

connect360

BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE

The Conquerors

HEROES OF THE FAITH

A STUDY OF JUDGES 1—8

John Duncan • Patrick Wilson

Jimmy Hester • William Miller

Tom Howe • Pam Gibbs

Charles Glidewell



BaptistWayPress®

Dallas, Texas

*The Conquerors: Heroes of the Faith—
Connect 360 Bible Teaching Guide*

Copyright © 2021 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations. For information, contact BAPTISTWAY PRESS, Baptist General Convention of Texas (Texas Baptists), 7557 Rambler Road, Suite 1200, Dallas, TX 75231-2388.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

CONNECT 360 ALL THE BIBLE FOR ALL OF LIFE®

is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 1-7 are taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 8-10 are taken from the 1995 update of the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission. NASB refers to this edition of the New American Standard Bible®.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations in lessons 11-13 are taken from the Holy Bible, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION®, ESV® Copyright 2001 by Crossway Bibles. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® Leadership Team

Executive Director, Texas Baptists: David Hardage

Associate Executive Director, Texas Baptists: Craig Christina

Treasurer/CFO, Texas Baptists: Ward Hayes

Director, Center for Church Health: Phil Miller

Publisher, BaptistWay Press®: Bob Billups

Marketing Coordinator, BaptistWay Press®: Stan Granberry

Publishing Specialist, BaptistWay Press®: Nancy Feaster

Production, Cover Design, and Printing: Randall House

First edition: June 2021

ISBN-13: 978-1-948618-40-3

How to Make the Best Use of This *Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This *Teaching Guide* has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called the “Discovery Plan,” which emphasizes discovery learning techniques; and the second is called the “Discussion Plan,” which provides questions and suggestions for dialogue about the Scriptures. Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect With Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. You might use one or more of the following methods:

- In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents in their *Study Guides* and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
- Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.baptistwaypress.org under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates, and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.

Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers don’t have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
3. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
4. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.
5. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session

can provide a positive model to class members to use their own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You're free to use the Bible translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)

6. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible comments in the *Study Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—"sidebars"—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They're intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
7. Review the "Teaching Plans" in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
8. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
9. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this *Teaching Guide*, with alterations as needed for your class.
10. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

Premium Commentary. Plan to get the additional Bible study comments available online. Visit our website, call 1-866-249-1799, or e-mail baptistway@texasbaptists.org to order the *Premium Commentary*. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. The price of these comments is \$8 per person. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Commentary* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

Premium Teaching Plans. An additional teaching plan is also available in electronic format (PDF) by visiting our website or calling 1-866-249-1799. The price of these plans for an entire study is \$8 per person. It is available only in electronic format (PDF) from our website. A church or class that participates in our advance order program for free shipping can receive the *Premium Teaching Plans* free. Call 1-866-249-1799 or see www.baptistwaypress.org for information on participating in our free shipping program for the next study.

FREE! Downloadable teaching resource items for use in your class are available at www.baptistwaypress.org. Watch for them in the “Teaching Plans” for each lesson. Then go online to www.baptistwaypress.org and click on “Teaching Resource Items” under the “Teacher Helps” tab for this study. These items are selected from the “Teaching Plans.” They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for handouts and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, copy them as needed, and use them in your class.

Writers for this *Teaching Guide*

John Duncan wrote the Bible Comments for lessons one through seven.

Dr. Duncan is the co-pastor of the Church at Horseshoe Bay in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. He has a Ph.D. from The Open University via the Kirby-Laing Institute in Cambridge, UK, and a D.Min. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. John is married to Judy, has three married daughters, and three grandbabies. He is also an avid basketball fan of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks.

Patrick Wilson wrote the Teaching Plans for lessons one through four.

Patrick serves as the Pastor of Salem Avenue Baptist Church in Rolla, Missouri. Dr. Wilson is a graduate of Baylor University (B.A.), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.A.Th. and Th.M.), and Logsdon Seminary (D.Min.). A native of Texas, he formerly pastored in Austin and in the Dallas metroplex. In addition to pastoring, he has taught seminary courses in Old Testament, Hebrew, and pastoral ministry. Patrick lives in Rolla, Missouri, with his wife, Michelle, and his son, Joel.

