



EMPOWERED

A FOUR-WEEK STUDY ON PENTECOST FOR STUDENTS



READ NUMBERS 11:1-35

- Notice the opening sentence of Numbers 11; “the people became like those who complain of adversity...”
- Notice verse 4, also; “the rabble among them had greedy desires, and also the sons of Israel wept again...”
- Observe the conflict Moses had with the people and with God, and observe God’s response to Moses’ difficulty. The purpose of the coming of the Spirit of God was to relieve the burden of leadership on the shoulders of Moses (vs. 17).

NUMBERS 11:24-29

“24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. 27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” 28 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, “Moses, my lord, restrain them.” 29 But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!”

The purpose of God for the coming of the Spirit here, coupled with the response of Moses to Joshua concerning Eldad and Medad, suggests the prophetic response of the seventy elders at the coming of the Spirit was a means of validating the leadership of those men. Their one-time prophetic anointing sent a clear message to the people they led, while Moses’ status as leader was once again affirmed. In this way, the elders would maintain order among the people and lighten the leadership load on Moses. While Joshua’s desire for Moses to restrain Eldad and Medad from prophesying in the camp indicates his own fear of a potential leadership coup, Moses was not concerned. In fact, he expressed his own desire that all God’s people would be prophets, and that God would put His Spirit on all of them. In this way, the coming of the Spirit of God represented His seal of approval, authorization, and validation.

While this narrative makes it clear that the elders did not prophesy again, this account clearly foreshadows the events of history as they unfold on the pages of Scripture. One biblical commentator observes in Moses' response a "wistful longing" and "stamps" it as a definite part of Yahweh's program for the future. **From a spiritual perspective, this event looks forward to the day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit in the upper room.** From a historical, experiential perspective, this event stands as a paradigm for similar experiences yet to come in the history of Israel.



Moses was incapable of fulfilling God's purpose for His life. Every situation he faced only confirmed his inability to successfully do all that he had been called to do. There was a great desperation in Moses to see some kind of headway; he asked that God either lift the burden, in effect, or kill him outright.

God responded by placing the leadership load on 70 elders who would assist Moses. The mantle of leadership was conferred upon them by the reception of the Holy Spirit and was confirmed by their prophetic response. That mantle represented God's approval, His authorization, and His validation of those men and of Moses. **His Spirit would be the empowering agent behind all that God wanted to accomplish among them and through them.**

There are parallels with this event in our lives today. We often sense our own inability to accomplish what God has called us to do. We get frustrated by the adversity we face, and we want to give up.

There is a certain level of desperation--a coming to terms with the mission of God and the call of God--that preceded the coming of the Spirit then and now.

When we become so focused on the mission and call of God and so hungry for His empowering presence to accomplish that mission and call in our lives, and when we become separated unto Him, we too position ourselves much like the Seventy Elders did for the power of God to grant strength to us in our weakness--to anoint us with His approval, authorization, and validation.

Maybe we've become distracted and somehow reached the mistaken conclusion that we can accomplish all that God has for us in our own ability. Perhaps we have lost sight of that original calling, that mission that filled our vision beyond the frames of our mind and made us turn towards Him. **We will not see the power of God moving in us as long as we are convinced we have the ability to do it ourselves.** God did not set His Spirit upon those men until Moses had reached the point that HE KNEW he could not do it on his own.

What has God called us to accomplish?

What's the mission and purpose burning in your heart to see fulfilled? Is there a burden that cannot be borne apart from His empowering presence?



PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What conflict made Moses and God so aggravated and angry in verse 10? What were the people demanding that Moses wasn't able to give (HINT: check out verse 13)?
- Considering his conversation with God, do you think Moses was a little overwhelmed? What makes you think so?
- What was God's solution to Moses' problem? What did He instruct Moses to do?
- What happened when Moses obeyed God's instructions? How did the people in the camp know that something BIG had just happened?

MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been given a job or task to do that seemed bigger than you? What was the job? Were you able to finish? Did you get frustrated by that job?
2. Where do you usually turn when you need help? Why do you turn to that person/place/thing?
3. How might problems help us in our relationship with God? Does God still help us today with difficult tasks? How?
4. Do you believe that God has a purpose and plan for your life? If you could do it by yourself, do you think you would ever need His help?
5. Have you given any thought to fasting? What distraction(s) could you set aside in order to hear God's voice more clearly?

