

Lessons of Faith from Joshua Living in the Land

Lesson #11 for December 13, 2025

Scriptures: Joshua 22; Ephesians 6:7; John 7:24; Numbers 25; Proverbs 15:1; 1 Peter 3:8-9.

1. This lesson is based on Joshua 22, describing: (1) The strong suggestions by Joshua for loving, trusting, and serving *YAHWEH*; and (2) The way the misunderstanding between the people living on the east side of the Jordan River—the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the eastern half of the tribe of Manasseh—and the other 9½ tribes who lived west of the Jordan River, about building an altar was resolved.

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:]
There is no nation without law and land. Such is the case with the biblical Israel, which receives God's law in Exodus and obtains the land in Joshua. However, as a kingdom of priests, they also needed a strong identity, rooted in their call as the chosen people to be God's representatives on earth. Such an identity would not endure without two basic elements: total commitment and unity. This theme is what Joshua 22 is all about.

At this time, the land has been conquered and divided among all the tribes—at least partially (because there is work yet to be done). Regardless of this fact, Israel still needed to understand what it meant to be Israel. Their needing to understand their identity is the purpose of the concluding speeches of the book, found in Joshua 22:1–8, Joshua 23, and Joshua 24:1–28.—*T-BSG** 145.††

To Love, To “Walk,” To Keep the Law, To Hold Fast, and To Serve

Joshua 22:1-4: ¹Then Joshua called together the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh. ²He said to them, “You have done everything that Moses the LORD’s servant ordered you to do, and you have obeyed all my commands. ³All this time you have never once deserted the other Israelites. You have been careful to obey the commands of the LORD your God. ⁴Now, as he promised, the LORD your God has given the other Israelites peace. So go back home to the land which you claimed for your own, the land on the east side of the Jordan, that Moses, the LORD’s servant, gave you.”—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*®* [GNT] (*Today’s English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition, Joshua 22:1-4). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].‡ [Kill anyone who disobeys! (Joshua 1:18.)]‡

[T-BSG:] In Joshua 22, the leader of Israel nears the end of his commission.... As Joshua was convinced that he would not see the leaders of the Transjordan tribes again (which quickly proved wrong), he gave them the last instructions. In a typical covenant structure, Joshua commended them for following all that Moses and he himself had ordered and for helping their brothers during the conquest (*Josh. 22:2, 3*). Then he emphasized God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises and said that it was time for them to rest (*Josh. 22:4*). Before their departure, he summarized the core of the

Torah [*sic*] (law) and **explained the path to complete commitment in five infinitive phrases** [in Joshua 22:5], **progressing logically from love to service**.—*T-BSG** 146.^{†‡§} [An infinitive phrase contains the word *to* plus a verb, with the two together used as a noun, for example, *to err*, and then an object such as in the infinitive phrase *to err is human*.][‡]

Joshua 22:5: [Joshua said:] “But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, [1] to love the LORD your God, [2] to walk in all His ways, [3] to keep His commandments, [4] to hold fast to Him, and [5] to serve Him with all your heart and will all your soul.”—*New King James Version*.^{*‡}

[*T-BSG*:] First [infinitive phrase], **“to love Yahweh [*sic*], your God”** (*Josh. 22:5, NKJV*). Love is the foundation of God’s character, and everything starts with it. Service without love is legalism. Such service is a distortion of the Torah [*sic*], and it cannot be accepted by God. Alongside walking and keeping, loving is the summary of the law already in Moses’ mouth before his death (*Deut. 10:12, 13, 20; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 6:4–15; Deut. 13:4, 5*).—*T-BSG** 146.^{†‡§}

Deuteronomy 6:4-9,15: ⁴ “Israel, remember this! The LORD—and the LORD alone—is our God. ⁵**Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.** ⁶Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. ⁷Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. ⁸Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. ⁹Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.”...

