

Never Give Up Even When Life Feels Dull – June 29 & 30, 2019
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Numbers 11

- As was their custom in the desert, what did God's people do (1)? How did he respond (1)? Describe the aftermath (2-3). Besides complain, what other options did the Israelites have? When feeling dull or stuck and tempted to complain, what can you do instead?
- Describe the Israelites' specific complaint about food (4-6). Why do you think they romanticized their prior enslavement? What was it like to eat manna (7-9)? How did Moses process the people's complaint (10-15)? What can be done during times like this when even the leader complains and feels like giving up?
- Summarize the action God took to move his people out of this particular season of grumbling (16-35). Which parts seem like gracious gifts? What parts seem painful? What aspects of this plan – be they gifts from God or hard "right foot, left foot" work on your part – might help you when you feel dull in your faith?

Day Two: Mark 4:1-20

- What is the setting of this text (1)? Put yourself in the crowd on the water's edge. How many people are there? What's the weather like? How far out onto the lake is Jesus? What else do you notice?
- Summarize the parable Jesus told; note the four distinct soils (2-8). What do you think it means to have "ears to hear" the spiritual truth in Jesus' parables? When asked about parables, what did he say (11-13)? Instead of shouting it from the rooftops, why do you think Jesus desired for the truth to leak out in this mysterious fashion? What do his methods mean for you today?
- What is this parable's meaning (14-20)? Consider those who embrace the truth of God found in Jesus but then fall away. Do you know such a person? Does it describe you? Pray you'd "move beyond...elementary teachings and be taken forward to maturity" (Hebrews 6:1) and have a transformed heart, like the fruit of the good soil described in verse 20.

Day Three: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

- How does Paul feel he must address his readers (1)? What do you think it means to "live by the Spirit" versus being "worldly"? How does the latter make someone a "mere infant in Christ"?
- Considering them "mere infants in Christ," what did Paul offer to the Corinthians (2)? Why (2)? At the writing of this letter, how did Paul rank their maturity (2)? What evidence does Paul use to point to the Corinthians' spiritual immaturity (3-4)?
- Ponder the second question in verse three, then sit in silence for one minute. May the Holy Spirit gently remind you of times you've lived only as a "mere human." May he show you how to live by his power instead. How will this help you when life is uninspiring?
- Compare this passage to Hebrews 5:11-14. What similarities and differences exist? Why do you think these two letters, each written by a different person, speak of spiritual maturity in these terms? How would *you* speak of the need to pursue maturity in Christ?

Day Four: Hebrews 12:1-3

- Who surrounds us, and what should they inspire us to do (1)? Think of “everything that hinders” you in your life. What sin “so easily entangles you”? How does Jesus encourage you to “throw it all off”? What new purpose does he point you toward instead?
- How should we run “the race” (1)? What race do you sense God has “marked out” for you? When we run, where should we look (2)? Meditate on all of verse two, imagining Jesus gazing at you. Let him tell you how he established your faith, and how he desires for it to mature. Your turn: tell him how you will be diligent to resist spiritual dullness. How does it feel to have this exchange?
- What is one purpose of contemplating Jesus’ suffering (3)? Right now, what has you feeling weary and weak in heart? Talk to the Lord about it. Pray for grace and for more of the life rooted in Jesus’ overcoming power. What do you sense the Lord speaking?

Day Five: Revelation 3:14-22

- To whom is this letter addressed (14)? How does Jesus describe himself (14)? What does he know about the church in Laodicea (15)? In an area lacking a fresh water supply, Jesus used a familiar physical problem to illustrate a spiritual one. How might God be using the physical to communicate the spiritual to you?
- What will Jesus do in response to Laodicea’s lukewarm status (16)? Some translations use the word “vomit.” Sit with the truth that some expressions of so-called Christianity disgust Jesus. Respond to the Lord. What makes Laodicea so unappealing to Jesus, and what does he want them to do about it (17-18)?
- What does Jesus do for those he loves, and how should they respond (19)? What does Jesus announce next (20)? Pause to open the door; allow him in to all of your immaturity and dullness. No matter what he sees, he still wants to dine with you. How does this make you feel? How does this passage conclude (21-22)?