

Family Bible Series for July 16: God guides believers with strength

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- Exodus 13:17-18, 20-22; 14:5-6, 10, 13-14, 31; 15:1-2, 11-13

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A boater was rescued after being lost for a brief time. Authorities asked if he had a compass and what caused him to be lost. The relieved boater replied: "Yes, I have a compass. But no matter how much I tried to make the needle point north, it continued to point southeast."

As Exodus opened, the Israelites must have felt much like the rescued man. God was leading in a direction which made them uncomfortable. No matter how much Moses tried to divert God in another direction, the Lord kept staying the course.





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The Israelites had to answer a basic question, which Christians must answer today as well. Can I be sure God will guide and protect me if I follow him faithfully?

God takes into account our weaknesses (Exodus 13:17-18)

After the death of the firstborn throughout Egypt as the 10th plague, Pharaoh allowed God's people to leave the land. Yet, God did not lead his people by way of the Philistines as they left. He did not want their hearts to become afraid when they saw war. Perhaps they would change their minds and return to Egypt (v. 17). Instead, God led them through the wilderness by the Red Sea (v. 18). He knew their hearts and took into account their weaknesses.

The Lord deals with his children the same today. He fully is aware of our circumstances and even how we will respond to them. The psalmist worded it beautifully when he wrote: "For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

Yet, it is our weakness that often fits us for his service. Paul spoke of a thorn in the flesh that gave him strength (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, once said, "I am thankful that God looked long enough to find someone as weak as myself so he could

use me.” Be assured today that God knows your weaknesses but will use you through them.

God gives his constant presence (Exodus 13:20-22)

As the Israelites ventured into the wilderness, they camped at Succoth (v. 20). It must have been a frightening time for them, so God gave physical evidence of his presence. “The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night, in a pillar of fire to give them light” (v. 21). He did not take the pillars away, so the Israelites would be assured of God’s presence.

Often, Christians are in situations in which they simply need to know that God is near. Perhaps you are in such a situation now. God promised he would never leave nor forsake his children (Hebrews 13:5).

Corrie ten Boom experienced God’s presence in the most extreme of circumstances. Placed in a Nazi concentration camp, along with her sister, Betsy, Corrie would write her thoughts in a journal. She often wrote of a peace which passed all understanding as she was comforted by God’s presence, although she was surrounded by torture and death. You can be assured of God’s presence today, as well.

God fights for his people (Exodus 14:5-6, 10, 13-14)

Soon after the Israelites left Egypt and camped in the wilderness, Pharaoh changed his mind and went after them (vv. 5-6). Naturally, the Israelites were afraid and wondered what God would do (14:10). Moses calmed the heart of the people when he told them to “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord ... the Lord will fight for you” (vv. 13-14). We know what

happened next as the Red Sea parted, the Israelites safely crossed over and the Egyptians perished in the waters.

John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, spoke of a time when he was surrounded by hostile natives. He simply looked up to the Lord and asked for protection. God fought for the missionary as the natives were thrown into confusion and retreated.

Christians today can know God will do battle for them. There is never a situation in which God will leave believers powerless or defenseless. Claim this promise the next time you are in such a situation.

God guides believers with strength (Exodus 14:31-15:2; 11-13)

The Israelites saw the great miracle God performed at the Red Sea and feared him (v. 31). As a result, they sang a song of praise and spoke of the Lord being their strength (15:2). They sang, “the people whom you have redeemed, you have guided them in your strength” (v. 13).

A simple fact of Scripture is that God loves you today as much as he loved the Israelites in the Old Testament. You can trust that God will guide you with strength today in your fearful situations, just as he led the Israelites. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). You can demonstrate your dependence upon God by following his leading. He will guide and protect you throughout the journey.

Discussion question

- Name a time when God took into account your weakness to give you strength.

- Which attribute of God brings you the most comfort in troubled times?
- Name specific ways God may fight for his people today.



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