

## Keep in Step

*A Weekly Devotion*  
*Galatians 5:25 · John 16:12–15*

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This week the nation turns 250.

There will be fireworks and parades, hot dogs and lawn chairs, the particular smell of summer evenings that belong to this time of year. And there is nothing wrong with any of that. Gratitude for the place we live, for the freedoms many have sacrificed to protect, for the neighbors and communities that make up this complicated, beautiful, struggling country — these are good and human things to feel.

But the church has always known something the fireworks cannot say:

*Our deepest citizenship is not on any flag.*

Paul writes to the Galatians from the margins of empire. Rome was the superpower of his world — its symbols everywhere, its authority total, its claim on human life absolute. And into that world, Paul plants a quiet, subversive seed: *if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

Not Caesar's step. Not the empire's tempo. Not the pace set by whoever holds power this particular century.

*The Spirit's step.*

This is not cynicism about the nation. It is clarity about who leads. The same Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation, who fell like fire at Pentecost, who Jesus promised would guide us into truth we are not yet ready to bear — that Spirit does not pledge allegiance to any earthly kingdom. The Spirit moves where it will. It crosses every border we have drawn. It shows up in places our politics would never send us and loves people our tribes would never choose.

*Keeping in step with that Spirit is the most countercultural act any of us will ever perform.*

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Jesus tells his disciples in John 16 that the Spirit will lead them into truth *gradually* — not all at once, not more than they can bear, but faithfully, persistently, in its own time. Which means the spiritual life is not a sprint to certainty. It is a long, attentive walk — learning to notice where the Spirit is already moving and having the courage to follow.

This week, amid the celebrations and the noise, amid the pride and the honest reckoning with who we have been and who we are still becoming as a people — ask the quieter question:

*Whose step am I keeping?*

Not in judgment of the festivities. Not in withdrawal from the community around you. But as an act of inner orientation — a small, daily choice to keep your deepest loyalty where it belongs.

The Spirit is moving. In your neighborhood. In your ordinary week. In the uncomfortable conversation and the unexpected kindness and the moment when you could have looked away but didn't.

Keep in step. One day at a time. One choice at a time. One small act of faithfulness at a time.

*That is how the kingdom comes — not with fireworks, but with people quietly keeping pace with a Spirit that refuses to stop moving toward love.*

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## A Prayer for the Week

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*Spirit of the living God,  
you are not contained by any border we have drawn  
or any flag we have raised.  
You move where you will —  
toward the forgotten, the fractured, the far-off,  
and the ones right next door we have never truly seen.  
  
This week, amid the noise and the celebration,  
keep us oriented toward you.  
Let our gratitude be genuine  
and our loyalty be clear.*

*We belong to you first.*

*Lead us accordingly.*

*Amen.*

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