Jimmy Hester wrote the Teaching Plans for lessons five through seven.

Jimmy retired in 2011 after twenty-seven years of publishing for churches through magazines, Bible studies, and books. Dr. Hester is Bible study director and teacher of adults at First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, where he and his wife Kim have been members since 1985. They have two grown sons and three grandchildren. Dr. Hester received the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

William Miller wrote the Bible Comments for lessons eight through ten.

William served 44 years as pastor of three different churches in Missouri. He retired in 2017 after 31 years as pastor of First Baptist Church of Farmington, Missouri. Bill served Baptists in several denominational roles including chairman of trustees at Southwest Baptist University and

Missouri Baptist University. He has written for several editions of the Adult Bible *Teaching Guide* for BaptistWay Press®. In retirement, he and Mary Beth live in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where their two sons, daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren live. He and Mary Beth are members of the First Baptist Church of Fayetteville.

Charles Glidewell wrote the Teaching Plans for lessons eight through ten. Charles is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in New London, New Hampshire. He received the Master of Divinity degree from Logsdon Seminary in Abilene, Texas. His favorite activities include reading, writing, skiing, hiking, going to the beach, and anything that involves spending time with his family. Charles and his wife, Lisa Dawn, have three children, Kaitlin, Jonathan, and Jack.

Tom Howe wrote the Bible Comments for lessons eleven through thirteen. Tom serves as the Associate Director of Missions for Texas Baptists (BGCT). Prior to this new position, he served as the Senior Pastor of Birdville Baptist Church in Haltom City, Texas. Dr. Howe is a graduate of East Texas Baptist University (B.S.), Beacon Divinity School at Samford University (M.Div.), and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (D.Min.). He and his wife Amy have three children: Julia, Rhett, and Grant.

Pam Gibbs wrote the Teaching Plans for lessons eleven through thirteen. Pam is a freelance writer and certified Spiritual Director who lives near Nashville, Tennessee. A native of Texas, she graduated with her M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Since then, she has served on church staff and has taught Sunday School for much of that time. When she is not writing, providing spiritual direction, or leading retreats, Pam enjoys watching her husband coach girls' high school basketball and hanging out with her teenage daughter, Kaitlyn.

The Conquerors: Heroes of the Faith

A Study of Judges 1—8

<i>How to Make the Best Use of This Issue</i>	3
<i>Writers for This Teaching Guide</i>	7

DATE OF STUDY			
LESSON 1	_____	Just One Needed JUDGES 1:1-2, 8-13, 20	11
LESSON 2	_____	Conquering and Conquered Patterns JUDGES 2:11-20; 3:5-11	23
LESSON 3	_____	The Weak Teaching the Strong JUDGES 3:12-30	34
LESSON 4	_____	An Unknown, Known by God JUDGES 3:31	45
LESSON 5	_____	Living in Courage/Living in Fear JUDGES 4:4-23; 5:7, 24-27	57
LESSON 6	_____	Seeing Ourselves Through God’s Eyes JUDGES 6:1-16	69
LESSON 7	_____	He’s the God of Peace and Possibilities JUDGES 6:22-35	79
LESSON 8	_____	Fleece, Faith, and Fellowship JUDGES 6:36-40	90
LESSON 9	_____	The Selflessness of the Conquering JUDGES 7:1-11	102
LESSON 10	_____	The Sovereignty of God Gives Us Courage JUDGES 7:12-22	114

LESSON 11	Leadership Lessons of a Conqueror JUDGES 7:23-24; 8:1-9	125
LESSON 12	How Quickly From Conqueror to Conquered JUDGES 8:18-34	135
LESSON 13	Lessons Learned From Judges and the Last Judge JUDGES 2–8; 1 SAMUEL 3:1-11	145
<i>Prayer for This Study</i>		155
<i>How to Order More Bible Study Materials</i>		156
<i>Ministry Promotions</i>		158

lesson 1

Just One Needed

MAIN IDEA

God called up Caleb after the death of Joshua. God needed one person who had faith, one person who would be an example to a nation, and one person who wholeheartedly followed God.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Does my heart fully belong to God or is my heart divided?

