



Follow the Cloud

August 17/20 – Valley Creek Church-Pastor John Stickl

Lesson #2 Scripture Verses from John's Outline

“God leads us one next step at a time”

Key Verse: Exodus 13:21-22

Galatians 5:25

Psalms 119:105

John 16:12-13

Proverbs 16:25 - 16:9

Ephesians 2:8-9

1 John 4:17

Romans 5:19

Genesis 1:28

John 14:6

Lesson #2 – Follow the Cloud-Author/Pastor John Stickl @ Valley Creek Church – **Scripture Verses with bfc sharing her comments on each verse.** Prepared by Salt Shakin Sister Outreach & Ministry:
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Exodus 13:21-22 (NLT)

²¹The LORD went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. ²²And the LORD did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.

Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

²⁵Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Psalms 119:105(NLT)

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

John 16:12-13 (NLT)

¹²“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. ¹³When 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.

Proverbs 16:25 (NLT)

²⁵There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

⁹We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

1 John 4:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

Romans 5:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

Genesis 1:28 (NLT)

²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

John 14:6 (NLT)

⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Scriptures Verses with additional notes and comments

Exodus 13:21-22 (NLT)

²¹The **LORD went ahead of them**. He **guided them** during the **day with a pillar of cloud**, and he provided **light at night with a pillar of fire**. This **allowed them to travel by day or by night**. ²²And the **LORD did not remove** the pillar of **cloud** or pillar of **fire** from its place in front of the people.

(bfc-God gave me the verse Psalms 32:8 in 2009, to hold on to as part of the teaching gift He placed in my heart. When God calls you and gives you a specific verse, it will GUIDE and COMFORT you and keep you through the tough times, especially when you may want to quit. In making this verse Life Applicable, I am thankful that God does go ahead of us. I can remember many times as I look back on my job where God protected me and opened and closed the right doors for me to enter regarding work situations, He also does this in my personal life since I retired.

*As **God goes ahead** of us, sometimes we just follow Him by our PEACE for those times when we are not sure what we are supposed to do; other times He will give us scripture, confirmations or words of wisdom from someone we trust. **Our Pillar of Cloud and Fire IS THE HOLY SPIRIT and He always dwells inside of us . He never leaves us and keeps His angels of protection all around us.**)*

Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

²⁵Since we are **living by the Spirit**, let us **follow the Spirit's leading** in every part of our lives.

***bfc**-How do we live and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit? Some people have never learned or been taught that the Holy Spirit is a PERSON, not an it. He is the third person of the Trinity; He is real, alive, and active within us. We need to ask for a fresh filling of Him every day. New day needs new infilling of His power and strength to help us walk pleasing to Him. The only way we can do this is staying connected to Jesus via His word, prayer, praise and fellowship with other Christians.*

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Psalm 119:105(NLT)

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a **lamp** to guide my feet and a **light** for my path.

(bfc- This verse is short, simple, and easy to memorize. The Word-The Holy Spirit-Jesus-Abba Father, are always available to show us the way we need to go. We all have a race to run; be watchful our steps as we move forward and listen to His voice and walk accordingly. Obedience= blessings.)

Proverbs 16:25 (NLT)

²⁵ There is a **path before each person** that seems right, **but it ends in death.**

There is a way that seems right to a man. We truly blew it when we decided to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

They ate of something forbidden by God. In fact, there was only one rule in the garden - just ONE! They were not to eat of the fruit of this one tree. But they chose to eat - and by eating brought the entire creation into futility by their choice to sin against God.

We will NEVER be drawn closer to God through disobedience. They were not eating of a tree that would help them know the difference between good and evil. This was not a discernment tree which would help them choose good things the rest of their life. They were wanting to partake of good and evil - they wanted the knowledge of both. The way that seems right to a man is a way that experiences good and evil - and therefore man can choose which he wants. The problem is that once he chooses to DO evil - to ACT evil - to WANT evil - he will be enslaved to it.

There is a way that seems right to a man - which includes knowing evil intimately so he thinks he will be able to choose what is best. But the reality is that the end enslaves us. As we look at this proverb, there is another danger in the "way that seems right to a man." This again proceeds from eating and participating in the knowledge of good and evil. Once the pair had eaten of this fruit - they knew both good and evil. That knowledge made them think that they could reject the evil, choose the good, and become acceptable to God

Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

⁹ We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

Commentary Notes: Many wander and wonder through life, wishing they knew God’s will for them. Commit your works to the LORD ([Pr 16:3](#); [Ps 37:4-5](#)); believe that He will take care of the details ([Ps 37:23](#); [84:11](#)). There are no “perfect” human plans, so do not look for them. You live in a sinful world; everything is imperfect. God has not revealed perfect choices. You cannot see the next five minutes. Do not waste your life worrying, or you will always be frustrated.

If you fear or worry about circumstances or perfect plans, you will hesitate or do nothing, and you will lose God’s blessing for faith and diligence ([Eccl 11:3-6](#)). Since you do not know what will happen five minutes from now, run on in Biblical wisdom .

