

Forgotten God

Small Group Study Guide

Chapter 1: I've Got Jesus. Why Do I Need The Holy Spirit?

Introduction: What do you know about the Holy Spirit? When was the last time you recall him active in your life?

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Let's take a look at some of the self-evident truths about the Holy Spirit found in the Bible.

- Read Acts 17:11 - We don't just want to believe what culture or our traditions tell us about the Holy Spirit. Like the Bereans we want to search the Scripture and discover what the Bible tells us.
- We won't cover everything the Bible says about the Holy Spirit in this study.
- Let's read these Scriptures (divide 1 per person to read aloud). Let's read and listen to these as if we knew nothing about God or Christianity. What would we believe is true about Christians and the Holy Spirit from reading these Scriptures?

John 14:16-17, John 16:7, Acts 1:4-5, (Leader Explain Acts 2 story in a sentence or two), Romans 8:9-11, Ephesians 1:18-23 (power in this scripture refers to Holy Spirit), 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

1. What would we believe about being a Christian and the Holy Spirit if all we knew was what we had just read in these verses?

These verses give you the impression that life with the Holy Spirit (as a Christian) should be radically different then life without the Holy Spirit.

2. When Christians are out in culture do you think anyone can tell the difference between Christians who have the Holy Spirit in them and non-Christians who do not? Why or Why not?

Example story to share: What if I told you that God had entered me and given me supernatural abilities to play basketball or football? What would you expect? (leave space for group to answer) You would expect me to be great wouldn't you! What would you think if I went out and was really terrible?

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit enters us....if this is similar to our football example above...what does that imply about our Christian lives? What do you think will happen if our lives are not extraordinary? What does that make other people think?

Perhaps people are not interested in our faith because the way we live is not compelling because we are trying to live by our own power rather than the power of the Holy Spirit!

Read John 14:16-17.

- The word “another” in this verse means another one just like the first one. So Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is JUST LIKE him. The Holy Spirit is God as Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is powerful as Jesus is powerful. And so on.

1. What would it be like to have Jesus right beside you or available, physically present with you all the time (or anytime you need him)?

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is available to us in just the same way Jesus was available to the disciples. All of those things we just said we would like to have Jesus by our side for - IS available to us in the Holy Spirit!

Application:

1. How might our lives be different if we began living as if the Holy Spirit were actually with us all the time as we've discussed?
2. What can we do to begin living this way this week?

Chapter 2: What Are You Afraid Of?

Introduction: What fears do you have about the Holy Spirit? What makes you uncomfortable about the Holy Spirit?

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Dealing with our fear - What if God doesn't come through?

- A common fear some have is what if we ask for God's Spirit to fill us and guide us and it appears nothing happens?
- How many of you would have this fear?

Read the last paragraph from page 47 that finishes at the top of page 48 in *Forgotten God* book.

1. What stands out to you from this reading?

One of the reasons we don't get the things we pray for is we are praying for the wrong things. The key is to pray for the things that we know God has promised.

1. What do you think it means to pray for the things God has promised?
2. How can we pray this way?
3. How can praying this way help to address our fear that God won't come through?

God is faithful to this word. If he has promised something, we can be confident that he WILL keep his promises.

Dealing with our fear - What if God DOES show up?

- Sometimes what we fear is that God actually WILL show up and he will ask us to do something difficult!
- How many of you would have this fear?

Read this quote from p. 50 of *Forgotten God*, "The Spirit will lead you to the way of the cross, as He led Jesus to the cross, and that is definitely not a safe or pretty or comfortable place to be."

- The Holy Spirit will work in our lives to mold us into the person God has called us to be.
- A good example of this is a story from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C.S. Lewis. In the book he tells a story of a boy named Eustace who becomes a dragon. The only way for the dragon to become a boy again is for each one of his scales to be pulled off one by one. Sometimes they are stuck and it was quite painful to pull them off. The

work the Holy Spirit does in our lives to help us to remove sin and to be more like Jesus is a bit like Eustace having his dragon scales pulled off.

1. What is painful about the process of sin being removed from our lives?
2. When you think about this process what fears does it raise for you?

Dealing with our fear - Understanding the Holy Spirit

- We should base our understanding of the Holy Spirit on the truth rather than on our fears.
1. What do you think are people's perceptions of the Holy Spirit?
 2. Do you worry what people will think of you if you start talking about the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you worry they will think you are too radical and out there? Are there some who will think that you're too conservative in your views about the Holy Spirit?

Read Matthew 6:10 and 12:28.

1. What do these verses tell us about God's kingdom? Is God's kingdom only in the future or a present reality?
2. If God's kingdom is a present reality, what does that mean for how we should live now?

God's kingdom is both a present and future reality. Thus, as Christians we are called to give our allegiance to His kingdom now. We are called to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives now, allowing him to change us and shape us now...not just in the future.

Application:

1. There will always be a struggle to maintain allegiance to God's kingdom in how we live our lives. How do you experience this struggle in your life?

Journaling Question: This week consider this question and perhaps take some time to journal your thoughts: Do I really want to do the will of the Holy Spirit no matter what it might cost me?