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think God ever calls us to do impossible tasks? Why or why not?
2. How did Moses' "impossible" task open a door for God to work in his life? How does an "impossible" task for us create opportunities for God to work in our lives?
3. What kind of obstacles do you face in your everyday life? What distractions keep you from fulfilling God's purposes and plans for your life?
4. What conflict made Moses so desperate that He had to ask God for help? How does conflict in our lives help our relationship with God?
5. How might fasting help us discover God's power in our lives to overcome difficulty?



Samson is a picture of one who has been supernaturally gifted by the power of God, but lacks the integrity to withstand temptation. There is no doubt that God had a specific purpose for his life and had blessed him with supernatural strength to accomplish that purpose.

Is it possible to wield the power of God apart from the purity of God? It appears so, not only here, but also in the New Testament as we consider the example of the Corinthian believers. They had been blessed with every gift of the Spirit, yet continued to live in carnality and had to be disciplined.

As we seek the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must also consider the integrity of our heart and the purity of our spirit. If we imagine Samson as a building, we see that while he was founded on the promise and blessing of God, there were flaws in his character. When he became an adult, he built his life around the supernatural abilities given to him by God. However, because his foundation was flawed, his house was doomed. He continuously got too close to the edge and eventually fell over. All that he built collapsed in a moment in Delilah's lap. The Holy Spirit departed from Him because he finally stepped over the line of complete disobedience. Samson was like any other man.

God certainly has a plan and purpose for our lives, and He will grant us the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish that purpose and plan. We can, however, short-circuit that plan and purpose by our own poor decisions. Just like Samson, we can attempt to get as close to the world as possible without failing and try to have the best of both worlds, but in the end, the cracks in our foundation will sink our house and we'll fall flat on our faces.

Before we seek to begin moving in this power, perhaps we should take a moment to examine the foundations of our own life. Are there cracks in our foundation? Are there places where we're getting too close to the world and too much like them? We might find that God uses us even when we dance along the edge of failure, but if we continue down that path, there will come a day when we step over the line and all that we've worked for will disappear. We will no longer have access to God's power, and we will find ourselves in despair with our life in crumbles around us--all because the foundation of our character was flawed.

JUDGES 13:2-6 NLT

"In those days a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children. 3 The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "Even though you have been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. 4 So be careful; you must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food. 5 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. For he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines." 6 The woman ran and told her husband, "A man of God appeared to me! He looked like one of God's angels, terrifying to see. I didn't ask where he was from, and he didn't tell me his name."



JUDGES 14:5-9 NLT

"As Samson and his parents were going down to Timnah, a young lion suddenly attacked Samson near the vineyards of Timnah. 6 At that moment the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as if it were a young goat. But he didn't tell his father or mother about it. 7 When Samson arrived in Timnah, he talked with the woman and was very pleased with her. 8 Later, when he returned to Timnah for the wedding, he turned off the path to look at the carcass of the lion. And he found that a swarm of bees had made some honey in the carcass. 9 He scooped some of the honey into his hands and ate it along the way. He also gave some to his father and mother, and they ate it. But he didn't tell them he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion."

JUDGES 14:15-19 NLT

"On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to explain the riddle for us, or we will burn down your father's house with you in it. Did you invite us to this party just to make us poor?" 16 So Samson's wife came to him in tears and said, "You don't love me; you hate me! You have given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer." "I haven't even given the answer to my father or mother," he replied. "Why should I tell you?" 17 So she cried whenever she was with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on the seventh day he told her the answer because she was tormenting him with her nagging. Then she explained the riddle to the young men. 18 So before sunset of the seventh day, the men of the town came to Samson with their answer: "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson replied, "If you hadn't plowed with my heifer, you wouldn't have solved my riddle!" 19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. He went down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother."

JUDGES 15:9- 17 NLT

"The Philistines retaliated by setting up camp in Judah and spreading out near the town of Lehi. 10 The men of Judah asked the Philistines, "Why are you attacking us?" The Philistines replied, "We've come to capture Samson. We've come to pay him back for what he did to us." 11 So 3,000 men of Judah went down to get Samson at the cave in the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, "Don't you realize the Philistines rule over us? What are you doing to us?" But Samson replied, "I only did to them what they did to me." 12 But the men of Judah told him, "We have come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." "All right," Samson said. "But promise that you won't kill me yourselves." 13 "We will only tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines," they replied. "We won't kill you." So they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. 14 ¶ As Samson arrived at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting in triumph. But the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon Samson, and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands of flax, and they fell from his wrists. 15 Then he found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it. 16 Then Samson said, "With the jawbone of a donkey, I've piled them in heaps! With the jawbone of a donkey, I've killed a thousand men!" 17 When he finished his boasting, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was named Jawbone Hill."