¹⁵ **“If you do worship other gods, the LORD’s anger will come against you like fire and will destroy you completely, because the LORD your God, who is present with you, tolerates no rivals.”**—*GNB-TEV*.^{*‡}

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=*EGW*:] **The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet’s day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal.**—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 170.2.^{†‡}

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.740&index=0>][‡]

[*EGW*:] **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.** Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1.^{†‡}

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.768&index=0>][‡]

Deuteronomy 13:4-5: ⁴ “Follow the LORD and honor him; obey him and keep his commands; worship him and be faithful to him. ⁵**But put to death** any interpreters of dreams or prophets that tell you to rebel against the LORD,

who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves. Such people are evil and are trying to lead you away from the life that the LORD has commanded you to live. They must be put to death, in order to rid yourselves of this evil.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[T-BSG:] There is no contradiction between the Old and New Testaments’ revelation of God: He created human beings to have a relationship with Him based on love, not fear. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:2: Without “love,” we are “nothing” (*NKJV*). Our love is already a response, for we love Him because He loved us first (*1 John 4:19*). The object of our love is balanced between the divine transcendence of the Creator (*Elohim*) and the immanence of our Lord (Yahweh) [*sic*], who dwells with His people.—*T-BSG*^{* 146.†§}

[T-BSG:] Second [infinitive phrase], **“to walk in all His ways”** (*Josh. 22:5, NKJV*). The Bible often uses the **metaphor of “walking”** to refer to the **relationship between God and His people**. It expresses, on the one hand, intimacy and, on the other, agreement. In a literal sense, God walks (Heb. *hlik*) with His people (*Exod. 13:21; compare with Gen. 3:8*). **In a spiritual sense, He calls them to walk with Him.** Against this background, the image becomes relational, for “can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (*Amos 3:3, NKJV*).—*T-BSG*^{* 146.††§}

Exodus 13:21: During the day **the LORD went in front of them** in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and during the night he went in front of them in a pillar of fire to give them light, **so that they could travel night and day.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [Israel could not have kept up that pace for more than a few days!][‡]

[T-BSG:] Additionally, it indicates the conduct expected from those who choose to walk with God, as seen in Leviticus 26:23, 24: “[If you] continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you” (*NIV*).—*T-BSG*^{* 146.‡§}

Leviticus 26:23-24: ²³ “If after all this punishment you still do not listen to me, but continue to defy me, ²⁴then I will turn on you and punish you seven times harder than before.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*}

[T-BSG:] Third [infinitive phrase], **“to keep His commandments”** (*Josh. 22:5, NKJV*). Keeping the law as an expression of God’s will is the natural outcome of a thankful heart that comprehends what God has done. In this sequence, there is a progression from love as the starting point, the first spark, to a trusting relationship, which results in obedience. That is why John says that “His commandments are not burdensome” (*1 John 5:3, NKJV*).—*T-BSG*^{* 146.††§}

John 14:15: “If you **love me**, you will **obey my commandments**.”—*GNB-TEV*.^{*†}

[T-BSG:] Observing the law would bring life for Israel (*Lev. 18:5*)—not life in a salvific sense but a bountiful life in the land. **By adhering to the divine principles, Israel could establish a just and prosperous society whose success would be a testament to the world.**—*T-BSG*^{* 147.††§}

Leviticus 18:5: “Follow the practices and the laws that I give you; you will save

your life by doing so. I am the LORD.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

2. ***It is interesting to notice that a death decree is attached to breaking each of the ten commandments except the tenth because a person cannot prove that another is coveting!*** https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bot/KHart_BTGC_PDF_Law_Leviticus_03.pdf
See Item #7 in that handout on Leviticus.

[T-BSG:] **Fourth** [infinitive phrase], **“to hold fast to Him”** (*Josh. 22:5, NKJV*). The Hebrew verb *dbq* also means “to cling” or “to cleave” in both a literal and a metaphoric sense. In the latter, it indicates a state of allegiance, affection, and closeness. The first occurrence of the word describes a man clinging to his wife in marriage: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined [*dbk*] to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (*Gen. 2:24, NKJV*).—*T-BSG** 147.^{†Ω§}

Genesis 2:24: That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

[T-BSG:] The same injunction to cling, but to Yahweh [*sic*], also preceded by the appeal of loving and obeying Him, appears in Deuteronomy 30:20, in which Moses also presents the reason: “ ‘For He is your life’ ” (*NKJV*).—*T-BSG** 147.^{‡§}

