

Faith to Begin the Journey — October 1 & 2, 2016
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Genesis 31:22-55

- What did Laban learn (22)? How did he react (23)? What did God tell him to do (24)? Describe Laban's initial encounter with Jacob (25-30). What about Jacob's response and the search for Laban's gods (31-35)? In his anger, what did Jacob say (36-42)?
- How did Laban shift the conversation toward a solution (43-44)? Summarize how the men worked this out (45-55). Overall, did Laban heed the Lord's advice in verse 24? Why or why not? If you were in Laban's shoes, what do you think you would've done?
- The Bible has many stories of people experiencing challenges similar to what we may face today. Instead of reading truths in just the abstraction of a command, we see them modeled in the lives of Biblical characters. What does this story of Laban and Jacob teach you about how to resolve a seemingly impossible dispute? For whenever you or others face challenges, pray you would seek God's direction via models in the Bible.

Day Two: Psalm 91

- In the beginning of this psalm, how is God described (1)? What happens when we dwell in the Lord (1)? What does this prompt the psalmist to proclaim (2)? What will God "surely" do for those who dwell in him (3-4)? What will no longer provoke fear (5-6)? What will we observe but no longer experience (7-8)? What does the psalmist then reiterate about what's promised to those who dwell in God (9-10)? How can this be (11-13)?
- How do all of these promises of God make you feel; how do they help you in your faith journey? Instead of putting your faith in something or someone else, what makes you want to dwell in the Lord? How can you maintain this posture of heart?
- Describe the point-of-view shift in verses 14-16. How does God respond to our love (14)? What about when we call on him (15)? What will satisfy us (16)? Imagine the Lord speaking these words directly to you. Respond out loud or by writing down a prayer.

Day Three: Matthew 4:18-22

- Set the scene of this text (18)? Who are the characters (18)? What were Peter and Andrew doing (18)? What did Jesus say to them (19)? How did the men respond (20)? Focus on the phrase "at once" and envision their immediate response to Jesus' call. How does this make you feel? Do you at all identify with Peter and Andrew in this moment? Explain.
- Whom did Jesus see next (21)? What were they doing (21)? As with Peter and Andrew, what did James and John do when Jesus called them? Note that they left both career and family in order to follow Jesus. Has a call toward deeper faith in God ever required you to sacrifice something important? What about multiple important things? In these moments, were you obedient or did you resist? Or were you somewhere in between? In the future, what do you want to be different about your response whenever Jesus calls you to follow him? Ask God for grace to make it so.

Day Four: Luke 9:57-62

- What is the setting of this text (57)? What did a man say to Jesus (57)? Describe Jesus' response (58)? Why do you think he said this? What might Jesus have discerned about this man's heart that wasn't expressed in his pledge to follow him?
- What did Jesus then say to someone else (59)? In reply, what did the man request (59)? Describe Jesus' denial of the request (60)? In a culture where honoring parents was

paramount, what was Jesus implying about what it takes to follow him? What cultural values tempt you to compromise your response to God's call on your life? Pray you'd be able to resist this temptation.

- What does the final potential follower say to Jesus (61)? What was Jesus' response (62)? Failing to look straight ahead while plowing yields crooked paths. What does this symbolize regarding Jesus' call to follow him in full faithfulness? This week, what spiritual practice can you adopt in order to better focus on God's call in each moment of your life?

Day Five: Hebrews 11:8-10

- Where was Abraham called to go (8)? What made it possible for him to journey to this unknown place (8)? In what areas of your life do you need to exercise faith to enter into the unknown? Do you think you can do this? If you doubt, talk to the Lord. What response do you sense? As you pray, visualize interacting with God at an altar or special meeting place. Make entering into this space a regular ritual of your prayer life. Ask God that this exercise would grow and sustain your faith.
- Describe Abraham's home in the promised land (9). Why was it like this (9-10)? What other "heirs of the same promise" also lived in tents (9)? Do you relate to this tent living? Why or why not? Ask God to give you a loose grip on the world and a tight grip on all that encompasses his kingdom. How might aligning more closely to this ideal impact your faith journey?