



REVOLUTION

THE RADICAL CHANGE THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS

A FEARLESS FOLLOWER STUDY GUIDE



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ABOUT THIS STUDY

This study explores how the power of the Holy Spirit changes us.

Near the end of His earthly ministry and life, Jesus promises His followers that the Holy Spirit would come upon them and empower them, lead them, work in them, and help them in their work of doing what Jesus did.

At the Ascension, Jesus commissioned his followers and gave them the promise of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came powerfully, bringing radical transformation to the disciples and people of the church. They moved from fearful to bold, as they proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah.

Over the next four weeks, we will read about these events and discuss how the Holy Spirit gives us power, courage, and guidance. To get the most out of this study, we encourage you to do the personal study, follow along with the weekend teachings and do the deeper dive discussion with your group.

Join the Revolution!

“PROMISE”

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Big Picture

One of my greatest fears when there's a storm is that the power will go out and we will be left in darkness for who knows how long.

As we open the book of Acts, it feels to the disciples that with Jesus' departure, the power has gone out. For over three years, the disciples walked and talked with Jesus and observed the incredible power at work in Him - healing people, casting out demons, commanding nature, forgiving sins, and raising the dead. But the most incredible demonstration of power came when Jesus himself rose from the dead.

But now Jesus was leaving them and going back to heaven. The power they had seen and known was about to go out. I am sure many questions swirled in their minds. Would they be left in darkness forever?

Jesus was quick to reassure His followers that the promised power would come. It would be something old yet something new. It would be a power working inside of them unlike anything they had experienced in the past. That promised power is the Holy Spirit, and His impact upon their lives would be explosive. But Jesus wasn't offering them power to do with as they pleased. Once they received this power, they would be called to action. There was work to be done. Jesus would give them power to be His witnesses to their city and beyond.

This promised power came true on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were in "one accord" when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in a unique way. It started with the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and then tongues of fire appeared upon each person. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.

This day would go down in history as the day that the church of Jesus was birthed. It is recorded that visiting foreigners heard them speak the mighty works of God in their own languages. Peter stood up to explain what was happening. He gave a remarkable speech explaining how the Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. He challenged his listeners to repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. It is recorded that three thousand believed and were baptized. Thus, the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

Today, we look back upon this great day with amazement and awe. Unfortunately, the issue of tongues has become controversial, and in the process, many have forgotten about the power given through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into our lives. The power the disciples received is available to all of us. It is power to do the impossible. It is power to be a witness for Jesus Christ, to turn on lights for those in darkness. We need this enabling power in our lives if we are to become the witness that God needs us to be today.

Personal Study

Read Acts 1-2 and respond to the following questions.

1. According to 1:1-3, Jesus was with His disciples for 40 days speaking about the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom of God and what is your role in it?
2. From Acts 1:4-5, why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit? What does this say about God's purpose in our waiting?

3. In Acts 2:2-3, the Holy Spirit came in a mighty wind and tongues of fire. What is the significance of the Spirit coming this way and not more "silently"?

4. Reading Acts 2:38-39, what is the "gift of the Holy Spirit" which was promised here, and who is included in this "promise"?

5. Acts 2:42-47 talks about life in community for the early church. What aspects of this life do you need to adapt into your own life?

Deeper Dive Group Discussion Guide

*These questions are best used as a group discussion guide. **Start your time in prayer** asking God to guide your conversation and make it useful for growing your understanding and building your faith.*

Opening (10min)

1. **Icebreaker:** What is the most unforgettable event you have ever attended?

Discussion (30 min)

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 1-2** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

2. Based on knowledge and/or experience, how would you answer this question? *The Holy Spirit is _____?*
3. What has been your experience of and exposure to the Holy Spirit? If you grew up in church, was the Holy Spirit talked about much? How?
4. Have you ever experienced a prompting or leading of the Holy Spirit? Or is there a place in your life where you think or know the Holy Spirit is pushing or prompting you to do something? If so, how does it relate to your mission to be Jesus' witness?
5. How conscious are you in your daily life of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? To what degree would you say your life

is filled with the knowledge and experience of God? How could you be more filled with the Holy Spirit.

Going Further (30 min)

Pick any or all of the following questions for further discussion.

6. Consider Jesus' commission to "make disciples" and "be his witnesses." How passionate and/or equipped do you feel? What would you need to feel more passionate and/or equipped?

7. This is the first time we have seen believers speaking in other tongues. What's this gift and how does it operate in the body of believers [Mark 16:17, Acts 19:6, 1 Cor 12:8-11, 1 Cor 14:1-28]

Closing: (10 min)

Spend time sharing some prayers arising from the discussion and other prayer requests. Then **close in prayer** for each other for the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in your lives.