[T-BSG:] Like a life preserver for a drowning person, Israel should cling to God as its only hope. The image also evokes the need for persistence and perseverance in keeping the connection with God in a land and in a time in which innumerable distractions would vie for their attention.—*T-BSG** 147.[‡]

[T-BSG:] Last [infinitive phrase], **“to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul”** (*Josh. 22:5, NKJV*). The expression “to serve Yahweh [*sic*]” occurs 56 times in the Old Testament and often denotes “to worship” or “to keep the covenant faithfully.” Serving Yahweh [*sic*] was the reason presented to Pharaoh for Israel’s departure from Egypt: “ ‘And you shall say to him, “The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness’ ” ’ ” (*Exod. 7:16, NKJV*; compare with *Exod. 12:31*).—*T-BSG** 147.^{†‡§}

Exodus 12:31: That same night the king sent for Moses and Aaron and said, “Get out, you and your Israelites! Leave my country; go and worship the LORD, as you asked.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.* [Did Pharaoh think it would be for only 3 days?][‡]

[T-BSG:] **When Israel left Egypt, the people were essentially changing masters by accepting the service of Yahweh [*sic*] instead of Pharaoh.** By serving God, they would experience blessing and fulfill their design to bless all families on the earth. Ultimately, the redeemed also are called to serve God forever (*Rev. 22:3*). **Therefore, human beings find their true identity only when they willingly serve their Creator with love. This blending of love with service is the paradox of existence: when creatures live to serve themselves, they encounter only confusion, despair, and death. But when they surrender their self-serving attitude and submit to the will of the Creator, they find true purpose, satisfaction, and abundant life. We see this same reasoning behind**

Jesus' statement in Luke 9:24: " 'For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it' " (NKJV).—T-BSG* 147.†§

Joshua 22:6-8: ⁶⁻⁸Joshua sent them home with his blessing and with these words: "You are going back home very rich, with a lot of livestock, silver, gold, bronze, iron, and many clothes. Share with your fellow tribesmen what you took from your enemies." Then they left for home.

Moses had given land east of the Jordan to one half of the tribe of Manasseh, but to the other half Joshua had given land west of the Jordan, along with the other tribes.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

3. ***Did any of the men from the two-and-one-half tribes who crossed the Jordan to fight alongside the rest of the Israelites lose their lives while fighting? How long were they gone?***
4. ***To see more details of the campaigns of Joshua, see these maps on the Internet:***
<https://ibiblemaps.com/joshua-central/>
<https://ibiblemaps.com/joshua-northern-campaign-canaan/>

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Joshua affirms that the tribes from the other side [east] of the Jordan have fully satisfied the obligations set out by Moses and himself, which meant a significant dedication to, and sacrifice on behalf of, Israel's common cause. They fought alongside their brothers for "many days," which in reality meant about six to seven years (*compare with Josh. 11:18, Josh. 14:10, Deut. 2:14*). Their wives and children were left at home, on the east side of Jordan, yet they decided to fight loyally along with their brothers, facing the threat of injury and death in war.—BSG* for Sunday, December 7.†§ [Were the injured sent home? What about the bodies of the dead?][†]

Joshua 11:17-18: ¹⁷⁻¹⁸The territory extended from Mount Halak in the south near Edom, as far as Baalgad in the north, in the valley of Lebanon south of Mount Hermon. **Joshua was at war with the kings of this territory for a long time**, but he captured them all and put them to death.—GNB-TEV.*†

[BSG:] **These verses indirectly underline the importance of the unity of the nation and that of the land. They also prepare the way for the ensuing story, which is ultimately about unity.** Will the Israelite tribes stay united, despite the strong natural border that the Jordan forms between them?...

Joshua explains the only way that such fidelity has been possible: they did not serve their fellow Israelites but Yahweh [*sic*] Himself, who charged them with their mission.