Ruth was a poor widow in a foreign land. She devised in her heart to glean fields – pick up scraps after the reapers – a lowly job with little future potential ([Ruth 2:2](#)). But the LORD directed her steps to the field of Boaz, a rich, single man who ended up marrying her, and they had David as their great-grandson ([Ruth 2:3](#); [4:17](#)). Give God the glory!

The Jews were condemned by the Persian Empire to genocide. Esther devised in her heart to have King Ahasuerus and Haman to lunch, though she feared for her life to even ask for the meeting ([Esth 4:16-17](#)). But the LORD turned the king’s heart toward her with great affection and responsiveness. After she told him of Haman’s evil plans, the King found Haman begging on her bed, and that was that ([Esth 7:7-8](#)). Give God the glory!

Abraham devised a way to find a wife for Isaac, and his servant met Rebekah first. Jacob devised a way to flee from Esau, and the Lord blessed him to become rich with a large family. Joseph chose to be righteous, and the Lord directed his steps to Egypt’s throne. Jesse devised a way to send food to his sons in the army by his youngest son David, not knowing that God was directing David’s steps for a showdown with Goliath.

Consider **Joseph** - His brothers devised a way to get rid of “the dreamer,” who tormented them by his divine revelations, but the Lord directed their steps to sell him into Egypt, where he saved them all from starvation some years later ([Gen 45:4-8](#); [50:19-21](#)). They eventually fulfilled every dream Joseph had about them bowing low before him.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

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1 John 4:17 (NLT)-¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

Romans 5:19 (NLT)-¹⁹ Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

Genesis 1:28 (NLT)-²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

John 14:6 (NLT)-⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

The Work of the Holy Spirit-John 16:5-15 (KJV)

⁵ But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?⁶ But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

John 16:12-13 (NLT)

¹² “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.**

bfc-I think of verse 12 quite often. There is so much to learn from Gods Word and sometimes it can be deeper than our infinite minds can comprehend. God is a big God, and I don’t think we will understand everything He has for us until we see Him. As John Stickl quoted in his video “God speaks to us in sentences not paragraphs because we can’t get it all” He won’t tell us any more than one next step at a time. If we knew what was going to happen tomorrow or next year, we would not be able to handle it! More than likely, if we knew what was really in store for us, we would react differently today, and have a hard time moving forward because of fear, lack of confidence and many other emotions.

What does the last portion of the scripture mean:

“He will tell you about the future NLT”?

*In the “context” of this verse – Jesus was talking to the disciples that had not yet received the Holy Spirit yet. They could not understand or comprehend all Jesus wanted to tell them from the Father. Basically, when they receive the Holy Spirit in the near future, their eyes and understanding would be opened to revelation and understanding – this was to come to them **in the near future.***

In Life Application purposes for you and I: This particular verse does not mean we will know our daily future in the sense of God telling us what He has in store for our personal lives- this keeps leading us back to what the title of this teaching series is:

“Follow the Cloud” Follow the Holy Spirit one step at a time.

Satan has a counterfeit for everything God does and says – He has the card readers and fortune tellers that people believe can tell them their future, that’s only another lie of the devil. He comes to steal, kill and destroy-he is the father of lies.

Lesson #2 – Follow the Cloud Bible Study

“God leads us one next step at a time” 8/17-20

John Stickl – Pastor Valley Creek Church

Video Notes by: bfc

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➤ Video Notes by BFC for Lesson #2



- Follow the Cloud
 - Listening to Gods voice and taking Next Steps into Freedom
 - How do you take a next step?
 - Why do you take a next step?
 - How do you know what that next step is?
 - Great Questions, right?
- Lean in and Listen – we are going to move forward and learn more about what we were created to be and do.
- Expect God to do something in this study.
- Follow by Faith – Follow the Cloud – Listen and Obey- One step at a time
- John shares how he started his church at the age of 29, not knowing what he was doing.
 - So, he and his church just started asking God what He wanted them to do and did what He said. What a novelty! That is not what most churches do.
 - Not everything made since and was often confusing. They had to walk by faith!
 - He shared how God had told him one weekend to scrap a message he had prepared for (12 hours prior his time to preach) and teach on following God.
 - This is not easy for him, as it takes several hours to prepare for his sermons.
 - FAITH- God told him to do what He wanted him to do not what John himself wanted to do.
 - HE was super nervous when time to preach
 - Let us follow the cloud – it became who they were as a church
- Follow the Cloud – Move by Faith not feelings, especially when it is not comfortable and does not make sense.