TEACHING AIM

To lead adults to see how God used the faith, courage, and willingness of Judge Caleb to impact the course of a nation



Bible Comments

Understanding the Context

When God sent twelve spies into the land of Canaan on an investigative reconnaissance mission, twelve spies returned. Only two spies returned to present a positive, hopeful response. Joshua and Caleb described the land as flowing with milk and honey, encouraged the children of Israel to possess the land, and confessed God's conquering power to help them defeat the enemy. "We can possess the land because God is with us. Do not be afraid," summarized their plea (Numbers 14:6-10). However, ten spies refuted such claims of possible victory to claim the land. All they could see were the giants (the Nephilim, sons of Anak) and all they could do was compare themselves: "We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them" (Numbers 13:33b).

When we open the early pages in the Book of Judges, land conquest had started, battles with the Canaanites have ensued, and Joshua died leaving Caleb to lead the people of Israel in the mission of conquest.

Four key virtues underlie every mission, every act of conquest, every leader, and every judge highlighted in the Book of Judges: (1) faith in God; (2) belief in God's covenant promises rooted in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12); (3) courage to move forward by trusting God's plan; and (4) a willingness to fear and serve the Lord by ridding the land of idols in the hearing of Joshua's last lament and words: "...But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Interpreting the Scriptures

God's Promise and His Covenant

Several important elements of Old Testament prophecy, promises, and God's provision guide the reader into understanding Judges 1. God's prophetic

word and call to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” The prophetic word gave way to specific instruction in the days of Joshua and Caleb: possess the land of Canaan. Do not be afraid. Be strong and courageous. “I will be with you,” God said (Genesis 31:3; Exodus 3:12; Judges 6:16).

The promise supplied impetus for the children of God to move forward to conquer the land in the shadow of God’s overarching provision (Psalm 91) and by faith. Conquest demanded faith in God. “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). “And without faith it is impossible to please God...” (Hebrews 11:6).

Yet, still, God’s prophetic word to Abraham, His promise in the realm of the Old Testament or covenant, and His provision required a human voice to shepherd, guide, lead, instruct, and correct God’s people as they moved forward. God raised up Joshua and Caleb. Joshua died (Judges 1:1) and Caleb continued to lead people into the land of promise, the land flowing with milk and honey.

Caleb, Son of Jephunneh the Kennizite (Joshua 14:6-9, 14)

Caleb, a valuable leader for the Jews in the conquest of the land of promise, according to his family lineage, was born a Gentile, not a Jew. The Kennizites, technically, found their historical lineage in the ten tribes of Canaan reaching back to the days of Abraham (Genesis 15:19). A Kennizite also connects to a grandson of Esau, Kenaz in Genesis 36:11, 15. Caleb is a son of Kenaz and Othniel is his younger brother (Judges 1:13); some scholars believe he was a nephew or cousin. The pagan Canaanite tribe of the Kennizites flow from Esau, not Jacob. The Kennizites somehow blended into the tribe of Judah after either marrying a woman from the tribe of Judah or adapted into the tribe of Judah as the children of Israel left Egypt and wandered in the wilderness (see Numbers 14:28-31; Exodus 12:38; 12:48, provision was made for non-Jews, aliens to be circumcised).