We find this same principle in the New Testament. The apostle Paul admonished Christians to render their service as if they were working for God and not only for human beings (see [Eph. 6:7](#), [Col. 3:23](#), [1 Thess. 2:4](#)). What higher calling is there than working for, ultimately, the Creator of the cosmos?—BSG* for Sunday, December 7.†§

[BSG:] In everyday life, we often face challenges and difficulties that can

easily discourage us and make us want to give up the fight. That's easy, at times, to do. Yet, we can call upon the power of the Lord, who promises to be with us and enables us to do what He asks of us. If we keep our higher calling before us, we can be motivated to press on ahead, despite the inevitable challenges and discouragements that are part of our fallen existence here.—BSG* for Sunday, December 7.‡

Accusations & Misunderstandings: The Altar

5. Read Joshua 22:9-20 about the building of the altar by the eastern tribes on the west side of the Jordan River and the subsequent actions. The people from the west misunderstood the intentions of the eastern people and thought that they were setting up a different place to worship God instead of worshipping God at the Tent/Tabernacle at Shiloh.

[BSG:] At the beginning of the book, Joshua commanded some tribes to cross the Jordan and participate in the conquest, along with the tribes on the west side of the Jordan ([Josh. 1:12–18](#)). Now that the task is accomplished, they are free to return. However, at the east [*sic*] side [it was on the **west side**] of the Jordan, they build an altar that raises concern among the West Jordan tribes.—BSG* Sabbath afternoon, December 6.‡§

Joshua 1:12-18: [Turning back to the time before crossing the Jordan River to conquer Jericho and the instructions Joshua gave:] ¹² Joshua said to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half the tribe of Manasseh, ¹³“Remember how the LORD’s servant Moses told you that the LORD your God would give you this land on the east side of the Jordan as your home. ¹⁴Your wives, your children, and your livestock will stay here, but your soldiers, armed for battle, will cross over ahead of the other Israelites in order to help them ¹⁵until they have occupied the land west of the Jordan that the LORD your God has given them. When he has given safety to all the tribes of Israel, then you may come back and settle here in your own land east of the Jordan, which Moses, the LORD’s servant, gave to you.”

¹⁶ They answered Joshua, “We will do everything you have told us and will go wherever you send us. ¹⁷We will obey you, just as we always obeyed Moses, and may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses! ¹⁸Whoever questions your authority or disobeys any of your orders will be put to death. Be determined and confident!”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*‡

6. ***If you had been Joshua, what would you have thought after hearing that response (“We will obey you, just as we always obeyed Moses.”)? Notice what punishment was suggested for anyone who disobeyed orders! Was that necessary?***

[T-BSG:] Joshua 22 contains the ... [discussion about] the Transjordan tribes, who, after complying with Moses’ command by helping their brothers in the conquest, were ready to cross back over the Jordan. Joshua’s speech emphasized that even though they would be geographically separated, the Transjordan tribes were still part of Israel and should live accordingly. His message focused on the importance of wholehearted commitment to Yahweh [*sic*] within the context of the covenant, which requires service based on love. Despite the geographical separation, they were called to remain united in their devotion to the Torah [*sic*] and its giver. The erection

of an altar would serve as a test of both their commitment and their unity.—
*T-BSG** 145.‡

[BSG:] We would expect a smooth conclusion to the story; however, tension arises as the tribes from the east are reported to have erected an altar at the Jordan. The text here does not offer any reason for the act [of building the altar], nor does it describe the function of the altar or specific activity related to it. The ambiguity concerning the meaning of this altar is increased even more if we observe the flashbacks to the first crossing of the Jordan, in chapters 3 and 4, where all Israel entered the edge of the Jordan to cross the river into mainland Canaan. Here a part of Israel comes to the region of the Jordan, but now to cross the river in the opposite direction.

In both cases, a structure of stones is erected. The first served as a memorial, while the second is perceived to be an impressive altar. The question that inevitably comes to mind is: “**What do these stones mean?**” (compare with [Josh 4:6, 22](#)). Is this altar built for sacrifices, or is it only a memorial? Are these other tribes already starting to fall into apostasy?—
*BSG** for Monday, December 8.†§

7. ***Why do you think the tribes west of the Jordan jumped to the conclusion that the tribes on the east side were trying to establish a new kind of religion?***

Haunted by Israel’s Past at Baal-Peor

8. The people on the west side of the Jordan remembered the story of Numbers 25, the story of Baal-Peor. Some of them feared that this was another attempt to separate the tribes on the east from the tribes in the west, and to establish maybe even a pagan form of religion. Fortunately, calmer minds came into play, and we read what happened next.