JUDGES 16:23-30 NLT

"The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and praising their god, Dagon. They said, "Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!" 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of us is now in our power!" 25 Half drunk by now, the people demanded, "Bring out Samson so he can amuse us!" So he was brought from the prison to amuse them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof. 26 Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand, "Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them." 27 Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them. 28 ¶ Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes." 29 Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, 30 he prayed, "Let me die with the Philistines." And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime."



PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- How was Samson's birth different? What was God's purpose for his life? What was he going to do? (HINT: see 13:5)
- What incredible feats did Samson accomplish? Where did he get the great ability to do those great feats? What did those feats all have in common?
- What were Samson's personal weaknesses?
- Was Samson's life more like climbing a mountain, or riding a roller coaster?

MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon the 70 elders. Describe what happened when the Spirit came upon Samson.**

The 70 elders prophesied and the people of the camp recognized them as leaders. Samson received super-human strength.

2. **How can we show dedication to God like Samson did with his long hair?**

Obedying the Word of God. Participating in worship. Serving our community in love.

3. **What are some ways we can overcome temptation?**

Possible Answer: Avoid temptation. Study Scripture to be well-armed. Ask for help from trusted friends.

4. **How might giving in to temptation steer our life away from God? What can we learn from Samson's life?**

Sin and giving in to temptation can lead us away from what God has called us to do.

5. **Why did God send the Holy Spirit?**

God sent His Spirit to strengthen Samson to accomplish what He called Samson to do. The same is true for us.

6. **How does the Spirit help us in our weaknesses?**

He teaches us how to pray when we don't have the words (Romans 8:26). He leads us into truth, gives us the right words to say, and gives us insight into what we should do (Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 16:13). He gives us boldness to speak the truth (Acts 4:31). He gives us wisdom (Acts 6:10). He gives us spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **What are some similarities between the story of Samson and the story of the 70 elders in Numbers 11?**

Overwhelming task to perform. The Holy Spirit came upon ordinary people. The Holy Spirit gave people great ability.

2. **How did Samson's purity affect his ability? How does our personal purity relate to our ability to be used by God?**

His great strength was directly related to his relationship with God.

3. **How did Samson handle his personal weaknesses? What should we do about our weaknesses?**

Samson did not avoid temptation—he gave in to it. (answers may vary)

4. **Can you think of celebrities or famous people who failed because they were overcome by their weaknesses?**

Consider Whitney Houston, Charlie Sheen, Ted Haggard, Lindsay Lohan, et al.

5. **Why did God send His Holy Spirit to rest on Samson? Why do you think He sent it to us?**

God sent His Spirit to strengthen Samson to accomplish what He called Samson to do. The same is true for us.

6. **How does the Spirit help us in our weaknesses?**

He teaches us how to pray when we don't have the words (Romans 8:26). He leads us into truth, gives us the right words to say, and gives us insight into what we should do (Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 16:13). He gives us boldness to speak the truth (Acts 4:31). He gives us wisdom (Acts 6:10). He gives us spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).



1. **CHANCE | A NOT-SO-CHANCE MEETING**

A mighty warrior named Kish had a handsome son named Saul who stood a head and shoulders taller than any of the people (9:2). Saul was sent out to find some donkeys that had wandered off but ended up meeting with Samuel who was on his way to a sacrifice. Knowing that God had already arranged that “chance” meeting, Samuel was on the lookout for the man God would show him. When they met, Samuel told him the news.

2. **CHANGE | GOD CHANGED HIS HEART**

Saul was changed by God in the moment he accepted the words of Samuel. Samuel prophesied that it would happen, and Scripture records that it did happen, so much so that the people who knew Saul before that moment realized that something was different. Whatever he was before he was no longer... The heart change that happened was in preparation for what would be soon to come. (1 Sam 10:1-9)

3. **CHARGE | THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAME UPON HIM**

Saul was charged by the Spirit of God. This is the OLD TESTAMENT! Even before Joel prophesied the coming of the Spirit of God upon the New Testament believers, the Spirit of God was active in the lives of Old Testament leaders. Even before the day of Pentecost came, the Spirit of God was validating the work of God in righteous men through signs? How else would his old friends know who he was apart from something visible or audible, or both happening to evidence that change? How else would you understand prophesying apart from some kind of verbal utterances? (1 Sam 10:9-12)

While we as a denomination do assert that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of Spirit baptism, keep in mind that those “tongues” had and have a purpose. While tongues certainly demonstrated the Spirit’s presence in the life of a believer, their design was to share the message of God with whomever could hear and understand. Thus, the core idea(s) I want to instill in these students are



1. God’s Spirit empowers us to accomplish His work on earth.
2. God’s Spirit produces an outward change in us.
3. God’s Spirit gives us words to speak, and the boldness to speak them.
4. God’s Spirit was active in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and TODAY!