- Exodus 13:21-22 – Follow the Cloud – Foundation verse
- A great picture of how God leads us
- He saw their misery and concerned about their suffering, so He came to rescue them. Moses-Pharaoh story.
- How do you lead more than 1 million people to the promised land?
 - It is hard enough to get your family to church on time 😊
 - How do you do it? Give them a cloud
 - God is intimately personal and ever present
- From the mighty cloud, God spoke and said “Follow Me” one step at a time
- I move, you move, I stay, you stay.
- Keep your eyes on me and discover who God wants you to be and where He wants you to go.
- God wants us to live a “simple life of Next Steps”
- Today the cloud is not above us, it is within us and His name is the Holy Spirit
- Galatians 5:25
- Wherever God is leading us is better than where we have been, and He is leading us out of bondage
- What does it look like to walk in next steps?
 - God leads us in small steps not giant leaps
 - Heard the term “A leap of faith”?
 - Do not think God leads us in large leaps, He leads us to small steps
- John shares story of game called “connect the dots”
 - When you start it looks overwhelming?
 - You keep following the dots until you see what the image is, and you say:” “I get it, I see what it is!”
 - God leads us like this, unsure of the future, but we have the faith to connect each dot in the order He gives them to you.
 - The goal is not to finish the picture, its to enjoy the journey

- God gives you your directions one step at a time
 - Why? Psalms 119:105
 - Because He wants you to be dependent upon Him.
 - John shares the verse out of our scripture references, John 16:12 – God cannot give us everything up front, we cannot handle it!
 - God gives us the Holy Spirit (our cloud) to give us directions, one step at a time.
 - **God speaks in sentences, NOT paragraphs!**
 - You can only obey one sentence at a time
- **John shares story about Peter when he was fishing** – Jesus asks “Peter, can I borrow your boat”? Then one sentence and one step at a time, Jesus continues to ask him to do several things.
- Peter, “Come follow me” (Video time @13:00)
- In the kingdom of God, we do not understand first then obey- we obey then we understand
- The “ah ha” moment only happens to those who follow by faith
- Steps are not always easy
- **Remember Johns visual story** about taking steps one way and God wants us to take steps another way (Video time @14:50)
- What looks good to us is often the last thing God wants us to do.
- Gods ways are higher than our ways.
- He will ask you to serve when you want to go
- He will ask you to go when you want to say
- **John shares story** about his dream when young (Video time @ 16:00)
 - God takes him through some tough times to get his attention
 - God called him and he runs the other way for a season
- Proverbs 16:9 – God plans not ours
- Let go of what is in your hand if you want to know what is in Gods heart
- Each step is designed to help you discover who we are, who He is and what He created us for

- What was the reason for the people getting to the promised land?
 - The goal was not so much getting to a new land as it was teaching them how to live and sons and daughters in His freedom
 - Every step was for a closer walk and freedom in Jesus
- Freedom of the heart was the outcome of the journey to the promised land
- Next steps are the process
- Freedom of the heart is the outcome
- It is all about who you become
- He talks about the three circles
 - **Identity-Receive His Grace**
 - Jesus is a mirror of who I become
 - Because He is a beloved son, so am I (daughter)
 - Romans 5:19
 - You are not a sinner because you sin, you sinned because you are a sinner
 - Jesus comes and transforms and repositions us because of Jesus
 - It's not about our behavior it is about our identity in Him
 - **Relationships -Experience His Presence**
 - We were made to be in a relationship with God
 - **Purpose – Release His Kingdom**
 - Genesis 1:28 – It means more than bear fruit and reproduce children.
 - It means be fruitful in Jesus; rule and reign with Him and use his resources to influence those around us.
 - Where the three circles cross – is called Jesus Heart
- John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth and the life
- When I know I am forgiven, I have **nothing to be afraid of** and can go on living for Jesus in courage one step at a time
- **If I am afraid**, I will always get caught up in works and value of who I am and what I need to do for Him

- Most religion lives in works and needing to earn God's grace and forgiveness
 - That is sinking sand
- Remember the story of the Prodigal son – Our lesson in Orphans, Slaves and Sons – We are daughters of the Highest – Abba Father!
- John shares the three circles several times.
- Who you are determines what you will do?
- We are FREE
 - Every step in the journey to the promised land was designed to free their hearts. One step at a time
 - **There is a massive difference between “being set free” and “living free”**
 - Follow God one step at a time
- We are drawn by GRACE
- **We take next steps so God can show us how much He has done for us.**
- It is not about our performance
- Do you share the gospel? Do you share what you are learning?
- **Who are you “becoming”?**
- John shares: **Follow the cloud challenge** – read the book, use the end of discussion chapter questions.
- **Is the Grace of God trying to pull you out to live in freedom?**
- **Psalms 32:8 – That is the verse God gave me in 2009 that keep me going in sharing the Gospel and teaching His word. God is good!!**

Lesson #2 – Follow the Cloud

“God leads us one next step at a time”– Scripture Review Questions

1. In Exodus 13:21-22 what did the Lord do for the people? _____

2. In Galatians 5:25 what are we to live by and follow the leading of? _____
3. In Psalms 119:105: write this verse out in you bible version: _____

4. What does John 16:12-13 say to you personally? _____

5. In Proverbs 16:25 what is the “end” results of taking wrong paths? _____
6. In Proverbs 16:9 what does it say? _____
7. In Ephesians 2:8-9: In your words, briefly tell us what it says: _____

8. In 1 John 4:17- What does our love become as we grow in God? _____ We can face Him with what? _____.
9. In Romans 5:19 what happened when one man disobeyed God? _____ and because of one man who obeyed God, what happened? _____
10. In Genesis 1:28 in your words, what did God say? _____

11. Write out the verse John 14:6: _____