If you read the Bible closely, two striking, eye-opening highlights become apparent: (1) God uses unlikely people and invites them to join Him in His work on the journey of faith; and (2) God equips the people He chooses to shepherd and lead His people. God equips them with callings, gifts, abilities, wisdom, and passion for His purpose. Clearly the prodigal story repeats itself over and over in Scripture: God welcomes the broken with loving, open arms and takes the broken, the wayward, the stranger, the alien, and restores them and uses them for His glory. (Matthew 25:35). The list of such people is endless: Jacob, Moses, Rahab, the shepherd boy David who became king, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, the apostle Paul, the passionate Peter, and others. Prodigals come home, return to God, as unlikely people serve God. God uses people by His grace through faith and for His purposes (see Ephesians 2:8-10, the Greek word, “*poieo*,” “workmanship,” (ESV) in Ephesians 2:10, we are His “workmanship,” God’s poetry). God creatively works His poetic work in people to build His kingdom. Caleb thrives as one of those people in whom God’s workmanship blossomed and bore fruit for the kingdom of God.

Caleb was only forty years old when God sent him as a spy to observe the land of Canaan.

By the time you arrive at Judges chapter one, Caleb is 85 years old and takes leadership in dispersing the conquered land. In Joshua 14:6-9, we discover three important items about Caleb: (1) his pure devotion to God (“followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly”); (2) the itemization of the land God promised to give to Caleb, the hill country, Hebron (Joshua 14:10-14); and his resilient faith to follow God even when dissenters, complainers, and hard-hearted people turned against God and Caleb (Exodus 14).

Caleb possessed a resilient faith in the face of adverse obstacles. He trusted God even when the outlook appeared pessimistic and bleak. He wholly demonstrated loyalty to God and faith in God against impossible odds. He believed, “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27). Caleb served as an example of faith to imitate and follow.

Who Shall Go First? (Judges 1:1-20)

1:1-2. One key to Caleb's life and for the people of Israel involved seeking the Lord's guidance. The Lord is a Shepherd, the good Shepherd who guides His sheep (Psalm 23; John 10:7). Following God, seeking Christ, and desiring to please God require first asking, "Lord, where shall I go? What do you wish for me to do?" and also listening to God.

1:3-7. Judah and Simeon begin the process of conquering the land by joining forces against the Canaanites, Perizzites, and against seventy kings including the king of Bezek. Next, the children of Israel conquered the Jebusites and drove them out of Jerusalem. The citadel city of God, Jerusalem, "the city of peace," later the center of God's kingdom, would take center stage in the history of the people of God. The city on a hill would transform into a holy city, a place for the Temple, for the Shekinah or presence of God, and a fortress not taken lightly. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels" (Psalm 122:6-7).

1:8-10. The battles to conquer the land began in the highlands around Jerusalem and moved to the lowlands near Negeb. No doubt, the fierce battles produced casualties, but the children of Israel fought hard and defeated their enemies thoroughly. The Hebrew word for "fought" (*lacham*) indicates by implication, to completely destroy, to consume, to devour, or overcome.

This thorough defeat of the enemy rid the land of paganism, idols, and false gods. This overwhelming defeat paved the way for God's prophetic word to become reality, for His promises to come true, and for His provision to take order under the old covenant Jewish law. In a new land a priority of worshipping God Almighty would be important. God's people would rid the land of foreign gods, yield their own hearts to the Lord, serve the Lord, and obey Him (Joshua 24:23).

1:11-13. Caleb gave instruction to attack Kiriath Sepher, or the town also named Debir. "Kiriath" means "city," so two cities are named here for attack, the city of Sepher and the city of Arba (Kiriath Arba). However, victory over

the city of Sepher (Debir) came with a prize. Caleb would give his daughter Achsah to the winning warrior. Caleb's younger brother Othniel took the challenge, achieved conquest over Debir, and won the prize. In the swirl of celebration Achsah asks her father Caleb for a blessing of land with springs of water. Caleb blessed her with the lower and upper springs of Negeb, south of Judah, ten miles southwest of Hebron.

Othniel appears here almost as a piece of family history or as a footnote to victory and a joyous celebration of marriage on the heels of conquest. However, Othniel later becomes an important warrior/judge in Israel's history when, as an answer to prayer, he helps restore Israel and turn the hearts of the children of Israel toward God in repentance (Judges 3:9-11; 1 Chronicles 4:11-13).

