



# MOSAIC Gospel Project

## Volume 3, Unit 7, Lesson 1: Joshua and Caleb

**Bible Passage:** Numbers 13-14

### Personal Preparation

Before God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt, he promised to bring the Israelites back to the land he had given to Abraham so many years before (Ex. 3:8). From Egypt, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and traveled toward Mount Sinai. When they were hungry and thirsty, God provided food and water (see Ex. 16-17). Israel spent one year at Mount Sinai, where Moses received God's law, including the Ten Commandments.

Time and again, the Israelites rebelled against God, Moses interceded, and God pardoned the people. When Israel arrived at the edge of the promised land, God instructed Moses to send scouts into the land. Moses sent out a leader from each tribe. Twelve men, including Joshua and Caleb, traveled through the promised land of Canaan for 40 days. They returned with fruit—grapes, pomegranates, and figs—and gave a report on the land.

The scouts described the land's abundance as "flowing with milk and honey." They gave an account of the people, various tribes who were physically strong and whose cities were fortified. Caleb's immediate imperative—"Let's go up now!"—was met with resistance by most of the group. Assessing their own strength against the strength of the inhabitants, they concluded that to move forward would mean certain defeat.

The Israelites complained: "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness!" Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade the people of God's presence and protection, but the people would not trust

God. So God gave them what they thought was better. He sent them into the wilderness to wander for 40 years. They would die there. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites' children would enter the promised land.

Help the individuals you lead contemplate the punishment Israel faced for their rebellion and their failure to trust God. Point out that as sinners, we have all disobeyed God. But Jesus trusted God perfectly and took the punishment for our rebellion. When we look to him for salvation, we have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

As you prepare to teach, confess the ways that you have failed to trust God. Thank him for sending Jesus to atone for your sins. Pray that the individuals you teach would see their own sinfulness. Pray that they would find hope in Jesus.

### Memory Verse

Begin the lesson by introducing the new memory verse for this unit.

#### Proverbs 3:5-6

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."*

### Points of Emphasis

1. Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give his people the promised land.
2. To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and his commands.

## Activity #1

Guide the group to begin working on the activity sheet. Feel free to let them continue as you teach the lesson.

## Video

We learned about how God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. He led them in the wilderness and taught them the right way to live to honor him. When they were hungry, God provided them with food; when they were thirsty, God gave them water. God dwelt with his people and taught them how to love him and how to offer sacrifices when they sinned against him. You would think the people would have gotten really good at trusting God's promises. We will learn today that they continued to struggle with trusting God. Our story today is called "Joshua and Caleb."

Play the video lesson titled "Joshua and Caleb."

## Bible Lesson

Wow! No matter what God did to prove his faithfulness, the Israelites always seemed to turn away from him or believe wrong things about him. Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give his people the promised land, but none of the other Israelites did. They thought God was leading them to die! The enemies living in the promised land were powerful, and they had strong cities. That was all true. Even so, God is more powerful, and he has the ability to defeat any enemy. By refusing to enter the promised land, God's people were showing that they believed the lie that God wasn't strong enough or good enough to protect them and fight for them.

It's too easy to read this story and think that the 10 scouts who were afraid were foolish. I tell myself that I would have been like Joshua or Caleb. But you know, I distrust God sometimes too. A lot of times, actually. Every time I choose sin instead of obedience, it shows I do not trust that God's commands

are good for me. Even though God has never been unfaithful to me, I am unfaithful to him. I sin even though I should trust him and obey.

What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or his commands. Sounds like sin is pretty unavoidable, right? That's why the gospel is such good news!

## Activity #2

Lead the group to finish working on the activity sheet. Practice the memory verse with the individuals, and help them begin to learn it. Encourage them to write the verse using the Velcro pictures.

## Christ Connection

God knows that we all sin. Sometimes we sin in ways we don't even totally understand or know about! Although we all deserve punishment for our sin, God sent Jesus to rescue us from sin.

The Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He took the punishment we deserve for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

## Review Questions

*(Optional: Watch the Questions from Kids (QFK) video as a part of the discussion on Joshua and Caleb. Today's episode asks how we can know that we can trust God.)*

Group A

Early Learner

Encourage the individuals to point to the pictures provided or to draw in order to answer these questions.

1. **Point to what the scouts from Israel found in the promised land.** Milk and honey, grapes, strong enemies
2. **Point to who was afraid and did not trust God.** The Israelites
3. **Point to who trusted God.** Joshua and Caleb

4. **Point to who punished the Israelites for their sin.** God
5. **Point to who would be allowed to enter the promised land.** Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites' children

#### Group B

1. **How did Moses pick the 12 men to go scout out the land?** Moses picked a leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.
2. **What did the scouts report about the land?** It was good, flowing with milk and honey, but defended by strong people with fortified cities.
3. **Who trusted God?** Only Joshua and Caleb trust God to give them the land. The other scouts were afraid.
4. **Was it sinful for the 10 scouts to feel afraid?** Feeling afraid is not sinful. We are humans and sometimes we will face things that scare us. The 10 scouts who were afraid sinned when they doubted God and did not trust him to give them the land he promised.
5. **Why do you think God allows us to go through difficult or scary circumstances?** When we face hard times, we learn to trust him. Remind the individuals that asking for help is wise. We never have to face scary times alone.
6. **How can trusting God help us face our fears?** Guide the group to think about who God is and what he can do. Lead them to see that he has promised his people eternal life through Jesus. When we trust Jesus, we know that no difficult situation lasts forever. We always have hope. We can persevere through hard times by remembering what Jesus did to save us.

#### Group C

1. **What did the Israelites think would happen if they entered the promised land?** The Israelites thought they would be killed by their enemies. They did not trust that God would give them victory and blessing in the land he promised.
2. **Why did God keep the Israelites who didn't trust him from entering the promised land?** The Israelites refused to

enter the promised land, so God punished them by sending them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. God was right to punish their sin. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites' children were allowed to enter the promised land.

3. **Why can we trust God?** Guide the group to discuss what they know to be true about God. Point out that fear can keep us from following God, but God is faithful. He will never leave us. God is good, and he is in control.

#### Group D

##### Advanced Learner

1. **What does this story teach us about God?** One thing we learned is how God feels about sin. God hates sin, but he forgives us when we ask. When the Israelites disobeyed, Moses asked God to forgive them. God did forgive the Israelites, yet their sin still had consequences. The people who refused to obey God would not enter the promised land. Instead, they would die in the wilderness. For the next 40 years, the people wandered through the wilderness. Only their children, along with Joshua and Caleb, would be allowed to enter the promised land.
2. **What did Joshua and Caleb believe about God?** Joshua and Caleb believed that God was with them and nothing could stop them from conquering the promised land.
3. **Whom can you trust to keep promises?**
4. **Why is it important to be a trustworthy friend?**

## Prayer

**God, thank you for your Word. We confess that we sometimes trust in ourselves instead of trusting in you. We know that you are good. You always keep your promises. Help us follow you and obey you with courage because you love us. Amen.**