Chapter 3: Theology Of The Holy Spirit 101

Introduction: Did you do anything this past week in response to the Holy Spirit or by the power of the Holy Spirit?

Today we will look at what the Bible says about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does in our lives. As we study, note that we cannot fully understand God. This study then should help us to worship him more (because we realize how great He is and how little we can truly understand). But it should not cause us to confine Him to what we can know and understand (The Holy Spirit is beyond our understanding and is much more than what we can contain in our minds.).

Read Acts 2:38.

1. How do we receive the Holy Spirit according to this verse?

7 Practical Truths about the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit is a person: Matthew 28:19. He has a name and works alongside both the Father and the son.
 - Why do you think this might be significant? *You can't have a relationship with a thing, but the Bible wants us to understand that we CAN have a relationship with the Holy Spirit.*
2. The Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5:3-4. The Spirit and God are interchangeable in the New Testament.
 - Why do you think this is significant? *When we forget about or ignore the Holy Spirit, we are forgetting or ignoring God.*
3. The Holy Spirit is eternal and holy: John 14:16, Romans 1:4.
 - Why do you think this might be significant? *The Holy Spirit isn't flighty. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our bodies are holy sanctuaries for God himself.*
4. The Holy Spirit has his own mind and prays for us: Romans 8:27.
 - Why do you think this is significant? *Even when we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit is praying God's will for us.*
5. The Holy Spirit has emotions: Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30.
 - Why do you think this is significant? *Our sin causes pain to the Holy Spirit.*
 - How often do you think about the pain your sin causes the Holy Spirit? How does that make you feel?
6. The Holy Spirit has His own desires and will: 1 Corinthians 12:11.
 - Why do you think this is significant? *The Holy Spirit has a plan for our lives, our small group and our church. He is the one who chooses the gifts that we need to accomplish His plans.*

7. The Holy Spirit is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient: Zechariah 4:6, Psalm 139:7-8, 1 Corinthians 2:10b.
- Looking at those verses, what do you think those words mean? *Omnipotent = All powerful, Omnipresent = Present everywhere at the same time, Omniscient = All knowing*
 - Why is this significant? *Mostly this is important for us to know because it reminds us that the Holy Spirit is God and we can never fully grasp or understand God. We can't understand how He is able to be these things. This should lead us to be in awe of Him and to worship Him!*

Watch the video and then answer the question he asks at the end.

Application:

Over the next 10 days, use the list on p. 74-76 of the book as a daily study of how the Spirit works in our lives. Read one each day and spend time in prayer. If you recognize an area that's not happening in your life, then pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help develop you and grow you in that area. Share the things you're learning with your group!

Chapter 4: Why Do You Want Him?

Introduction: Why do you want more of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and 1 Corinthians 14:12.

1. Why does God give us the Holy Spirit (v. 7)?
2. What do we receive from the Holy Spirit?
3. Why does the Holy Spirit give us these gifts?

God gives us the Holy Spirit to build up the church, not to glorify ourselves. Sometimes the gifts of the Holy Spirit become distorted and it appears to be more about drawing attention to an individual.

Read this quote from p. 87 of *Forgotten God*, “A sure sign of the Holy Spirit’s working is that Christ is magnified, not people.”

Using our gifts - What are we doing with what we’ve been given?

- Read the last paragraph on p. 91 through to the first paragraph on p. 92
1. What would Beacon Church look like if everyone was as committed as you? Would the church be dying or thriving? (*Encourage your group to have an honest discussion here.*)

Read Galatians 5:13-26.

- When the Spirit leads us, we are shaped to be more like Jesus.
1. According to this passage, how does the Spirit shape us? What changes?
 2. How does the phrase in v. 24 we have “crucified the flesh” make you feel about this process? What does that tell you it will be like?

Application:

1. Perhaps break up into groups of 2 or 3 and share an area where you need to “crucify the flesh” and allow the Holy Spirit to begin to shape you. Spend some time specifically praying for each other in these areas.

Chapter 5: A Real Relationship

Introduction: How do you know God loves you? How do you experience it?

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Read Galatians 4:1-9.

1. What is the difference between a slave and a son?

v. 6 - son has Spirit of God

v. 7 - son is an heir

v. 8 - slave bound to something lesser than God, bound to sin

v. 9 - son both knows and is known by God

2. What does the word “Abba” mean in v. 6? What does that imply about the nature of our relationship with God?

Abba is the Hebrew equivalent for our word “daddy.”

3. What role does the Holy Spirit play in this relationship?

The Holy Spirit confirms the intimate relationship we have with God. He reassures us of God’s love for us by his presence.

Read Romans 8:14-17.

1. How does this further describe the role of the Holy Spirit?

How to Experience Intimacy With God

- Perhaps as we’ve done the study thus far you’re feeling like you haven’t really experienced that kind of closeness with God. Let’s take a look at a couple reasons why that might be the case.