Joshua 22:13-15: ¹³ Then the people of Israel sent Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, to the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh in the land of Gilead. ¹⁴ Ten leading men went with Phinehas, one from each of the western tribes and each one the head of a family among the clans. ¹⁵ They came to the land of Gilead, to the people of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

9. Phineas the son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron was the high priest at that time.

[BSG:] Before giving full credit to the rumors of what might be perceived as a declaration of independence, the nine-and-a-half tribes, labeled twice as “the sons of Israel,” send a delegation to clarify the intent and meaning of **the altar**. The delegation consisted of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, who would succeed Eleazar after his death ([Josh. 24:33](#)). Phinehas already has gained some visibility as the priest who put an end to the debauchery of Israel at Baal Peor (*Numbers 25*).—*BSG** for Tuesday.†§

10. At Baal-Peor, Phineas had distinguished himself as being opposed to all false religion by stopping the uprising at Baal-Peor by summarily killing two of the perpetrators. The 9 1/2 tribes certainly did not want to repeat the Baal-Peor experience.

Joshua 22:16: And speaking for the whole community of the LORD, they said to them, “Why have you done this evil thing against the God of Israel? You have rebelled against the LORD by building this altar for yourselves! You are

no longer following him!”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

11. ***How many of our judgments regarding particular situations are clouded by our past experiences or by misinterpretations of the motives of another?***

Proverbs 15:1: A gentle answer quietens anger, but a harsh one stirs it up.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

Joshua 22:21-29: ²¹ The people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh answered the heads of the families of the western tribes: ²²“The Mighty One is God! He is the LORD! The Mighty One is God! He is the LORD! He knows why we did this, and we want you to know too! If we rebelled and did not keep faith with the LORD, do not let us live any longer! ²³If we disobeyed the LORD and built our own altar to burn sacrifices on or to use for grain offerings or fellowship offerings, let the LORD himself punish us. ²⁴No! We did it because we were afraid that in the future your descendants would say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? ²⁵He made the Jordan a boundary between us and you people of Reuben and Gad. You have nothing to do with the LORD.’ **Then your descendants might make our descendants stop worshipping the LORD.** ²⁶**So we built an altar, not to burn sacrifices or make offerings,** ²⁷**but instead, as a sign for our people and yours, and for the generations after us, that we do indeed worship the LORD before his sacred Tent with our offerings to be burned and with sacrifices and fellowship offerings.** This was to keep your descendants from saying that ours have nothing to do with the LORD. ²⁸It was our idea that, if this should ever happen, our descendants could say, ‘Look! Our ancestors made an altar just like the LORD’s altar. It was not for burning offerings or for sacrifice, but as a sign for our people and yours.’ ²⁹We would certainly not rebel against the LORD or stop following him now by building an altar to burn offerings on or for grain offerings or sacrifices. We would not build any other altar than the altar of the LORD our God that stands in front of the Tent of his presence.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*† [The original tabernacle was still at Shiloh, west of the Jordan.]‡

[BSG:] The opening sentence of the defense is a string of divine names attributed to Israel’s God: *EI, Elohim, Yahweh* [sic] ([Josh. 22:22](#)). It is repeated twice with a growing force, as **it becomes a solemn oath in order to dispel the doubts and false accusations that almost lead to a civil war in Israel.** They are strongly convinced that God fully knows and understands the situation, and they hope that the present delegation will arrive at the same conclusion. The two-and-a-half tribes also recognize their accountability before the Lord by calling Him to take vengeance (*compare with Deut. 18:19, 1 Sam. 20:16*) if they are indeed guilty.—BSG* for Wednesday, December 10.†§ [These three names all apply to God.]‡

[BSG:] A surprising revelation follows, which on the one hand proves the basis of the indictment void (an altar cannot serve only as a place of sacrifice) and on the other hand discloses **their true motivation. Fear of separation from Israel, rather than apostasy, was the true ground for their action.** Thus, the building of the altar is not evidence of apostasy, as had been supposed. Actually, the contrary is true: they have acted out of

fear of the Lord, just as the western tribes did. The true basis of Israel's unity is not geography or the physical extent of the inheritance but their spiritual allegiance to the requirements of the Lord.

