

Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Holy Spirit • Week of July 10

Introduction

What is on your agenda today? Are there things you would like to accomplish? Most of us want to be productive. We have goals and deadlines. We discipline ourselves to meet the task at hand, so we can reward ourselves later. We aspire to excel in work and ministry. Also, we envision a happy family and desire to see our children attain their dreams. But perhaps like me, you have noticed that sometimes things get in the way. Sometimes *we* get in the way of our own hopes and dreams—our children have different plans and we blow up; someone gets ill and we spiral into depression; we lose our job and lose motivation to work altogether. How do you respond to life's setbacks? Because sometimes, continuing in the negativity and bitterness, gives the enemy a foothold and can cause us to start worshiping the setback over God. Where is your focus? Is it on the Lord? Are you ready to look evil in the eye and say, No More!

In Acts, chapter thirteen, Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey. Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to take Christ's message of love and hope into the world. Upon his conversion, Saul (later Paul) immediately began preaching the Gospel; but when he came to Jerusalem and tried to meet with the believers, they were afraid of him. Then while debating with some Greek-speaking Jews, they tried to murder him. So some of the believers sent Saul away, back to his hometown of Tarsus of Cilicia (see Acts 9:20-30). It was Barnabas, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, who went looking for Saul in Tarsus. When he found him, Barnabas brought Saul back to Antioch where they both stayed with the church a full year, teaching large crowds (Acts 11:19-26). It was the Holy Spirit who led Barnabas to seek out (encourage) Saul.

Background

As chapter thirteen picks up, Barnabas and Saul have just arrived back in Antioch. They had been in Jerusalem delivering a special offering to the church there. It had been prophesied that a severe famine would sweep across the entire Roman world, and so believers in Antioch had taken up a special offering for their brothers and sisters in Judea, and had entrusted their gifts to Barnabas and Saul (see Acts 11:27-30, 12:25). Upon their arrival back in Antioch, as several of these Spirit-filled men are worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit says: "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). To be certain of the Lord's directive, these men do their 'due

diligence' and after more prayer and fasting, lay their hands on Barnabas and Saul—commissioning them for special mission work.

But remember, as mentioned above, sometimes things get in the way. How do we respond? In this case, *someone* gets in the way. It is Elymas, a sorcerer who has attached himself to the governor of Paphos in Cypress. Elymas tries to keep the governor (Sergius Paulus)—who is indeed interested in hearing the Gospel—from believing the message Saul (Paul) and Barnabas have to share. Paul finally gets so exasperated he looks the sorcerer in the eye, calls him out, and pronounces punishment on him. Darkness and mist come over the sorcerer's eyes and he begins to grope, begging for someone to take his hand and lead him. The governor sees this and becomes a believer "for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord" (Acts 13:12).

Reading the Text

Read Acts 13:1-12

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

In Closing

Notice it was when the Spirit-filled men in Antioch were worshiping the Lord with fasting, that the Holy Spirit showed up and instructed them to send Barnabas and Saul (Paul) on a special assignment. The Holy Spirit speaks and we must listen for God's voice. It is the Holy Spirit who sends us out; it is the Holy Spirit who calls. Are you submitted to the Lord's will? The Gospel of Jesus knows no boundaries; the Lord said, *As you go* make disciples and be my witnesses (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:8). Also, we do not engage in mission simply in our own strength. Because things will get in the way and the

journey will get difficult, we must be filled with *power from heaven* in order to produce lasting fruit and stay-the-course.

The Holy Spirit alone fills us with God's power and builds up a faith in us so bold, that like Paul, we have the courage to look evil in the eye and say, "No More!" – No more will you (darkness) rule in my house, in my thoughts, in my family. No more (devil) will you try to come between my spouse and me. No more (evil) will you keep me from worshiping my Lord. For my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. One day the Kingdoms of the world will become the Kingdoms of our LORD and of His Christ! (Revelation 11:15). Speak truth. Speak aloud God's Word and the devil will flee. Every angel, authority, and power in the unseen world must accept Christ's authority (see James 4:7, 1 Peter 3:22).

"Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all His glory." (Colossians 3:1-4)

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

July 10: 1 Chronicles 9:1-10:14, Acts 27:21-44, Psalm 8:1-9, Proverbs 18:23-24
July 11: 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:18, Acts 28:1-31, Psalm 9:1-12, Proverbs 19:1-3
July 12: 1 Chronicles 12:19-14:17, Romans 1:1-17, Psalm 9:13-20, Proverbs 19:4-5
July 13: 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:36, Romans 1:18-32, Psalm 10:1-15, Proverbs 19:6-7
July 14: 1 Chronicles 16:37-18:17, Romans 2:1-24, Psalm 10:16-18, Proverbs 19:8-9
July 15: 1 Chronicles 19:1-21:30, Romans 2:25-3:8, Psalm 11:1-7, Proverbs 19:10-12
July 16: 1 Chronicles 22:1-23:32, Romans 3:9-31, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 19:13-14

40 DAYS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Text: Acts 13:1-12

Plain Truth:

The power of God is _____ in
_____ followers of Jesus.

1. Holy Spirit _____ (_____ for God's _____).
2. Holy Spirit _____ (_____ to God's will).
3. Holy Spirit _____ (Live in God's _____).