

Thirty Years of Following the Spirit — September 23 & 24, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Exodus 13:20-22

- Set the scene of this time in Israel's Exodus from Egypt (20). This was the very beginning of the people's wilderness wanderings. What might they have been feeling and thinking at this point?
- How did God's presence manifest during the day (21)? What about at night (21)? Throughout Exodus and Numbers, which tell the whole story Israel's wilderness experience, God continued to reveal himself in this way – cloud by day, fire by night – in order “to guide them.” Why do you think he took this approach?
- How did this manifestation aid the Lord's people in their travels (21)? What does God's steadfast presence tell us about his faithfulness (22)? Recall times the Holy Spirit lead you like this: repeatedly and visually. Pray you'd be responsive to his guidance, whatever the form, and faithful to seek clarity.

Day Two: Psalm 115

- Who deserves glory (1)? Why (1)? What are some examples of God's love today: both for you personally and for the church?
- What accusations do others make against the God of Israel (2)? Summarize the psalmist's rebuttal (3-8). Meditate on how, unlike mute idols, “God in heaven,” who “does whatever pleases him,” still speaks to people today. Thank him for doing this, especially when he does it in ways that feel perfectly crafted for you.
- How does the author exhort people to “trust in the Lord” (9-11)? When has the Lord been your “help and shield”? What are some other ways he demonstrates his trustworthiness to you?
- What blessings does the psalmist proclaim for his readers (12-15)? Which one speaks most to your heart? Why? What belongs to God, and what has he given to us (16)? Who praises him “both now and forevermore” (17-18)? Take some time to praise him right now: testify about his unparalleled goodness, etc.

Day Three: Matthew 1:18-25

- How does this passage open (18)? What was the shocking context of Mary's pregnancy (18)? Describe Joseph's initial response (19)? What motivated him to respond in this way (19)?
- What happened next (20)? Summarize what the angel told Joseph (20-21). Why do you think such encounters often begin with the angel saying, “do not be afraid”? What does this say about God's love, and his understanding of how best to communicate with us?
- What did these events accomplish (22-23)? What did the miracle of Jesus' birth do for you? What about for the church? Fulfilled prophecies remind us the Holy Spirit is indeed real. What else increases your faith that he is real and capable of leading you?
- Describe Joseph's obedience to God (24-25). What impression do you have of him? Reflect on your own response to dreams that seem prophetic. Conclude by asking God to speak to you in your dreams this week about one specific area of your life.

Day Four: Luke 12:1-12

- Set the intense scene (1). Why do you think Jesus first addressed the disciples? What warning did he issue (1)? How will what's hidden be uncovered (2-3)? What role might the Spirit play in this?

- Whom should we not fear (4)? Why fear God (5)? Between trappings and talk of hell, how do you think the disciples were feeling? Describe the comforting word Jesus then speaks (6-7). Ask the Holy Spirit for more revelation of your value in God's eyes.
- What happens when we acknowledge Jesus (8)? What about when we disown him (9)? Speak against him (10)? Speak against the Holy Spirit (10)? This is about hardening one's heart, denying Jesus' messiahship and never repenting of it. Pray for continual openness to the truths the Holy Spirit wants to convey.
- When should we not worry (11)? Why (12)? Do you believe this? Why or why not? Ask God to tune you in to all the ways the Spirit continues to speak and teach today.

Day Five: Acts 12:25—13:3

- What did Barnabas and Saul do (12:25)? Who came with them (12:25)? Describe the people at the church in Antioch (13:1). What kind of corporate spiritual environment do you think a handful of prophets and teachers would nurture? Take a moment to thank God for the prophets and teachers in your own community.
- What happened while the group was worshiping and fasting (2)? Imagine this moment in your mind's eye. Do you think the Holy Spirit spoke in an audible voice? Or was it an impression or mental picture? Something else?
- No matter the way the Spirit spoke, how did the group initially respond (3)? Describe Paul and Barnabas' send-off (3). Note that the men didn't take immediate action in response to the prophetic word; instead, they sought clarity by fasting and praying. For when the Holy Spirit speaks to you, pray you'd press pause in order to think about it contextually and rationally, and that his direction would be reinforced via more words, confirmation from others, etc.