1 SAMUEL 10:1, 9-13 NLT

1 Samuel 10:1 ¶ Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it over Saul’s head. He kissed Saul and said, “I am doing this because the LORD has appointed you to be the ruler over Israel, his special possession.

9 ¶ As Saul turned and started to leave, God gave him a new heart, and all Samuel’s signs were fulfilled that day. 10 When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, they saw a group of prophets coming toward them. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he, too, began to prophesy. 11 When those who knew Saul heard about it, they exclaimed, “What? Is even Saul a prophet? How did the son of Kish become a prophet?” 12 And one of those standing there said, “Can anyone become a prophet, no matter who his father is?” So that is the origin of the saying “Is even Saul a prophet?” 13 When Saul had finished prophesying, he went up to the place of worship.

JOEL 2:28-32 NLT

“Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. 29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants-- men and women alike. 30 ¶ And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth-- blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and terrible day of the LORD arrives. 32 But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved...

NUMBERS 11:29 NLT

But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them all!”



PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Why did Samuel pour oil over Saul's head? (HINT: see 10:1)
- What happened to Saul as soon as he turned to leave Samuel? Why was that change significant?
- When Saul and his servants approached the prophets, what were the prophets doing? What happened to Saul? How did the people who knew Saul prior to his anointing respond to what happened to Saul? What did they say?
- How does 1 Sam. 10:12 connect to the Joel 2:28-32 passage? How does Moses' response to Joshua in Numbers 11:29 connect with the Joel passage?
- According to Joel, who would be the recipients of God's Spirit? Was anyone excluded from that list?

MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Given the choice, would you rather:

- A. Be pretty much like everyone else.
- B. Be a little bit like everyone else.
- C. Be NOTHING like everyone else.

**Do you think most people feel that way?
Why or why not?**

(Answers will vary. This is a great opportunity to get to know how your students think about friendship and social norms. Begin transitioning into a conversation about how we have been called to stand out, not blend in, and what that looks like.)

2. The author told us (the readers) that God changed his heart from the moment he turned to leave. How do people recognize what God is doing in our hearts? Is it important that others see a difference? Why or why not?

They are able to see a difference in us. If the Good News of God's grace hasn't affected our lives, there's no reason for others to accept it from us.

3. Which is easier for you, speaking to one person, or speaking to big group? Do you get nervous? Why?

(Answers will vary. Use their answers to transition into a conversation about how the Spirit gives us words to speak when we follow Him.)

4. Do you think anyone can speak for God? What does God require of us, based on what you've read and heard, in order for us to speak for Him?

Considering God used both a donkey and his rider to speak, we can see that God can use anyone or anything. If we have a cleansed and pure heart, we can be effective in God's purposes.

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Given the choice, would you rather:

- A. Be pretty much like everyone else.
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**Do you think most people feel that way?
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OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What have we been talking about in this series?
2. Who can share with us stories about the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?
3. Why did the Holy Spirit come in each of those instances?
4. How did everyone around know that the Spirit had come upon those people?

LET'S READ A FEW PASSAGES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT AS WE APPROACH PENTECOST SUNDAY.

LUKE 3:16 NLT

16 John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am-- so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

JOHN 14:15-17 NLT

"If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, **who will never leave you**. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who **leads into all truth**. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because **he lives with you now** and **later will be in you**.

JOHN 14:25-26 NLT

I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as **my representative**-- that is, the Holy Spirit-- **he will teach you everything** and will **remind you of everything I have told you**.

JOHN 15:26-27 NLT

"But I will send you the Advocate-- the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. 27 And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.



LUKE 16:7-8 NLT

It is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

JOHN 16:12-15 NLT

John 16:12-15 "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

LUKE 24:49 NLT

Luke 24:49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- If you were Jesus' disciple having heard all of these stories AND having heard all that He said about the Holy Spirit, what would you expect His coming to look like?
- Based on what Jesus said in the Gospels, what does the Holy Spirit do in our lives?
- Why do we need help with the truth? Do we have trouble separating truth from error?
- In what ways do you need the Holy Spirit in your daily life?