“POWER!”

“Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (Acts 3:6)

Big Picture

The coming of the Holy Spirit had an immediate effect on the followers of Jesus. Not only did they speak boldly about Jesus, but they also received power to perform miracles.

Part of the daily routine of the Jews was praying in the temple. So, Peter and John went up to the temple together to pray at the daily afternoon prayer. But even in that ordinary and routine activity, the Holy Spirit living in them was leading them into opportunities to proclaim Jesus as we read about their encounter with the man born lame.

The lame man sat at the temple gate each day. As people passed by, he would ask for a handout. It was part of his daily routine. But on this day, Peter and John saw the lame man as Jesus saw him. And they could not pass him by. Peter knew that he needed more than silver coins. He needed Jesus to fill the emptiness within. In faith, Peter lifted the man to his feet, healed in the name of Jesus.

The healing of this man was the direct act of Christ through Peter mediated by the Holy Spirit. The resurrected Christ was still touching lives. All he needed was for his followers, filled with the Holy Spirit to yield to the Holy Spirit working in them, and this encounter with one lame man would lead to another opportunity to present the Gospel and more people believing in Jesus.

What does your ordinary life look like? It is possible that hidden in the ordinary are opportunities for the Holy Spirit to move powerfully through us? I pray that we will learn from Peter look for extraordinary moments right amid life’s routines and “ordinary.”

This healing did not go unnoticed. Soon opposition grew. But opposition only served to embolden Jesus' followers. In Acts 4, we find Peter and John in custody because they preached Jesus' resurrection.

But they were not discouraged. They refused to obey the leaders' demands because it was in direct opposition to what God had directed them to do. When they were finally released, they joined other believers in prayer for more boldness. What an example for us today in how to exercise our faith and trust in the Lord in difficult times.

It begs the question, if asked to stand for God and His truths or please people, which would you choose? It is this very question that we see played out in Acts 5. A married couple sold some property and then lied about the proceeds from the sale. Instead of doing what was right in God's eyes, they choose the appearance of righteousness rather than true righteousness. Sadly, in the end they both paid the price with their lives. This was the opposite of what the apostles did. They, too, paid a price, but it was because from their determined obedience to God.

May God give us the courage, as He did the apostles, to speak His name and declare His truths, and to fear God more than we ever fear people.

Personal Study

Read Acts 3-5 and respond to the following questions.

1. What lesson from Peter' and John's interaction with the lame man in Acts 3 can you apply to your own witnessing opportunities?
2. What does Peter's description in Acts 4:8 indicate about the continual filling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer?

3. How are Peter and John describe in Acts 4:13-14? What does this tell you about who God uses?

4. What did the believers pray for in Acts 4:29-30? How does that prayer strike you? How do your prayers compare to these prayers?

5. The apostles dedicated the rest of their lives to proclaiming the Good News about Jesus. If someone looked closely at your life, what would they say you are dedicating your life to?

Deeper Dive Group Discussion Guide

*These questions are best used as a discussion guide for your group. **Start your time in prayer** asking God to guide your conversation and make it useful for growing your understanding and building your faith.*

Opening (10min)

1. **Icebreaker:** Have you ever had a “close call” when it looked like things might go badly for you, but in the end turned out okay?

Discussion (45 min)

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 3-5** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

2. What encouraged, challenged, or baffled you from this week’s reading and/or teaching from Acts 3-5?
3. Peter said in Acts 3:17 that the people and their rulers put Jesus to death “in ignorance”. What does this mean? What are some of the ways we can act “in ignorance” and how can we mitigate it?
4. According to Acts 5:3-5, what happened to Ananias to cause him to secretly keep some money for himself? Could this happen to us? How? What does Peter’s words in verse 4 teach us about how God views our possessions and money?

6. The apostles responded courageously to persecution. What were the keys to their courage? How does the apostles rejoicing "that they were counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name" (5:41) compare with your usual response to suffering?

Going Further (15 min)

Pick any or all of the following questions for further discussion.

5. After Ananias and Sapphira died, Acts 5:11 says a great fear came upon all who heard what had happened. What does this mean? How do you understand the Biblical term "the fear of the Lord." How do you live it out?

6. Based on your reading of Acts 5:1-10 and Mark 3:28-29, Matthew 12:31-32, and Luke 12:10, what is the sin that leads to death? How could we be in danger of this sin?

Closing: (10 min)

Identify one thing the Holy Spirit is teaching you or calling you to obedience and share with the group for prayer. Then close in prayer for each other.

