



A MODEL OF OBEDIENCE • GOD'S GIFTS AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY •

JOSHUA 17:15-18, JOSHUA 18:1-5 • 04/08/2018

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## MAIN POINT

As Christians we have a responsibility to respond to the gifts of God in the power of God.

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## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What is your favorite thing you have received as a gift? Why is that your favorite?**

**What is your favorite thing you had to earn? Why is that your favorite?**

**In the kingdom of God, what is the relationship between God's gifts and our responsibility?**

Everything that happens in God's kingdom is fueled by God's power. One of the main ways that God employs His power in the world today is through His people. He gives us promises, possessions, and people to reach, then leads us to respond to His promises, take hold of our possessions and call His people in His name. In the Book of Joshua, we see this modeled through the division of the promised land among the tribes. God gave His people the land. God was the power behind the victory. However, His people still needed to take possession of the land, taking hold of what had been given to them. We also have the opportunity to take hold of what He has given us, walking in His authority to possess His kingdom.

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## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE YOUR GROUP SKIM THROUGH JOSHUA 15-19.**

Chapters 15-19 explain how the land was divided among God's people. In these chapters we find the culmination of many years of blessing, struggle, faithfulness, faithlessness, and the continued love of God for His people. What had been promised long before to Moses and reiterated to Joshua was finally fulfilled. The people of God were given possession of the promised land. This was recorded in great detail both as a historical record of the ownership of the property and in recognition of the trustworthiness of God.

**Five chapters of Joshua are dedicated to the division of the promised land. Why do you think God wanted the writer to tell this story with such detail?**

**What stood out to you as you read about God's people receiving the land that had been promised to them?**

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOSHUA 17:15-18:5.**

**What problems did Joseph's descendants face?**

**Have you ever had a responsibility to fulfill as a result of a gift from God?**

**What happened?**

In Joshua 1, God promised Joshua the land. He went so far as to say that everywhere the people walked would be a gift to them. In chapter 17 and 18 though, we see there was still work to be done. God gave the people the land as an inheritance, but He still expected them to take action in order to claim it. God gave His people a gift and a responsibility.

**Read Joshua 17:17-18 again. What do these verses tell us about how God works?**

**God not only gave the people the responsibility to take hold of the possession, but He gave them the power to do so. Describe a time when God called you to do something, and then gave you the power to do it.**

**Read Joshua 18:3 again. What most often keeps you from acting on the promises of God? How have you seen Him grow you in those areas?**

**Who is a Joshua in your life? Who helps you see the steps you need to take in response to the gifts and promises of God?**

In these five chapters of Joshua, we see God's grace on display in the giving of gifts, the granting of responsibility, and the provision of power. Often in Scripture, God declares something will be accomplished and then allows His children the privilege of participating in fulfilling His words. We see another powerful example of this in Revelation 11.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ REVELATION 11:15-18.**

**What is the gift God is giving in this text?**

**What is our responsibility in seeing this moment come to pass?**

**What does it look like to be empowered for such a task? How do we put ourselves in the position to fulfill our responsibility?**

God has already declared that one day the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ, and that He will reign forever. We can hope in this promise, but we can also take hold of the world around us as messengers of the gospel of Christ. From God's perspective, the world already belongs to Jesus, but He has sent us as His disciples into the world to call people to Him. He has promised it will happen, tasked us to respond, and given us the power to do so through His Spirit.

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## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What gift of God are you most thankful for right now? How can you remember to be grateful this week?**

**What is something God is asking you to do right now? What is keeping you from moving? What step can you take this week?**

**What can our group do to help each other both trust God and serve in His power this week?**

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## PRAY

Thank God for the gifts He has given. Ask Him to help your group rest in the promises of God. Ask Him to give your group the grace to hope securely in heaven. Ask Him also to give you the power and the faith to respond to His call to move in His promises.

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# COMMENTARY

## JOSHUA 15-19

15:1–63. Judah was the first tribe to receive its inheritance. It was the largest and most prestigious tribe (see Gen. 49:8–12). Caleb’s lot was in Judah. He possessed Hebron by driving out the Anakites. Othniel, in behalf of Caleb, captured Debir and received Caleb’s daughter Acsah in marriage. Acsah, like her father, had a zeal for the promises of God. Jerusalem was in Judah’s territory, but the Israelites could not dispossess the Jebusites.

16:1–17:18. The lands belonging to the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, were in the central highlands. Ephraim received its allotment before Manasseh because it had the greater blessing of Jacob (Gen. 48:17–20). Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites from Gezer, although Joshua had killed its king (Josh. 12:12). Ephraim chose to use them as forced labor. The city became a royal possession under Solomon (1 Kgs. 9:16).

Joshua distributed land to the families of Manasseh west of the Jordan. He honored all of God’s promises, as shown by his giving land to Zelophehad’s daughters (Num. 27:1–7). Like Ephraim, Manasseh also chose to coexist with Canaanite cities. Later these areas were subjugated by Israel (see 1 Kgs. 9:15–22). When Ephraim complained that their lot was too small, Joshua challenged them to increase their territory by driving out the Canaanites.

18:1–10. The people set up the tabernacle at Shiloh, giving evidence that Israel had gained control of the land. However, seven tribes had not made their claim, and Joshua chided them for their reluctance.

18:11–19:48. The land was apportioned to Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. The inheritance of Benjamin was small but strategic; it was a buffer zone between the mighty states of Judah and Ephraim. Its cities of Bethel and Jerusalem were the most influential cities in the worship of Israel. King Saul and the apostle Paul were Benjamites.

The inheritance of Simeon was absorbed by the tribe of Judah according to Jacob's blessing (Gen. 49:7). Simeon may have lost its blessing as a result of Simeon's and Levi's murder of Shechem (Gen. 34:25).

The final lot fell to the Danites. Its territory was very small, and the Amorites were too great for them (see Judg. 1:34). Yet even they succeeded in having a portion with Israel by possessing Leshem, which they renamed Dan (see Judg. 18).

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## READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

Joshua 20:1-9