1. Maybe you’re too safe

- Read the first two paragraphs under the “Comfort” heading on p. 106-107.
- What stood out to you from this reading?
- Do you think you work hard to be too comfortable in your Christian life?

2. Maybe your life is too loud

- Read the first two paragraphs under the “Volume” heading on p. 108-109.
- What stood out to you from this reading?

- What are some ways that you can turn down the volume in your life and find quiet space to be with God?

Read Galatians 3:13-14.

1. Look at v. 14. Look for the words “so that.” What does this verse say is the reason Jesus died and redeemed us? What is the promise that was so important for us to receive he was willing to die?
2. What does that imply about the gift of relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Application:

1. What prevents you from connecting intimately with God? (past experiences? shame? hurt? time? commitment?)
2. What can you do this week to seek God whole heartedly?

Take Home:

- This week, make space to read John 14-16. Notice Jesus’ desire for the disciples to have peace and how He comforts them, particularly through the Holy Spirit. Think about (perhaps journal thoughts) what that means for you.

Chapter 6: Forget About His Will For Your Life!

Introduction: Have you ever tried to discern God's will for your life? Did you find an answer? Discuss.

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Read Genesis 12:1-4.

1. What did God tell Abram? How much information did he have?
2. When was God going to reveal His plan to Abram?
3. How did Abram respond?
4. How would it shift your thinking, if instead of asking for God's will for your life in some big picture, distant future kind of way, you asked for God's will for your life today in your present circumstances?
5. What is harder: to ask for God's will - wanting the big picture what is the future or asking for God's will just for today? Why?

Read Galatians 5:16, 23.

1. What does it mean to walk by the Spirit or to keep in step with the Spirit?
2. How might this impact your decisions?
 - Read the last paragraph beginning on p. 121 and continuing on p. 122.
 - What stood out to you from that reading?
3. What is the result of walking by the Spirit in these verses?

Think of this example: Imagine when you were a teenager dating a guy (or girl). Then another guy (or girl) showed up at church and you realized you wanted to date that person instead. You wouldn't just ask the new person on a date. You would first break up with the first person you were dating and then you would ask the new person out on a date. Walking by the Spirit is like this. Repentance requires us to break up with our sin and then invite the Holy Spirit into our lives (through Jesus). But sometimes we want to invite Jesus in without breaking up with our sin!

4. What does it look like to repent - to break up with your sin?
5. Look at v. 16. If you tell a child to walk with you to the kitchen, do you expect them to take a few steps with you and then stop or are you expecting them to keep walking with you until you reach your destination? So how does that help us to understand what v. 16 means?

Walking by the Spirit is not a one-time act, but an ongoing relationship. It is an ongoing decision, that we make every day, to follow the Holy Spirit wherever he leads, leaving behind sin and instead, pursuing what God calls us to no matter where He leads.

The Holy Spirit brings freedom from the cycle of sin, but it requires action on our part!

Application:

Read Galatians 5:19-23.

1. How can we know if someone is walking by the Spirit?
2. What areas of your life could you submit to the Spirit?

Journaling Question: This week consider this question and perhaps take some time to journal your thoughts: What fruit do you see in your life, based on the list in Galatians 5:19-23? What areas are you lacking fruit that might be opportunities for you to submit something to the Holy Spirit?

Chapter 7: Supernatural Church

Introduction: What are the ways we might try to live as Christians without depending on the Holy Spirit? Why is this a problem?

Watch Video

- What stood out to you from the video?

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

1. What is the result of living by the Spirit?
2. Do you know any muslims, buddhists, hindus or atheists who possess any of these qualities?
3. So what makes these uniquely a gift (or fruit) from God's Holy Spirit for Christians?

Christians shouldn't just have these fruits of the Spirit. We should have them in our lives to a supernatural degree, meaning we should have them in ways that it should not be possible apart from the power of God working in us.

Read the first paragraph on p. 147.

4. Can you will yourself or force yourself to be more loving, patient, joyful etc.? Why do we spend so much time trying to do this? What do we need to do to embody this if we can't just make it happen ourselves just by trying hard?

We need to spend more time with the Holy Spirit.

Example story: Have you ever noticed that you will become like the people you spend time with? Chrissy is an American and Roberta is English. Because they live together they have started to talk like each other - because they are around each other so much. So Chrissy has told her mom that she's going to the "tip" (rather than saying the "dump" like Americans say). And Roberta has said she got a new pair of "pants" (rather than saying "trousers" as English people say). You see the more time we spend with someone the more they rub off on us. We start to talk and act like them because we are together so often. The same is true of the Holy Spirit! The more time we spend with Him, the more we will talk and act like Him - the more fruit we will show in our lives.

Read the section below the line on p. 153 and ending on p. 155.

1. What did you think about how this church allowed themselves to be lead by the Spirit? Be honest!
2. What would it look like for us at Beacon Church or even in this small group to be lead by the Spirit in our care for one another?

Application:

Read the “Forceful or Forced?” section from p. 155 to the top of p. 156.

- Close with a time of prayer for Beacon Church and for your small group. Pray that we will be an unstoppable force powered by the Holy Spirit.