One thing remains clear in the conquest of the land: faith overpowered fear. A tenacious faith caused the people to look upward ("The battle is the Lord's," Zechariah 4:6; and Exodus 14:13-14), to move forward, and to turn inward, that is, to worship God and build altars in an act of worship after battle.

1:20. This verse simply states three facts: (1) Caleb drove out the giants; (2) God fulfilled His promise to Caleb and the children of Israel in conquest; and (3) God's provision and strength sustained Caleb and the people of God in victorious conquest.

In days past, Abraham built an altar to the Lord in Hebron in the shadows of God's promise to provide the land of promise to His people (Genesis 15:18-21). Later Hebron would serve as capital and headquarters for the anointed King David (2 Samuel 5:5).

Focusing on the Meaning

The highlights of Caleb's life shine as an example of faith. Do you follow God wholeheartedly? Do you demonstrate faith in adversity, courage in the face of fear, and a tenacious resilience to please God in the face of uncertainty? Will

you go where God leads? Will you allow God to shepherd your life? Family? Church?

One great blessing in my life came when God called us to serve in Hong Kong. My wife and I wrestled with the decision. We prayed for God's Holy Spirit to lead us. We discussed the pros and cons. We dealt with realities: what to do with our possessions? What about the new grandbaby? Can we go halfway around the world into Asia and leave family? What about cultural differences? Will we like the food? Will the people of Hong Kong like us? We faced fear, uncertainty, and questions.

After much prayer and discussion, we followed God's call to serve Him in Hong Kong. It truly became one of God's great blessings in our lives and faith-adventure. God's blessing touches the depths of your heart when faith and courage meet in your soul to help you follow God's plan.

Teaching Plans

DISCOVERY PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Bring a game to class that requires a steady hand. You could use *Jenga* where you have to remove a lower block from the tower and place it on the top without knocking the tower over. You could use *Operation* where you have to remove a bone from the body with tweezers. You could use *Break the Ice* where you have to knock out a piece of ice without causing the figure to fall. Any game where a steady hand is necessary will work. Invite a few people to come up and attempt the game and then discuss the following questions as a class:
 - How nervous does it make you to do something where a lot of pressure is on you?
 - Do you feel more or less pressure if the person before you were successful?
 - How do you feel if you are successful to accomplish your goal?
 - How do you feel if you are unsuccessful to accomplish your goal?
2. Overview the book of Joshua and the events that precede the opening verses of Judges. Explain how both Moses and Joshua were successful leaders for the people through their transition from slavery in Egypt to the fulfillment of inhabiting the Promised Land.

Guide Bible Study

3. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:1-2. Using the “Bible Comments” in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Consider the challenges of going through transitional times. Now that Joshua is dead, the people raise the question about next steps. Identify times when we might experience uneasiness in transition (i.e., lose a job,

retire, experience a divorce, death in the family, kids move out of the house). Talk about the importance of processing what needs to happen next and how the Israelites identified the need to defeat the Canaanites. Talk through ways we should seek God's guidance when facing dilemmas. Lead the class to consider the following discussion questions from the *Study Guide*:

- In what ways have you lived in fear recently and not faith? And in what ways have you lived in faith and not fear recently?
 - Do you think God can forgive any sin in your background? Do you believe His grace, His Son's cross, and His mercy is enough to forgive any and all sin in your life?
4. Take some time to discuss the sidebar, "What's in a Name?" from the *Study Guide*. Discuss the pagan heritage of Caleb, the meaning of his name, and how God used him as a "ferocious" and "tenacious" person.
 5. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:8-13. Using the "Bible Comments" in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Talk about how God chose the tribes of Judah and Simeon to fight for the people. Discuss the significance of the city of Jerusalem, which David will later establish as the capital of the nation. Evaluate what factors played a role in Israel's victory. Consider the motivation for Caleb to give his daughter as a prize to the victor in the battle of Debir. Reflect on what else Othniel gains from Caleb that may be helpful to him as a later leader/judge in Israel. Ask the class to consider the following discussion questions from the *Study Guide*:
 - Does the entirety of your heart and life belong to God? Which parts of your life do you find difficult to turn over completely to the Lord? Relationships? Finances? Hurts? Past? Future?
 - Why do we find it difficult to give our whole heart to God?
 6. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:20. Using the "Bible Comments" in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Talk about the success of Caleb and his leadership of the people. Discuss how God's promises were fulfilled in Caleb's life. Consider what promises God gives