The genuine concern of the tribes on the west side of the river also is revealed in their authentic joy as the innocence of the tribes on the east is ascertained. Instead of feeling defeated by the arguments of their brothers, they show sincere happiness that their suspicions turned out to be wrong.

Civil war in Israel was avoided and the unity of the nation preserved.—*BSG** Wednesday, December 10.^{†‡}

Joshua 22:30-34: ³⁰ Phinehas the priest and the ten leading men of the community who were with him, the heads of families of the western tribes, heard what the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh had to say, and they were satisfied. ³¹Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, said to them, “Now we know that the LORD is with us. **You have not rebelled against him**, and so you have saved the people of Israel from the LORD’s punishment.”

³² Then Phinehas and the leaders left the people of Reuben and Gad in the land of Gilead and went back to Canaan, to the people of Israel, and reported to them. ³³The Israelites were satisfied and praised God. They no longer talked about going to war to devastate the land where the people of Reuben and Gad had settled.

³⁴ The people of Reuben and Gad said, “This altar is a witness to all of us that the LORD is God.” And so they named it “Witness.”—*GNB-TEV.*†*

12. ***Have you ever faced any false accusations? How did you deal with them?***

13. Does this story give us any ideas about how to resolve conflicts in our churches? Families? Or, communities in 2025?

[BSG:] Why is it dangerous to jump to a rash conclusion about the behavior of others? How can we foster unity in the church? Why is it important to keep in mind the larger scope of our calling and not to get caught up in distractions?—*BSG** for Sabbath Afternoon, December 6.[‡]

14. It is good to think of the words of Jesus.

John 17:20-23: ²⁰ “I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. ²¹I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. ²²I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one: ²³I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

15. Consider these principles of communication listed in the Bible study guide:

- 1) [BSG:] When things go wrong, or seem to go wrong, the best thing to do is to communicate instead of suppressing our observations until they explode. It is good for God’s people not to remain indifferent when problems seem to arise. Of course, **had the Transjordanian tribes communicated their**

intent of building an altar, the whole issue could have been avoided.

- 2) Even if one is convinced about their judgment, do not jump to hasty conclusions. The West Jordan tribes were quick to believe the rumor that reached their ears and to draw the false conclusion that the East Jordan tribes already had apostatized.
- 3) Talk about the real or perceived problems before you act on your conclusions.
- 4) Be willing to make a sacrifice in order to achieve unity. The West Jordan tribes were willing to give up part of their allotment to accommodate the other tribes, if being on the other side of the Jordan was the cause of their assumed apostasy.
- 5) When accused, falsely or rightly, give a gentle answer that turns away wrath. To answer an accusation with a counter-accusation will never lead to peace. Try to understand before attempting to be understood.
- 6) Rejoice and bless God when peace is reestablished. It is wonderful to see that the main Israelite congregation experienced genuine joy when they learned about the true motivation of the two-and-a-half tribes. They were not so proud of their judgment that they could not admit they were wrong in making it.—BSG* for Thursday, December 11.^{†‡}

[EGW:] **While it is important on the one hand that laxness in dealing with sin be avoided, it is equally important on the other to shun harsh judgment and groundless suspicion.**

While very sensitive to the least blame in regard to their own course, many are too severe in dealing with those whom they suppose to be in error. **No one was ever reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many are thus driven further from the right path and led to harden their hearts against conviction.** A spirit of kindness, a courteous, forbearing deportment may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins.

The wisdom displayed by the Reubenites and their companions is worthy of imitation.... **Thus the difficulty which had threatened such serious consequences was amicably settled.**

Even under false accusation, those who are in the right can afford to be calm and considerate. God is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misinterpreted by men, and we can safely leave our case in His hands. He will as surely vindicate the cause of those who put their trust in Him as He searched out the guilt of Achan. Those who are actuated by the spirit of Christ will possess that charity which suffers long and is kind.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 519.4-520.2.^{†‡}

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.2406&index=0>][‡]

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