometimes Christians may think God only expects such a high standard of pastors and church leaders. While God does call His leaders to a high standard, He expects all of us to surrender our lives to Him. Whether we serve God as a professional minister or as a ministering professional, we are to serve Him fully, with all we are.

Why does obedience prove to be a better indication of genuine faith than mere words of affirmation? Would you say that genuine faith normally should lead to action? Why or why not?

JOSHUA 22:6-7

⁶ Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, and they went to their homes.

⁷ Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, but Joshua had given territory to the other half, with their brothers, on the west side of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed them,

A WELCOMED BLESSING (JOSH. 22:6-8)

VERSES 6-7

Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, back across the Jordan River. They had completed the task they said they would do (Josh. 1:16-18). The tribes **went to their homes** (literally "tents"; see comments on v. 4). Verse 6 comprises a brief summary of what follows. Verses 7-8 provide further details regarding Joshua's blessing.

Verse 7 clarifies that the **tribe of Manasseh** received an allotment on both sides of the Jordan River: **Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan**. Bashan was a region east of the Jordan and to the north. Manasseh thus would control the northernmost Israelite territory east of the Jordan. The land of Bashan was agriculturally rich and boasted rich soil. Trees of great stature could grow there (Zech. 11:2). Animals that grazed there became strong due to the good food grown from the good soil (Ps. 22:12). Moses had allotted this quality area to the half-tribe of Manasseh. **Joshua had given territory to the other half** of the tribe on the west side of

the Jordan (Josh. 17:1-11). The western brothers would end up having a hard time totally subduing the Canaanites who lived in their territory (Josh. 17:12-13). They later would pay a heavy spiritual price. The west side of the Jordan comprised the primary inheritance of Israel, and although under Joshua the tribes achieved effective control of the land, they were not able to drive out pockets of resistance that later became spiritual snares to them (Judg. 2:1-5). However, the eastern tribes had kept their word, so Joshua **sent them to their homes and blessed them**. The eastern tribes would have their own struggles against those who lived with them east of the Jordan (Judg. 3:12-14; 11:4).

VERSE 8

Joshua's command, **return to your homes with great wealth**, emphasized the treasures the eastern tribes would take home with them as spoils of war. When the tribes fought Jericho, Joshua commanded them to take all the plunder and put it in the Lord's treasury (Josh. 6:19). However, in subsequent battles, the tribes kept the plunder from the peoples they conquered. These possessions included **a huge number of cattle** that could support them in many ways. Livestock could furnish much milk and meat; sheep and goats could furnish wool, milk, and cheese.

The people also had accumulated **silver** and **gold**. These precious metals could serve a monetary purpose as well as be fashioned into jewelry or other items. **Bronze** could be used for tools or instruments of war (1 Sam. 17:5; 2 Sam. 21:16). **Iron** likewise could be used for a variety of purposes, as it was even harder than bronze (Josh. 17:16; Amos 1:3). Finally, the tribes took with them **a large quantity of clothing** they had taken from the cities and peoples they had conquered. Joshua commanded them to **share the spoil** of all they had taken from their enemies with their **brothers**. Presumably, the reference is to those men who stayed behind to guard the soldiers' families and possessions east of the Jordan. Joshua wanted all to share in the blessing of the conquest through the soldiers' sharing God's blessing with their fellow Israelites. Moses had practiced this principle earlier (Num. 31:27), as did David after he defeated the Amalekites (1 Sam. 30:9-10, 21-25).

Honor comes to those who are faithful in their commitments. Believers are to remain faithful to God regardless of their station. When we are young in our faith, God may call us to smaller tasks than He does when we are older and more mature in our faith. Nonetheless, whether the task is large or small, He expects faithful obedience to His commands. As God blesses us, it is also important that we faithfully exercise our stewardship to bless others. The Lord wants to use us as a channel of blessing to others as well. Everything we have is a gift from God (1 Cor. 4:7).

What kinds of blessings come to people today who are faithful to honor their commitments? List as many as you can think of. Why do you think God uses His children to bless others?

JOSHUA 22:8

⁸ he said, "Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share the spoil of your enemies with your brothers."

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

INTRODUCE: As group members arrive, conduct a survey: *When signing an agreement or agreeing to the terms of a website or phone app, do you read the full contents rarely, never, sometimes, or usually always?*

EXPLAIN: *When we sign our name, we are putting our integrity on the line that we agree with what is in the contract or terms of usage. We also trust the integrity of the person or company to uphold their promises.*

FOCUS: Review First Thoughts (p. 54; PSG, pp. 52-53). Ask: *Why is integrity so important today? What makes many people stop and take notice today when they see a person of integrity?* (PSG, p. 52)

TRANSITION: Call attention to the session summary statement on page 51 of the PSG: *The rewards of faithfulness come with the expectation of continued obedience.* Challenge the group to look at how that statement is demonstrated in today's Scripture passage.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Joshua 22:1-3.