to us as His people and how He remains faithful to keep His promises. Consider how God strengthened Caleb and Israel through their struggles and how He continues to do the same for us. Ask the class to consider the following discussion questions from the *Study Guide*:

- Who has inspired you to walk in faith? Who is an example to you to live with courage, faith, and dependency upon God?
 - And to whom are you an example? Who is watching you and observing your life? To whom are you an encouragement in courage, faith, and dependency upon God?
7. Take some time to discuss the sidebar, “William Wilberforce,” from the *Study Guide* and his efforts to end slavery. Talk about his non-Christian background, how he came to faith, and how God used him to change his culture. Evaluate what social injustice issues need to be addressed in our time and what steps we can take to learn about these issues and to bring about positive change. Consider how to be bold and courageous for the good of others and the glory of God.

Encourage Application

8. End the class by asking for a couple of people to share their testimonies of coming to Christ using this outline:
- What was my life like before I came to Jesus?
 - How did I come to accept Jesus in my life?
 - How has Jesus changed my life since I gave my heart to Him?

DISCUSSION PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Make four quadrants on a marker board, chalkboard, or poster board. On the top of the left two quadrants, write “struggles.” On the top of the right two quadrants, write “outcomes.” Ask the class to share some of the current struggles in our society or in their own personal lives.

Write these responses in the top left quadrant under “struggles.” Explain that today, we are going to examine how the Israelites faced struggles and how they found victory.

(A copy of this assignment is available in “Teaching Resource Items” for this study at www.baptistwaypress.org).

Guide Bible Study

2. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:1-2. Using the “Bible Comments” in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Using Joshua 14 (and other background passages) and additional reference materials, give an overview of Caleb’s life. Talk about the challenges of taking a leadership role after a successful predecessor. Give a personal example of this challenge. Analyze the question the people ask of God in verse 1 and His answer to them. Consider what it would have been of the tribe of Judah, which was chosen, how the Simeonites might have felt to be asked to assist, and how the other tribes might have considered their exemption.
3. Summarize the sidebar, “What’s in a Name?” from the *Study Guide*. Share about Caleb’s past and his heritage. Give a personal testimony of how God used you amidst your past struggles or even used past struggles in your life to help others.
4. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:8-13. Using the “Bible Comments” in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Talk through the struggles that the Israelites faced. List these on the lower left quadrant of the board under the section about the “struggles” of those in your class described earlier in the lesson. Talk through the challenges of going to war both for those fighting and for their family members and communities left behind. If you served in the military or know someone who can share about these experiences, relay first-hand what it is like to be in battle.

5. Enlist a volunteer to read Judges 1:20. Using the “Bible Comments” in the *Teaching Guide*, give a brief overview of this section. Analyze the successes of the Israelites in the battles described here. Consider what promises were fulfilled in Caleb and the people. Share about how the city of Jerusalem will later serve as the capital of the nation. Write the “outcomes” of the Israelite battles in the bottom right quadrant on the board (to the right of the struggles that the Israelites faced).

Encourage Application

6. Summarize the sidebar, “William Wilberforce,” from the *Study Guide*. Talk about how his background did not keep him from being used by God to bring about change. Discuss the need for changes in our modern day culture.
7. Return to the board and fill in the top right quadrant under “outcomes.” Assess the “struggles” your class listed in the top left quadrant at the beginning of class. Applying the lesson and the ways God provided victory for the Israelites, consider potential outcomes from the struggles listed by the class members. Write these into the top right quadrant of the board. Close the class in prayer for these situations, asking God to be faithful, and seeking to trust Him in all of life’s struggles.