“COURAGE”

*"Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
(Acts 6:3-4)*

Big Picture

The more the church grew, the more the resentment toward the apostles and the believers continued to deepen in the hearts of many members of the Sanhedrin. The apostle's refusal to be intimidated by the council's edicts or obey the council's command to stop preaching Jesus threatened the Sanhedrin's power and control over the populace.

The apostles had become virtually untouchable due to their enormous popularity among the thousands in Jerusalem and its surrounding villages. Any further attempt to arrest and punish them would most certainly lead to riots resulting in an unwanted intervention by Roman soldiers to restore peace. Riots were common in Palestine because of resentment towards Roman authority. However, religious upheavals directly threatened the position of the high priest and the power of the Sanhedrin. If the high priest and the Sanhedrin could not maintain peace, Rome would remove the current high priest and install another in their place.

Therefore, the Sanhedrin needed to find another way to assert their power and control over the religious system and contain the threat presented by the apparent disobedience of the followers of Jesus. To do this, they needed a substantial charge against the disciples.

Stephen, one of the deacons of the church, a man "full of faith and power" and who "did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8) had presented indisputable evidence in local synagogues that Jesus was the Christ. After being falsely accused of blasphemy, Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin to answer the charges

against him. Rather than deny these trumped-up charges, Stephen began his defense by giving a brief history of the people of Israel from the days of Abraham. He not only outlined God's care for His people, but also provided examples of Israel's disobedience.

However, it was the conclusion of this story that enraged the high priest and the other members of the council. Stephen said, *"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."* (Acts 7:51-53). This rebuke was like the rebuke God sent Moses to rebuke the Israelites with after they worshipped a golden calf on Mount Sinai (Genesis 33:5).

The enraged council would hear no more. They took Stephen by force, dragged him outside of the city, and stoned him. The irony of this event is that the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. Saul despised the followers of Jesus so much that he personally sent many to prison. But Saul would eventually become the man known as the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. The stage was set for the next phase of church growth. This rejection by the Jews opened the door to the Gentiles, just like Jesus had predicted with the parable of the wedding banquet (Matthew 22, Luke 14).

Personal Study

Read Acts 6-7 and respond to the following questions.

1. In Acts 6:5-8, Stephen is described as a man "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." What does this mean to you? Does it describe your life?

2. Compare Acts 6:14 with Matthew 26:59-61 and Mark 14:57-58. How are the charges brought against Stephen related to the charges brought against Jesus?

3. In his rebuttal, Stephen infers that God was always with Abraham in his travels. Do you believe that God is always with you? How? What would this belief change about how you go about your day?

4. In Chapter 7:1-53 we read Stephen's great speech. If you had to summarize this speech in just 3 words, what words would you use?

5. What two prayers did Stephen pray while being stoned to death? What does it reveal about Stephen's heart? In a similar situation, what would you pray for and what would that prayer reveal about your heart?

Deeper Dive Group Discussion Guide

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 6-7** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

Opening (10min)

1. **Icebreaker:** Have you ever experienced an uncomfortable or embarrassing moment? What was your immediate reaction and why?

Discussion (45 min)

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 6-7** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

2. What encouraged, challenged, or baffled you from this week's reading and/or teaching from Acts 3-5?
3. Stephen, like Jesus, was accused of crimes he didn't commit, and Stephen, like Jesus, chose not to defend himself. Would you be able to do the same? Why not?
4. When Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin, instead of defending himself, he proclaimed the truth about Jesus. Why do you think he did that?
5. When have you had an opportunity to take a courageous stand for Jesus? How did it go?

6. Have you forgiven those who've harmed you like Stephen does? What makes forgiveness so hard? Pray that God will help you to truly forgive.

Going Further (15 min)

Pick any or all of the following questions for further discussion.

7. How would you answer this question: "why did God let Stephen die?"
8. One of the consistent teachings of Jesus concerns counting the cost and being willing to lay down our lives for the Gospel. How do you understand this? Would you lay down your life?

Closing: (10 min)

Where do you need courage in your life? Check all that apply then spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to give you the courage you need.

Marriage	_____	At work	_____
Finances	_____	Direction from God	_____
Health	_____	Sharing Christ	_____
Decision making	_____	Other	_____
Parenting	_____		

“PARAKLETOS”

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever- the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." John 14:16-17

Big Picture

If you have ever been to a new country, you know how important it is to have a guide; someone to help you figure out where to go for what, and to teach you the language and culture.

