5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Themes of "The Tug of War"

Day 1: The Land Before You Reading: Numbers 13:25-33 Devotional: The spies returned with evidence of God's provision — fruit so abundant it took two men to carry it — yet ten of the twelve could not see past the obstacles. How often do we do the same? God places before us clear signs of His faithfulness, and still we catalog the giants rather than the grapes. The land was real. The promise was real. The fear was also real, but it was not final. Today, take inventory of what God has already placed before you and ask yourself honestly which report you are choosing to believe.

Day 2: David Eyes Reading: 1 Samuel 17:32-50 Devotional: Every hardened warrior in Saul's army saw the same giant David saw. The difference was not courage alone — it was perspective rooted in covenant. David understood that Goliath was not standing against Israel's army but against the living God, and that changes everything. Caleb and Joshua carried this same vision into their report of Canaan. They were not blind to the danger; they simply refused to let the danger be louder than the promise. Ask God today to give you eyes that measure obstacles against His faithfulness rather than against your own strength.

Day 3: The Weight of the But Reading: Hebrews 11:1-16 Devotional: The word "but" has derailed more obedience than almost anything else. The land flows with milk and honey, but the people are strong. God is calling me, but I do not have the time. I want to serve, but I am not qualified. The heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11 each faced their own version of that word. They saw circumstances that made the promise seem impossible, yet they moved forward anyway. Faith is not the absence of the "but" — it is the decision to act on the promise despite it. What "but" are you hiding behind today?

Day 4: The Who Over the What Reading: Psalm 37:23-28 Devotional: The psalmist writes from the vantage point of a long life, declaring that he has never witnessed the righteous abandoned by God — a truth referenced in this sermon as one that only deepens with age and experience. When the ice closes in around you, when the ship is compromised and the supplies are running low, the anchor is not a plan or a strategy. It is a Person. Shackleton's men survived nineteen months of Antarctic ice because their trust was fixed on their captain. How much more can we endure when our trust is fixed on Jesus Christ, who has never lost a single soul entrusted to Him.

Day 5: The Call to Serve Reading: Romans 12:4-13 Devotional: The body of Christ does not function when its members sit on the sideline waiting for someone more qualified to step forward. Paul makes clear in Romans 12 that every member carries a function, and the absence of any one member is felt by all. The excuses feel legitimate — not enough time, not enough training, not enough resources. But the call to serve is not an invitation extended only to the fully prepared. It is extended to the willing. God does not call the equipped; He equips the called. Whatever tug you have been feeling, respond to it today. The body needs what only you can offer.

Reflection Questions:

The ten spies and Caleb and Joshua all saw the same land and the same giants, yet came to opposite conclusions -- what does this reveal about how our internal faith shapes the way we interpret the circumstances in front of us?

Pastor John describes Caleb and Joshua as having 'David eyes,' the ability to see both the obstacles and the promise simultaneously -- in what areas of your life do you find it hardest to hold both realities at once, and what would it look like to trust God's promise anyway?

The ten spies used the word 'however' to pivot from acknowledging God's provision to listing their reasons for fear -- how often do you find yourself doing the same, and what does that pattern reveal about where your true trust lies?

Psalm 37 declares that the righteous will not be forsaken, and the pastor frames this as something he has witnessed across a lifetime -- how does the testimony of others who have remained faithful through hardship strengthen or challenge your own faith?

Shackleton's crew survived 19 months on the ice by placing their faith in their captain rather than demanding answers about when or how rescue would come -- how does this parallel the kind of trust God calls us to, and where do you struggle most with the 'when' and 'how' questions in your own life?

Pastor John argues that obedience and serving are the primary pathways through which we know God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference -- do you agree, and what has your own experience of serving revealed to you about God that you might not have discovered otherwise?

When John says 'as soon as I said we need more people, you are immediately thinking somebody else,' he names a common deflection -- what fears or assumptions drive that instinct, and how might confronting them open you to a calling you have been avoiding?

The Israelites stood at the edge of a land God had already promised them and still chose unbelief -- what does this tell us about the gap between knowing God's promises intellectually and actually living as though they are true?

Pastor John frames Jesus on the cross as someone who, amid suffering, kept his focus on the 'who' rather than the 'why' or 'how' -- how does meditating on that example reshape the way you approach your own seasons of confusion or pain?

Shackleton refused to leave any of his 27 men behind, returning four times until every person was rescued -- how does this picture of relentless pursuit reflect the character of God, and how does knowing you are that pursued change the way you respond to His call on your life?