ASK: *How had God shown His commitment to the children of Israel? Support the discussion using **Pack Item 6** (Chart: Cities of Refuge).*

EXPLAIN: *In Joshua 21:43-45, God's covenant was reaffirmed with the people (v. 43), His power was remembered (v. 44), and His promises were held true (v. 45). God had shown how He was committed to keeping His word by enabling the Israelite army to conquer the land. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh were promised by Moses the land east of the Jordan River (Deut. 3:8-20), in exchange for their promise to help secure the promised land with the remaining tribes.*

ASK: *How did Joshua affirm their commitments? Explain that he acknowledged their presence (v. 1), recognized their obedience (v. 2), and shared his appreciation (v. 3). Ask: *Why was it important that these two and a half tribes keep their promise? Why is it important for believers to keep all of our promises?* (PSG, p. 55)*

EXPLAIN: *Joshua emphasized in verse 3 how the tribes did not desert them, even though it was a long battle. For us, we may encounter commitments that may last longer than we originally intended, but it's important for us to recognize how our word matters and that we should not desert situations but stay committed to them.*

READ: Read aloud Joshua 22:4-6, noting that verse 5 is this week's memory verse. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 5** (Bookmark: Memory Verses) to those who need one.

DIRECT: Focus attention on the word “rest” in verse 4. Ask: *How important was it for Joshua to affirm that the Lord had given them “rest”?* Explain that it was a reminder of God’s promise to give the people rest (Gen. 17:8; Deut. 7:22-23). “Rest” also affirmed the victory and security of the people. Ask: *How does our relationship with Christ affirm to us victory and security?* Explain that because of Jesus we have been promised rest, which provides us victory and security (Matt. 11:28-30; 2 Cor. 4:13-15).

ASK: *Why was it important for Joshua to charge them to obey Moses’ instructions from God?*

REVIEW: Direct the group to the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 56). Review the activity, allowing the group to reflect personally on the question.

ASK: *Why does obedience prove to be a better indication of genuine faith than mere words of affirmation? Would you say that genuine faith normally should lead to action? Why or why not?* (PSG, p. 57)

HIGHLIGHT: *As children of God, we cannot compartmentalize our spiritual responsibilities to the times that we are only around other Christians. Our lives are to reflect obedience to the Lord at all times.*

READ: Direct the group to read silently Joshua 22:6-8, identifying the blessings included.

LIST: Call for volunteers to share the blessings they identified. (Possible responses include being sent home from war (vv. 1-3), receiving the spoils of war (v. 8), or provisions for all members of their tribes.)

DISCUSS: Review the Key Doctrine (Stewardship) on page 59 of the PSG. Lead the group to discuss how stewardship is illustrated in Joshua 22. Redirect the discussion by focusing on how the doctrinal statement relates to today’s believers.

DISCUSS: *Agree or disagree: God always provides a blessing so that you can provide for the needs of others. Explain your response.* (PSG, p. 59)

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

CHALLENGE: Direct the group to discuss the third question set under In My Context (PSG, p. 60): *Discuss as a group the blessings God has given to this group. How can your Bible study group use your blessings to bless others?*

PRAY: Spend time in prayer, reflecting on the commitments that have been made by group members. Remind the group of the grace of God that sustains commitments.



PRACTICE

- Contact group members, challenging them to reflect on the importance of commitments. Be prepared to share a story of a time when you honored a commitment.
- Spend time praying for your group members who have indicated they are struggling to keep a commitment.
- Ask God to reveal to you commitments needing more attention. Ask Him to help you be faithful to those commitments.

MORE IDEAS

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

Pre-enlist a volunteer to research the history of the handshake. Encourage him or her to include the value of a handshake in some cultures. After the volunteer has shared his or her findings, state: *The commitment we have from God goes beyond a handshake. It is based on His Word.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

- To supplement Joshua 22:1-3, direct the group to write a recommendation letter for the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh based on this passage.
- To enhance the study of this week's memory verse (Joshua 22:5), distribute different Bible translations (or encourage the group to use apps on their smartphones). Lead them to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 56 of the PSG.
- To supplement the teaching of Joshua 22:6-8, guide the group to role-play how they believed the soldiers responded to what Joshua told them.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

Challenge the group to evaluate their commitments to God, family, church, and personally sharing the gospel. Ask: *Are we committed to the best things that God has planned? Are we over-committed?* Encourage the group members to align their commitments with God's Word and His divine plans.

SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA

Lead the group to read responsively the words of "Take My Life, Lead Me Lord," by R. Maines Rawls, alternating every other line.