The same is true for your life. When we become believers, we join God's Kingdom, but we don't yet know how to live in this Kingdom. Some of our experiences will inevitably be confusing. We need an expert guide to help us live in this kingdom.

Here is the good news. God has given you an expert guide for your life of faith - the Holy Spirit. John 16:7 *"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."*

Imagine if Jesus hadn't ascended to heaven. Imagine what He could have done. He could have built the largest temple in the world in the 1st century, written the best books in the 18th century, and live-streamed services in the 21st century. But He didn't do any of that. Instead, He left after 40 days.

The Apostle John explains that Jesus thought it was better for Him to leave. Why? So that the Advocate would come. The word "advocate" translates differently in different translations of the Bible. In Greek, the word is *parakletos* which means, "one who is called upon to assist." In English, this word is translated as "counselor," "helper," or "intercessor."

Regardless of the English translation, this term is referring to the Holy Spirit's role as our guide.

How could Jesus confidently say that "it's good for you that I am going away?" Because Jesus, in his flesh, stayed in one place at a time. He could only be in either Jerusalem or Nazareth. However, the Holy Spirit can be everywhere all the time. The Spirit moves and ministers every second of every day in the lives of every believer on the face of the earth. This is why Jesus was able to say, "whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these" (John 14:12). He doesn't mean "greater" in the context of quality as much as in the context of quantity. You are part of that quantity. You are in the group of people who will do greater things than Jesus. So, how do we do it? By following in the steps of Jesus.

How do we closely follow someone who hasn't walked the earth in two thousand years? That's where the Holy Spirit shows up. John was intentional when he called the Spirit our guide. In the life of faith, we need a good guide. Fortunately, we have the best guide imaginable. The Holy Spirit lives within us enabling us to follow Jesus more intimately than those who walked behind him.

God wants to do things in us and through us that are far beyond your best abilities and wildest dreams. It all starts with surrender to the Spirit's role as your guide. When you became a Christian, the Advocate, Leader, Counselor, Guide came into your heart. Your only responsibility is to listen to Him, remain close, and follow His leading on the journey ahead of you.

Personal Study

Read Acts 19-20 and respond to the following questions.

1. What aspects of these chapters raise questions or cause curiosity for you? What part of the passage do you personally connect with the most and why?

2. The Seven Sons of Sceva were imposters pretending to have spiritual power that they didn't possess. Why might we be tempted to pretend to have more spiritual strength than we do?

3. Acts 20:7 describes the church gathering. Why is it important that we gather regularly and intentionally?

4. Acts 20:12 describes the congregation being comforted and urged to carry on the Gospel mission to make disciples. What does this sense of urgency look like in your life, and how do we "spur one another on", as described in Hebrews 10:24?

5. In Acts 20:17-38 Paul says goodbye to the Ephesian elders. Who is in your spiritual care, and what would you say to them if you had to leave them now?

6. As Paul said goodbye to the Ephesian elders, he was confident that he served the Lord with great humility. If you were to say goodbye to a group of people, how do you think they would describe your character once you left? What part of your character would you like to see develop and grow?

Deeper Dive Group Discussion Guide

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 19-20** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

Opening (10min)

1. **Icebreaker:** Have you ever been in a situation where you needed some kind of guidance from a book, map, or an actual guide?

Discussion (45 min)

*Either take turns reading through **Acts 19-20** out loud or allow time for participants to read through silently.*

2. What encouraged, challenged, or baffled you from this week's reading and/or teaching from Acts 3-5?
3. Though we might be followers of Jesus, we can still be resistant to the guidance of the Spirit. What are reasons and/or situations for why we might resist the Spirit?
4. Paul says in Acts 20:22 that he was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem knowing that hardship awaited him there. What does that teach about how the Holy Spirit leads and guides us?

5. Paul also speaks of the challenges and hardships that he regularly faced throughout his ministry. Hard times can cause us to harden our hearts to the Holy Spirit. How do we make sure we don't do that?

6. Paul was burdened to preach the gospel. Maybe you're not a preacher, but how does a burden for the gospel grow in our lives?

Going Further (15 min)

Pick any or all of the following questions for further discussion.

7. The disciples Paul first met in Ephesus only received the baptism of John the Baptist. They failed to see that John the Baptist was only a pointer to Jesus.
 - a. What are the things that are a part of the Christian faith that are intended to point us to Jesus?

 - b. In what ways do we end up seeing those things as an end and of themselves rather than a pointer?

 - c. How does that impact and affect our faith?

Closing: (10 min)

Take a few moments and reflect on what the biggest takeaway was for you from this discussion. Share it with your group. Close in prayer.

NOTES:

