

RICA McROY

wildfire

A STUDY ON
LIFE IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT



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RICA MCROY

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Why THRIVE?

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

JOHN 10:10 AMPC

This is the life Jesus intends for His beloved bride—an abundant, full, overflowing life. Not a barely-getting-by, making-it-by-the-skin-of-our-teeth life. Not a superficial life that leaves no lasting legacy, but a life of significance, purpose, and destiny. The goal of this Thrive Bible study is to glorify Jesus by teaching, equipping, and empowering women to live the abundant life promised to us.

Why W I L D F I R E ?

The beginning can be almost imperceptible. The temperature begins to rise, causing fuel to get hotter and hotter. Then, there is a point of no return—the flash point. At that moment, agitated molecules collide with atmospheric oxygen, causing the fuel to combust into a flame. There are flames that are small, dim, and easily extinguished. But there is an all-consuming flame that is extensive in size and produces light that can be seen from the heavens. This flame is known as a wildfire.

When the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus begins to warm the embers of our faith, the breath of His Holy Spirit becomes the catalyst needed for combustion. Join us for *Wildfire*, an eight-week exploration of the passion, power, and mystery of the Holy Spirit.

And this is eternal life:
[it means] to know
(to perceive, recognize,
become acquainted with,
and understand)
You, the only true *and* real God,
and [likewise] to know Him,
Jesus [as the] Christ
(the Anointed One, the Messiah),
Whom You have sent.

JOHN 17:3 AMPC

How to
thrive

This Thrive Bible study is designed with a singular purpose: to know Jesus more. Our prayer is that God will meet you wherever you are in your faith journey. Our hope is the next eight weeks will not be just another Bible study, but an encounter with our risen Lord. His Word promises us that as we draw near to Him, we find He is leaning in toward us (James 4:8). He invites us to call on Him with our questions and doubts, and He will show us great and unsearchable things that we do not know (Jeremiah 33:3). I don't know about you, but I can never have too much of Jesus. Any time that I spend with Him just leaves me wanting *more*.

As with anything else, we will get out of this study just as much as we put in, so here are some tips to get the most out of the Thrive experience.

1. COME HUNGRY!

Spend time with the Lord before each class, asking Him to increase your appetite. I don't mean your appetite to know more about Him, but your appetite to truly know Him. The difference is life changing.

2. PROTECT THIS HOUSE!

Remember, the enemy would love nothing more than to keep you from growing in your relationship with Christ. Do all you can to protect your time, both as we meet as a class and as you meet privately with the Lord.

3. YOU MATTER.

Each class will include prayer, worship, discussion, and a teaching video. Every element serves a significant purpose. Your contribution is vital—share your heart and learn from each other. Know that you are joining a group that is built on a foundation of love. Just be you.

4. USE THE GPS.

This workbook is to help guide you. Each lesson has a short opening essay, which is meant to be read *before* class each week. Each teaching session is rooted in a single scripture, which can be found following the opening essay. That same scripture will be used for your THRIVE homework. Each week should look something like this:

- » Read the week's opening essay
- » Gather together in a group
 - Open with prayer, worship together (if possible)
 - Discuss your notes from the previous week
 - Play the current week's teaching video and follow along in the viewer guide for each lesson
 - Discuss reflection questions
 - Pray together
- » Go through the THRIVE section at home
- » Summarize thoughts and prayer requests to share in the next group session

5. LEARN FIRSTHAND.

The most valuable lessons you will learn over the next eight weeks will be directly between you and Jesus. The homework for this class follows the THRIVE acronym each week. You will find a detailed explanation of each letter listed on the following pages. Feel free to refer back to the THRIVE guide each week. It is important to note that you are not meant to do each letter every day. You have six letters in THRIVE, and six days to complete your homework. Your small-group discussion will be centered around your homework from the previous week.

T

THANK

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name.

PSALM 100:4 HCSB

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is. Unsure how to start? Here are some suggestions:

- 1 Consider looking up various names of God and praising Him for that facet of His character.
- 2 Many of the Psalms are songs of thanksgiving and praise; copy a psalm or write one of your own.
- 3 Traditional hymns and modern-day worship songs are packed with praise. Write out the words of your favorite hymn/worship song or sing it out to Him.
- 4 Change your posture. Have you ever been on your knees with your arms wide open in praise and thanksgiving? You will be amazed how God can align our spiritual posture with our physical posture.
- 5 Make a list. Include what appear to be the majestic and the mundane encounters you have with God's goodness in the course of a day. Read back over your list, thanking Him, replaying His kindness moment by moment.

H

HEAR

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

ROMANS 10:17

Read the key Scripture passage in two different translations and then in *The Message* paraphrase. Rather than doing all three readings together, consider allowing God to sow His Word throughout your day. For example, you might align your reading with your three meals for the day so that you do not finish breakfast, lunch, or dinner without having feasted on His Word. Online resources include biblegateway.com and biblehub.com. Try to avoid reading any additional commentaries at this time. Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

R

RESPOND

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

JOHN 10:27

"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."

JEREMIAH 33:3

What have you heard God say to you so far this week? Do you have any questions you want Him to answer?

I

INVESTIGATE

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

PROVERBS 2:1-5

Dig deeper for treasure buried in the key Scripture. (Feel free to use commentaries or online resources.)

Each week you will be provided with some questions to get you started on your treasure hunt.

V

VALUE

The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

PSALM 19:9B-10 NIV

What impacted you most from the video teaching, from your small-group discussion, and from your personal devotion and study thus far this week? Try to summarize what has meant most to you in three sentences or less.

E

EVERYDAY

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

MATTHEW 7:24-27 NIV

Put it into practice. How can you take what you have heard and learned and apply it in your daily walk with Jesus?









WEEK *ONE*

THE FLAME

OF FIRST LOVE

As the sun can be seen only by its own light, so
Christ can be known only by His own Spirit.

ROBERT LEIGHTON

I remember the moment as though it were yesterday. The days that led up to that night were a whirlwind. Turn seventeen. Check! Have braces taken off. Check! Get a big spiral perm for prom. Check! Graduate from high school. Check! The new goal for summer was to spend as much time as possible with friends before we went our separate ways in the fall.

I walked into a party one evening that summer and saw him standing across the room. A tall, thin young man with large, gold-rimmed glasses and a long, luxurious mullet looked up and smiled at me. I immediately noticed my heartbeat getting faster. We recognized each other instantly, even though we had never met before. I approached him with excitement, eager to meet this guy I had heard so much about through a mutual friend.

That night I met the man who would eventually become my husband and the father of my three children. To this day, I adore that mutual friend! In fact, we all still live in the same hometown.

My children have heard this story many times, so when they finally got to meet her I was able to say, "This is Leanne! Remember? She was one of our best friends in high school. She is the reason Daddy and I got to know each other in the first place."

These days, if we so much as pass Leanne in her car, one of our three kids will say, "Hey! Isn't that your friend who introduced you to Daddy?"

Leanne will always have my love and gratitude for helping me know the man I would marry before I ever met him.

There was a time when I would have told you that my husband, Spike, was the love of my life. Turns out I was wrong. The reality was that I never truly

knew how to receive love, so it was impossible for me to give love. The trauma of childhood sexual abuse had paralyzed my heart. The slight warmth that Spike's love brought with it was not nearly enough to thaw my frozen emotions. Eventually, our marriage collapsed. He asked for a divorce. Check. I got depressed. Check. I stopped eating. Check.

I had invested my life believing that a good education, a great job, a healthy bank account, and getting married would give me peace of mind and protect me from harm. But instead, I was at the pinnacle of all I had set out to achieve and my life was unraveling at the seams. I was twenty-seven years old and I wanted to die. But on that night when it seemed like there was nothing worth living for, I could hear a tiny whisper saying, "Hang on. Just hang on."

The next day I found out there was hope after all. His name is Jesus. Over the next few months I fell head over heels in love with Jesus Christ, the true love of my life. Because of Him, I learned to be loved. Eventually, I learned to give love, and my mind, body, and marriage were gradually restored.

Here is what I have come to realize. My collision with Jesus was no chance encounter. All along there was someone behind the scenes. He was chasing after me, wooing me, and drawing me into the arms of my first love. You may know and love Jesus too. If so, we have the same person to thank! But if you have never experienced Jesus' extravagant grace, you can be certain of this: there is someone who is seeking you out. He will pursue you passionately; He will woo you; and He can thaw even the coldest heart. And when the time is right, He will introduce you to a love you never dreamed possible.



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

GENESIS 1:1–2 NIV



LOVE
MADE AND KNIT
IN INDIA

Week One Group Session Guide

GETTING READY TO THRIVE

Starting next week you will have an opportunity to share with the group what has been most meaningful in the previous week's study. Begin the first session by getting to know one another. Take a few minutes within the group to share your name and your response to God's first question in the Bible. I wish I could pull up a chair and hear your responses, but for now, feel free to e-mail me at wildfire@seedbed.com. I would love to get to know you!

WHERE ARE YOU?

In today's lesson, I will share a little about my journey with Christ. Please pause to share a brief description of where you are in your faith journey today, including a quick glance in the rearview mirror summarizing where you have been in the past.

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

GENESIS 1:1-3

PSALM 19

JEREMIAH 33:3

MATTHEW 12:34

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

We find a progressive revelation of God in the pages of Scripture. Though the revelation came in stages, we should keep in mind that the members of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—exist simultaneously and eternally.

- » **Old Testament**—the people of God had the unique opportunity to respond to God as *Father*.

- » **New Testament**—the people of God had the unique opportunity to respond and relate to God as *Son*.
- » **Pentecost onward**—the people of God had the unique opportunity to respond and relate to God as *Spirit*.

Granted, these categories are not precise and there certainly exists some overlap. But this is where we are today—we are the people of God living in the age of the Spirit.

Let's begin our study anchored to some truths about the Holy Spirit.

- » The Holy Spirit is a *person* with mind, will, and emotion.
- » The Holy Spirit is not created; He is *God*.
- » The Holy Spirit made the *first move* in our journey with Jesus.

The Hebrew words that describe the waters of the deep are *tohu* and *bohu*. These words mean “without form” or “void.” The words carry a connotation of *chaos*.

Chaos theory, or the science of surprises:

- » unpredictable: in a chaotic system, *anything* is possible
- » initial sensitivity: what happens in the *beginning* sets everything else in motion
- » movement from *disorder* to *order*
- » mixing

A mathematical element of chaos is a fractal. A fractal is a fragment, or a little picture that repeats a bigger picture over and over again. The Bible is made up of fractals—little stories that always tell a bigger story.

Words are to the heart what the eyes are to the body.

God's first words: “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3).

Once there is light, we can see the Holy Spirit bringing:

- » order out of *disorder*;
- » *formation* out of formlessness; and
- » fullness out of *barrenness*.



REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *What is the current state of your relationship with the Holy Spirit?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *Is there a place in the landscape of your life that you would describe as chaotic, barren, or dark?*
- *Describe what you see.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba Father, thank You for searching for us when we were hiding from You. Jesus, You are the eternal Word that brings forth life. We offer to You this day our barrenness and the places in our life that are chaotic and, quite honestly, dead. O Holy Spirit, we acknowledge both Your mystery and Your revelation. We sense the wind of Your movement upon our lives. We open our hearts for You to do what only You can do. Holy Spirit, show us who You are. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

At this very moment, the Holy Spirit hovers over the chaotic waters of your life.

WEEK ONE

Thrive



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters.

GENESIS 1:1-2 NIV (*emphasis added*)

THANK

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is.

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HEAR

Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

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NOTES



WEEK

two

THE BREATH

OF REVIVAL

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine, till
all the earthly part of me, glows with thy fire divine.

EDWIN HATCH

When was the last time you experienced a miracle? What if I were to tell you it is likely you have experienced twelve to twenty miracles in the last minute? Sounds absurd, but it's true! Okay, another question. What do you need most in this life? Money? Shelter? Companionship? Safety? There is one essential element that every living being on this earth requires. We receive that element every few seconds without making any effort at all.

It comes through the miracle of a breath.

Whether we are awake or asleep, we breathe. We inhale atmospheric oxygen and, in a matter of seconds, the lungs send that oxygen-rich blood to the heart. Arteries then deliver the oxygen to every cell in the body. The cells take in the oxygen and excrete carbon dioxide into veins. The carbon dioxide is then pumped out of the lungs as we breathe out. Try it. Take a deep breath in and hold it for a second. And now slowly breathe it out. You have just experienced a miracle.

A fascinating aspect of breathing is that although most of the time we are unaware it is happening, we also can control it. If we are exercising and feel out of breath, we can breathe faster. When playing a musical instrument that requires air, we can control the force and rhythm of inhaling and exhaling. If we are around a smell that we don't like, we can hold our breath. Yet almost twenty thousand times a day we take a breath and don't even realize it.

What seems insignificant to many of us is life or death for the millions of people around the world who suffer from lung disease. When the respiratory system is not functioning effectively, life-giving oxygen no longer saturates blood cells.

Ask a child with acute asthma or an adult with severe emphysema what it feels like to try to breathe, and you will hear responses like, "I feel like I am suffocating." "It's like an elephant is sitting on my chest and I just can't seem to catch my breath." "Climbing up the stairs takes every ounce of energy I have." The miracle of a breath is easy to take for granted until you cannot breathe.

Three minutes. That's how long the average person would be able to survive without breathing. Have you ever heard the term "rescue breathing"? This life-saving technique is designed for someone whose breathing is severely impaired or has stopped completely. Rescue breathing is the quickest way to get oxygen into the lungs of someone who is unable to take it in on his or her own. The steps to rescue breathing are universal. Place the person flat on his or her back. Tilt the chin up to ensure an open airway. Look to see if there is anything in the mouth that could be blocking his or her airway. Plug his or her nose with one hand and give two regular breaths into the mouth. Make sure you are blowing hard enough to see his or her chest rise. Take a breath, and then give a breath. Repeat about every five seconds until help arrives. Notice, this is called "rescue" breathing.

There is another type of secondary breathing. It is not a breath of temporary assistance; instead, it is a breath that brings dead things to life. This breath saturates every cell in our being, enabling us to operate at maximum potential. Join me as we seek to better understand the fresh air of the abundant life, *ruach ha-kodesh*.



*Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**, and the man became a living creature.*
GENESIS 2:7 (*emphasis added*)



Week Two

Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

GENESIS 1:26

GENESIS 2:7, 16–17

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

EZEKIEL 36:26

JOHN 3:3–6; 17:3

EPHESIANS 2:1–6 The Message

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

- » The Holy Spirit is a person, so He is knowable.
- » The Holy Spirit is God; therefore, all the attributes that are true about God as Father and Son are true about God the Holy Spirit.
- » The Holy Spirit's work comes first.
- » The Holy Spirit makes all things possible.

The Hebrew word *yastar* brings forth imagery of a potter working with clay.

Imagine yourself as a tree.

- » The branches are our *spirit*. The part of us that is able to have *connection* and *relationship* with God.
- » The trunk is our *soul*. The essence of us comprised of our mind, will, and emotion.
- » The roots are our *body*—the different parts of our body that interact with the world.

Do you find yourself yearning for more—something beyond your capacity to produce for yourself?

We are not capable of *regenerating* our connection between God and us, so He does that for us.

Just as our breath is responsible for *sustaining* our natural life, the Holy Spirit sustains our *supernatural* life in Christ.

Grace has a name: the Holy Spirit.

In case you are wondering, it would not be wrong to say that grace also goes by the name Jesus.

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *How is your oxygen level?*
- *Are you saturated by the Holy Spirit?*
- *What kind of breath describes your relationship with the Holy Spirit?*

God's Word is a means to breathe in the Holy Spirit.

GROUP REFLECTION

- *How would you describe your relationship with God's Word?*
- *How can you start breathing more deeply from God's Word today?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba Father, thank You for not just looking for us, but bringing us home. What a gift to know that we are Your children! Jesus, thank You for reconciling us into Your family. You alone satisfy the deep longing of our hearts for acceptance, identity, and meaning. Holy Spirit, we offer to You this day our areas that are in need of fresh air. Teach us how to breathe, inhaling and exhaling grace. Revive us with Your Word today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

The Holy Spirit is not reserved for a select few pastors, leaders, and Bible study teachers. The Holy Spirit is for you.





WEEK TWO

Thrive



Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**, and the man became a living creature.

GENESIS 2:7 (*emphasis added*)

THANK

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is.

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HEAR

Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

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NOTES



WEEK

three

REMOVING THE

FIREWALL

The shut-in flame goes out for want of a draft.

JOHN T. SEAMANDS

My daddy was a dreamer whose capacity to see a future beyond his present reality changed the direction of my life forever. He was also gifted with a keen sense of adventure and a trailblazing spirit. When he was a little boy growing up in a remote village of rural India, he walked several miles with his brothers to go to a village with a school. His sisters were left behind because girls in his village were not permitted to obtain an education. He said to himself, "If I become a father, my daughters will be able to go to school." That dream became a reality when he immigrated to America in the early 1970s.

He had other dreams that were not on such a grand scale, but he pursued them with the same degree of passion and enthusiasm. I remember my family piling into our tiny yellow Vega for epic, summerlong cross-country road trips to fulfill my daddy's dream of seeing every state in America. My favorite of his many noble dreams involved his entrepreneurial spirit. He was a professor of finance, but always dreamed of owning his own business. When I was in middle school, he finally acted on that dream and bought an ice cream store.

I have so many fond memories of working at our family's ice cream shop, which often entailed consuming large quantities of mint chocolate chip ice cream on sugar cones. By the time I was in high school, Mom and Dad opened a second parlor. It was the cutest thing we had ever seen! Checkerboard floors, Formica and stainless steel tables, and white wrought iron chairs with heart-shaped cushions made us feel like we had stepped back in time into an old-fashioned soda shop. The fact that it was located right across the street from my high school and contained a small arcade complete with Centipede and Ms. Pac-Man was the cherry on top!

But one summer morning, everything changed. The details have become hazy over time. The phone rang. Daddy looked concerned as he listened to

what the caller had to say. He whispered something to Mom, and they told us to get our shoes on quickly and get in the car. We could see the large plume of smoke long before we got to the parking lot. Fire trucks, police cars, and a news crew surrounded what was once our sweet little ice cream parlor. We walked among the charred remains of Daddy's dream in disbelief. It was a terribly sad moment for our family, but we also recognized it could have been so much worse. It wasn't our home. No personal belongings had been destroyed. No one was hurt. And, amazingly, the fire was completely contained.

Our ice cream parlor was one of many businesses within a small strip mall, but none of the other stores were consumed by the fire. While several experienced significant smoke damage, the flames never reached them. Apparently, the builders of the mall had designed each business to be protected by a firewall. Dictionary.com defines a firewall as "a partition made of fireproof material to prevent the spread of a fire from one part of a building or ship to another" or, a "person, thing, or event that acts as a barrier or protection against something undesirable."

Having a firewall in place is essential when trying to keep a fire from spreading. But what if a fire is not meant to be contained? What if the flame brings healing instead of harm, ushering in life instead of destruction? In order for the Holy Spirit to ignite the fuel of our faith, we must allow Him to remove some firewalls.



After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

GENESIS 3:24 NIV



Week Three Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

GENESIS 3:24

PSALM 51:4

HOSEA

ZECHARIAH 3:1-5

MATTHEW 27:51

LUKE 11:13; 15:21

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9

EPHESIANS 4:30

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-19

2 TIMOTHY 1:6

1 JOHN 5

Every believer has an *experience* of the Holy Spirit, but not every believer is *full* of the Holy Spirit.

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, always makes a *place* for His people to have *access* to Him.

Quenching and grieving are ways we can limit the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Holy Spirit can be *quenched*.

Possible ways to quench the Spirit include:

- » *despising* supernatural gifts such as prophetic utterances;
- » *neglecting* supernatural gifts; and
- » being unwilling to express joy in *worship*.

The Holy Spirit can be *grieved*.

The Greek word for “grieved” is *lupete*, which is a picture of when one person *loves* another deeply and the other person *wounds* them deeply.

We are *sealed* by the Holy Spirit.

- » Jesus’ tomb was sealed or *locked* or *firmly* in place.
- » Abraham was sealed, or *protected* by God.
- » Revelation describes a seal as a mark of *identity*.

The Holy Spirit is a deposit of what is to come. Locked in.
Protected. Identified.

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we attempt to break His seal
through *rebellion*.

But we can make the Holy Spirit glad by remaining in an
intimate *relationship*.

What do the marks of a high-quality relationship look like? Consider how the
same characteristics are transferable to your relationship with God.

We can also grieve the Holy Spirit by not investing *time*, *attention*, and
honesty with God.

The Holy Spirit is grieved when we are not *obedient*.

The Holy Spirit is grieved by *broken relationships*, where we fail to extend the
grace we have been given.

How much of your time in the course of the day do you think about God?

The Holy Spirit is grieved by a *lack of faithfulness*.

Faithfulness is an all-or-nothing proposition.

What is the difference between being faithful and being perfect?

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Are you enjoying the fullness of the Holy Spirit?*
- *Are there places in your heart and mind where you have not given Him access?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *How might you be quenching the flame of the Holy Spirit?*
- *Do you have actions and attitudes that may be causing Him to grieve today?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, You are a good Father who gives good gifts. You tell us that You are more than willing to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, so we humbly, yet confidently, ask for more. Show us the areas of our life that may be quenching or grieving Your Spirit. Give us the courage to confess and repent. Come Holy Spirit! In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

God is well pleased to give you the full measure of the Holy Spirit.



We are
sealed
by the
Holy Spirit.

WEEK THREE

Thrive



After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

GENESIS 3:24 NIV

THANK

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is.

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HEAR

Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

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WEEK

four

THE LIGHT

THAT LINGERS

The truth of the Holy Spirit living with and in us assures us that we never have to feel alone.

ROBERT MORRIS

We sometimes tease our youngest child, Sophie, that she will walk down the aisle with “Pink Baby” safely hidden in her wedding bouquet! Pink Baby was once actually pink, but is now irrevocably dingy brown thanks to nearly thirteen years of being loved by a little girl. This soft, terry cloth baby doll was a gift from Grandpa McRoy to Sophie on the day she was born.

We rode home from Huntsville Hospital with Pink Baby tucked in our infant carrier, and she has been by Sophie’s side ever since. Her presence has provided tangible comfort through long car rides, violent thunderstorms, painful tummy aches, teary afternoons following a hard day with friends, and sleepless nights that precede the big days of a child’s life.

On the rare occasion Pink Baby finds her way to the washing machine, I try to have her dry and back in position before nightfall; otherwise, at Sophie’s bedtime I will hear a panicked cry: “Mom! She is missing!”

Knowing how much she means to Sophie, our family decided to look for a backup just in case something happened to Pink Baby. Spike and I were joined by aunts, uncles, and grandparents in our quest to find a second doll. After scouring every store in town that sold baby gifts, we turned our

attention to the Internet. It was there we learned the horrifying news—there would be no backup. The company that made Pink Baby had discontinued her production. Turns out we found a blue doll that was exactly the same and promptly ordered him.

Sophie was grateful, but she made it abundantly clear that Blue Baby could never take the place of Pink Baby. In fact, she said, “If you did find another pink doll it may look the same, but it would never, ever be Pink Baby.”

The profound level of comfort a little worn-out terry cloth baby doll brings to my child amazes me. Pink Baby’s consistent presence in the highs and lows of our daughter’s life communicates a reality our hearts yearn to be true: you are known; you are loved; you are not alone.

God designed us for communion. He knows we can never abide in the abundant life He has planned for us without Him. We need Him. We don’t need a far-off concept of Him; we need His intimate, personal, palpable presence every day of our lives. The gift He has graced us with is far better than a pink baby doll. Through Christ, we have a Comforter who knows us, loves us, and is with us . . . always.



And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

JOHN 14:16 KJV



Week Four Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

EXODUS 33:1–3, 7–15

LUKE 11:13; 14:17

PSALM 51:10

JOHN 1:14, 32; 14:16, 25–27

MATTHEW 7:11

ACTS 2:4

About twelve hours before His crucifixion, Jesus makes a promise of another helper. This helper is the Holy Spirit, another *just like* the first.

Old Testament:

- » The presence of the Holy Spirit was *temporary*.
- » The Holy Spirit rested on *some* people, but not *all* people.
- » The Holy Spirit *enabled* the work of God, *inspired* the worship of God, and *revealed* the Word of God.

New Testament (Time of Jesus' Incarnation):

- » The *promise* of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in Christ Jesus.
- » The *permanence* of the Holy Spirit is seen on Jesus in His baptism.

New Testament (Post-Pentecost until Now):

- » Jesus pours out the Spirit on *all* people.

Paraclete: Advocate; the One who comes alongside; Comforter

Would you accept the promise of heaven without the presence of God?

Moses knew an *intimate* relationship with God.

We ask for what we think we want, but He gives us what we really want. God gives us the better.

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Are you desperate for the presence of God?*
- *What if God were to say to you, “You can have it all, but you can’t have Me.” What would you say?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *Would we be satisfied if God gave us stuff, but we didn’t have Him?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, You who created the stars and the moon, and galaxies that fill the skies, make Yourself accessible to us. Who is like You, God? Jesus, You are our Immanuel—God with us. Holy Spirit, You are the one who gives us an experience of the Father’s love and communion with the Son. May we never lose the wonder of enjoying Your presence. May we come to the truth that everything else is trash compared to the all-surpassing treasure of knowing You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

You can meet with God face-to-face like a friend.

WEEK FOUR

Thrive



And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

JOHN 14:16 KJV

THANK

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is.

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HEAR

Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

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NOTES









WEEK

five

WHAT DOES

THE FIRE SAY?

The Holy Spirit comes to make us holy, by making us know and feel the reality of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

J. I. PACKER

A fire assay is the fascinating process of analyzing the composition of a substance. Fire assays are most often used to test metals, ores, or alloys to determine the amount of impurity found in the substance. If you have an object that looks like gold and you are wondering what the percentage of gold versus scrap metal is in the object, you could employ a metallurgist (a scientist who is an expert in extracting, purifying, and fabricating metal) to perform a fire assay.

During the purity testing, the object is placed in a crucible, mixed with several chemicals, and then put in an extremely hot furnace. The super heating of the chemicals causes lead to be formed throughout the crucible. As the lead droplets form, they extract all the precious metals from the substance and together they sink to the bottom of the crucible. Above the molten lead is liquid glass, or slag that is full of the impurities.

The contents of the crucible are poured into a cone-shaped mold and allowed to cool. Once that cooling is complete, the slag is thrown away, leaving a lead “button” behind. This button is placed in a cupel, which is a solid cylinder of bone ash. The sample is then placed back in the furnace

under extreme heat. At this point, the cupel absorbs the lead, leaving behind the precious metal in the form of small beads. Metallurgy experts say that a fire assay is labor intensive and time-consuming, but it is the best technique to assure the most exacting results.

We are given a right relationship with God through the work of Christ Jesus. This is purely a gift of grace that we instantly receive by faith. But the process of conforming us into the image of Christ takes time. Intense heat may be required for the dross of our life to be removed. This purification may not always be pleasant or painless, but it accomplishes an eternal purpose. It has been noted that a silversmith knows that the purification process is complete when he sees his own image in the object being refined.



*According to the foreknowledge of God the Father,
in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience
to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

1 PETER 1:2





Week Five Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

PSALM 32:3–4

HEBREWS 4:12

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

1 PETER 1:2, 6–7

1 THESSALONIANS 5

1 PETER 1:14–15 The Message

God's will for us is to be *sanctified* through and through.

Grace began our relationship with God and grace will see our salvation through to *completion*.

Sozo: save; deliver; make whole, spirit, soul, and body

We all have two inherent desires:

1. *acceptance*—to be loved just as we are; and
2. *growth*—to grow, change, and get better

We can rest completely in our justification and still labor diligently in our sanctification.

Don't reduce holiness to just mean *moral behavior*.

The Holy Spirit can sanctify us through:

- » Scripture;
- » serving (work and worship come from the same root word, *evid*);
- » small, strong *relationships*; and
- » suffering

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Are you saved?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *What is an area of your life that is in need of sanctification?*
- *Do you have a small, trusted group where you can be completely honest about your sin and encounter the sanctifying grace of Christ?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, we trust that You will finish the good work You began in us and will see it through to completion on the day of Christ's return. Root us deeply in Your love so that we will be responsive when You reveal the places in us that are not whole. Holy Spirit, may we partner with You in glad submission, yielded to Your sanctifying grace at work in us this day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

God has saved you from your past.
God will save you in the future.
God is saving you today.



RESPOND

What have you heard God say this week? Any questions you want Him to answer?

INVESTIGATE

Dig deeper for treasure buried in this week's scriptures.

The process of sanctification involves a spiritual position found in Christ, a practice of cooperation with the Holy Spirit, and a promise of completion. Look up the following scriptures to learn more about these three aspects of sanctification.

Position:

ROMANS 1:7; 8:27

1 CORINTHIANS 1:2

EPHESIANS 1:1

HEBREWS 3:1

1 PETER 2:5

Practice:

ROMANS 6:19, 22

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3, 7; 5:23

HEBREWS 12:10, 14

Promise:

EPHESIANS 5:27

1 THESSALONIANS 3:13; 5:23

EPHESIANS 2:22



NOTES





WEEK

Six

CHESTNUTS

ROASTING ON

AN OPEN FIRE

Love must govern and drive everything we do—including the use of spiritual gifts.

ROBERT MORRIS (emphasis added)

Are you asking yourself if you read the title of this week’s lesson correctly? Maybe you are wondering if I typed out the lyrics of a famous Christmas carol just to see if you would notice. Well, yes and yes. You read the title correctly, and I was wondering if you would notice the Christmas reference. If you are thinking, *What in the world does that have to do with our study of the Holy Spirit?* then you had just the reaction I was looking for!

As a child I loved C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The first book published in the seven-book series was *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In this adventurous tale, Lewis invites us to follow four siblings—Susan, Peter, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—through the magical land of Narnia.

C. S. Lewis would one day describe *The Chronicles of Narnia* as an “imaginative welcome” into the Christian faith. Let’s unleash our imaginations and step through the wardrobe into Narnia.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver are telling the Pevensie children about the frozen land of Narnia, where it is always winter but never Christmas. Suddenly an unexpected visitor appears! Let’s join them:

It was a sledge, and it was reindeer with bells on their harness. . . . And on the sledge sat a person whom everyone knew the moment they set eyes on him. He was a huge man in a bright red robe (bright as holly-berries) with a hood that had fur inside it and a great white beard that fell like a foamy waterfall over his chest.

Father Christmas first addresses Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, telling them the good news of gifts they will find when they return home. Then, he turns toward the children.

"Peter, Adam's Son," said Father Christmas.

"Here, Sir," said Peter.

"These are your presents," was the answer, "and they are tools not toys. The time to use them is perhaps near at hand. Bear them well." With these words he handed Peter a shield and a sword . . . Peter was silent and solemn as he received these gifts for he felt they were a very serious kind of present. . . .

"Susan, Eve's Daughter," said Father Christmas. "These are for you," and he handed her a bow and a quiver full of arrows and a little ivory horn. . . .

Last of all he said, "Lucy, Eve's Daughter," and Lucy came forward. He gave her a little bottle of what looked like glass (but people said afterward that it was made of diamond) and a small dagger.

Do you see a parallel to our lives? Before we encounter the passionate love of our Lord Jesus, our hearts are frozen cold and hard, just like the land of Narnia. Once we receive His grace, winter begins to give way to new life. Although by grace through faith we are justified (put in right standing with God) in an instant by grace through obedience, we are sanctified (conformed into the image of Christ) over the remainder of our lives. From the moment our hearts celebrate their first true Christmas, we are equipped with gifts that are just like Father Christmas described. They are tools, not toys. May we bear them well.



*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.
. . . one and the same Spirit works all these things,
distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4, 11 NASB



Week Six Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

LUKE 11:13

2 CORINTHIANS 1:4

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4, 11; 13:8

HEBREWS 10:24–25

Salvation is a gift that brings about *freedom* from the *penalty* of sin and the *power* of sin through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Shalom: peace—absence of conflict, but also actively moving toward flourishing.

How does the Spirit use us to be ambassadors of this message of reconciliation not just in word but also in deed? One way is through *spiritual gifts*.

“Necesito el regalo que Dios tiene en ti.”

“I need the gift God has in you.”

There is *one* Spirit who unifies us together into one body, so operating in our spiritual gifts creates *unity* not *division*.

The Holy Spirit overcomes division and disunity so that grace-bought people are both diverse and unified.

What is a spiritual gift that can be defined as a divine *enabling*, given to an individual to *glorify* God and *build up* the church?

The Holy Spirit can anoint a *natural gift* or *talent* to become a spiritual gift.

Paul is describing divine enabling of *supernatural* gifts, otherwise known as *sign* gifts.

Two streams of thinking about the exercise of spiritual gifts:

1. *cessation*; and
2. continuous, necessary.

Spiritual gifts should be *desired*.

Spiritual gifts can be *discovered*:

- » resources—spiritual gift *inventory* or *survey*;
- » *observation* of others;
- » *invitations* to serve; and
- » through the healing work of the Spirit in our deepest *grief* or wounds.

Oftentimes our most profound spiritual gift is wrapped in layers of grief.

Spiritual gifts must be *developed*.

Imagine a label on our spiritual gifts that read “some assembly required.”

Spiritual gifts must be *demonstrated*.

When and where are you willing to demonstrate your spiritual gifts?

Because the Holy Spirit is in all believers, the potential for *all* the spiritual gifts is in all believers.

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *What are we free for?*

GROUP REFLECTION

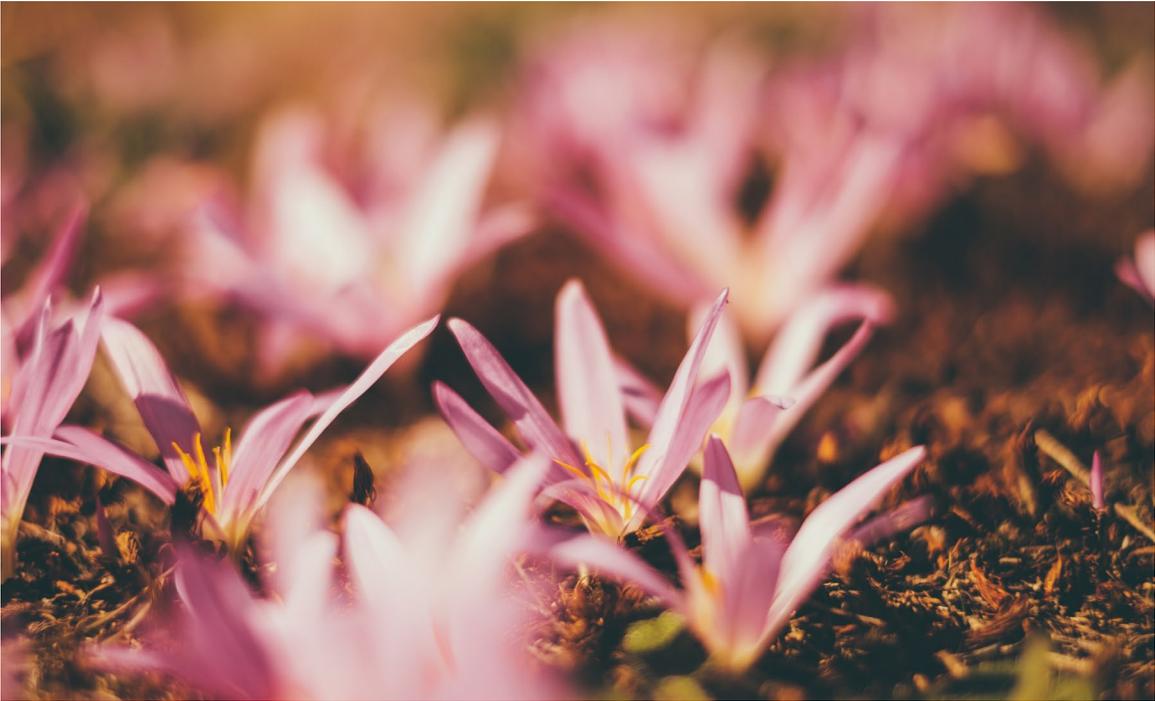
- *Are there places where you are resistant to the expression of a spiritual gift?*
- *Are you open to receiving any spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, thank You that in the body of Christ everyone counts and everyone contributes. Thank You for enabling us to play an active role in Your kingdom through spiritual gifts. Holy Spirit, may we be open to any and all gifts that bring You glory and that are good for our fellow man. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

I need the gift God has in you.
The world needs the gift
God has in you.



WEEK SIX

Thrive



Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 4, 11 NASB

THANK

Pour out your praise and thank God for who He is.

Handwriting practice lines for the 'THANK' section, consisting of ten horizontal dotted lines.

HEAR

Simply let the Word of God wash over you.

Handwriting practice lines for the 'HEAR' section, consisting of ten horizontal dotted lines.

RESPOND

What have you heard God say this week? Any questions you want Him to answer?

INVESTIGATE

Dig deeper for treasure buried in this week's scriptures.

Before going further, read Psalm 119:18 and ask God to make it true for you as you dig deeper.

Read Ephesians 4:11–13. (*Remember, this is not a comprehensive list of gifts.*)

Why were gifts given to the church (the body of believers)?

Look up the following people and write down what you perceive their gifts to be.

How did each woman use her gift to build up God's people?

DEBORAH — JUDGES 4:1–16, 23–24

MARTHA — LUKE 10:38–42

LYDIA — ACTS 16:14–15, 40

TABITHA — ACTS 9:36

PRISCILLA/PRISCA—ROMANS 16:3–5; 1 CORINTHIANS 16:19

Sit with God and take a personal inventory through His eyes.

What gift(s) have you been given to build up the body of Christ?

Are you using it (them)?

If yes, how? Do you need to make any changes?

If not, what steps do you need to take to do so?



NOTES





WEEK *seven*

BURNING TO

BEAR FRUIT

The fruit of the Spirit is really one—LOVE. The rest of this list is merely a description of love in its various manifestations. What is joy? It is love getting happy. What is peace? It is love in repose. What is patience? It is love in waiting. What is kindness? It is love in response. What is gentleness? It is love in behavior. What is faithfulness? It is love in trust. What is self-control? It is love in control.

JOHN T. SEAMANDS

In the spring of 1980, a series of earthquakes occurred in Washington. A large quake caused the north face of Mount St. Helens to turn into an enormous landslide on May 18 of that year. Inside the volcano, partially molten rock, infused with gas and steam, was suddenly exposed to lower pressure. These factors created the optimal conditions needed for eruption, which is exactly what happened. An eighty-thousand-foot eruption column sent ash into eleven states. The rock ignited by the sudden drop in pressure exploded, spewing lava and bits of rock. Although the landslide started before the eruption, the lava was able to overtake the avalanche as it rushed toward Spirit Lake at the base of the mountain.

The blast of the volcanic eruption caused dramatic changes to the forest ecosystem, leveling hundreds of square miles of previously untouched forest. Mark Swanson, a forest ecologist at Washington State University, said in an article in *National Geographic*, “Before the eruption, the dense forest meant there was little light and low wind speeds in the area. But afterward, you had a very open system” (see “Mount St. Helens before the Blast,” May 20, 2010).

The new, open-system ecology of the land surrounding Mount St. Helens meant soil was exposed to abundant light and brisk wind.

Abundant light and brisk wind—these factors created the optimal conditions needed for eruption, which is exactly what happened when hundreds of thousands of seedpods began breaking through the layer of ash that covered the soil above them. Soon, the barren land surrounding Spirit Lake was transformed into a carpet of brilliant pink as a single wildflower began proliferating the area. The seedpods had been in the soil all along but lacked the light needed for germination.

Once they started growing, nothing could stop them. A single plant could grow up to nine feet tall and bear more than eighty thousand seeds! The shoots themselves were edible and enjoyed as a spring vegetable. Tea was made from its leaves, while honey, jelly, and syrup were made from its nectar. A single plant was unimaginably fruitful.

Because this plant is known to be the first colonizer of an open area following a forest fire, it is known as a pioneer plant. Its scientific name is *Chemerion angustifolium*, but it is better known by the phenomenon that releases its potential to proliferate an area: fireweed.

Would you describe your life as unimaginably fruitful? If not, could it be that you are living in a closed system where there is little room for light and wind?



*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness . . .*

GALATIANS 5:22



Week Seven Group Session Guide

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

GENESIS 1:29; 3:15, 18

PSALMS 46:10, 105:12–22

MATTHEW 22:36–40

JOHN 15

ROMANS 5:5; 8:26

GALATIANS 5:22–23

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18

JAMES 1:18

What is the difference between a fruit and a vegetable?

Fruit: *seed* receptacle.

- » What is the purpose of fruit? It is to bear *seed*.
- » What is the purpose of seed? It is to bring forth *fruit*.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God two things happened:

1. The image of God in us was *marred*.
2. Our ability to reproduce in the likeness of God was *hindered*.

God gives us a promise of a new seed—*Jesus*:

- » In Christ, the image of God in us is *restored*.
- » In Christ, our ability to live a *fruitful* life that reproduces the character of Christ is also restored.

In the *flesh*: the work of our life will be full of “thorns and thistles” (Gen. 3:18).

In the *Spirit*: our lives will bear much fruit.

Busy does not equal fruitful. Lazy doesn’t equal rest.

The first fruit of the Holy Spirit is supernatural love.

The Holy Spirit is able to *pour out* God’s love in our hearts and *produce* God’s love in our lives.

The
first fruit
of the
Holy Spirit
is supernatural
love.

Through the Holy Spirit, Christ wants us to:

- » *experience* God's love; and
- » *reproduce* God's love for others.

The Holy Spirit reproduces God's love in us as we *abide* in Christ.

There are means to be able to abide in Christ in the daily rhythm of our day. These means can also be described as holy habits, or spiritual disciplines.

These are not points on a checklist, but points of opportunity to connect into the life of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

A few examples of how to abide daily in Christ include:

- » reading and responding to God's Word;
- » prayer; and
- » keeping Christ's commands.

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you know the supernatural love of God?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *Describe places in your life that are bearing fruit, and other areas that seem like "thorns and thistles."*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, Your love is like no other, flowing from a holy place of grace and truth. Your love is sacrificial; it is without limit and is the very essence of who You are. Jesus, You make the love of God visible and tangible. Holy Spirit, pour out this holy love in us and through us. May our lives bear much fruit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

God would not give you a command without supplying the means to obey Him.







NOTES



WEEK

eight

CAUTION:

HIGHLY

FLAMMABLE

When the Spirit of God comes down upon the church and we are anointed, the Word will be published in the streets, in the lanes, and in the alleys. If the Spirit comes upon God's people in demonstration and in power, there will not be a dark cellar, a dark attic, or a dark home into which the Gospel will not be carried by some loving heart.

D. L. MOODY

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines *fire* as "the phenomenon of combustion manifested in light, flame and heat." Fire, then, is the visible effect of the process of combustion. In order for combustion to take place, fuel must be heated to its ignition temperature. The fire can be sustained as long as there is heat, fuel, and oxygen. The four stages of a fire are: ignition, growth, full development, and dying out. A fire can also be prematurely extinguished by deprivation of one of the three key elements needed to sustain it.

What makes a substance highly flammable? This classification is based on several different attributes. The most important of those attributes is how quickly molecules within the substance can be loosed from one another and released into the atmosphere. The amount of heat required to loosen the molecules helps determine flammability. This is called a material's flash point. So the lower the flash point, the more flammable a substance. For example, we all know it would be unwise to strike a match when pumping gasoline.

Gasoline vapor is highly flammable because of its low flash point. In contrast, solid substances cannot ignite. They must be broken, separated, and released into the atmosphere before they can combust into flame.

The same is true for you and me. Broken apart. Separated. Released. These are the necessary precursors that allow our faith to ignite.

So I ask you: What is your flash point? Are the molecules that make up your life tightly bound together, neat, compact, and predictable? Maybe unexpected interruptions make you anxious because every minute of every day is already filled, scheduled, and planned. Maybe there's no margin between the end of one event and the beginning of another.

Or, perhaps your view of your life is more flexible, loosened from the grip of this world and the sin that so easily entangles us. Is your life open, spacious, and volatile, ready for the flame of God's love and the breath of His Holy Spirit to set your faith on fire? If you would consider yourself already ablaze, what is the stage of your fire? Are you at a point of ignition, growth, or full development? You might feel that you are dying out, or even prematurely extinguished.

Sometimes a fire appears to be extinguished, but the embers are still hot. Ashes need to be removed, the embers need to be stirred, and the flame needs to be fanned by a breath of fresh air. Before you know it, a fire that cannot be contained will begin to blaze. It can become a wildfire.



... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

ACTS 1:8 NASB



Week Eight Group Session Guide

Arriving at the right answer begins with asking the right questions. Today's lesson is full of questions to help you THRIVE.

VIEWER GUIDE

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

MATTHEW 28:16–20

ACTS 1:8

Canvas the entire earth with God's love!

God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is filling the *church* with people one by one.

The Holy Spirit is establishing us into the *family* of God.

We are created to be a *people* of God, His body—alive and active in the world.

REFLECTION GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *What is your experience as a member of the body of Christ?*
- *Do you feel invited, equipped, and empowered to share in the Great Commission?*

- *Do you carry a burden for those who do not know the love of God?*
- *During the rhythm of your life, who receives the love of God from you?*
- *Where are you witnessing the mighty acts of God?*
- *Are you able to communicate God's love in a language others can understand?*
- *How do you communicate the hope within you in the context of your life story?*

GROUP REFLECTION

- *Where is there darkness, chaos, emptiness, and barrenness in the world around you?*
- *How can you take the Holy Spirit there so that God's light can penetrate the darkness?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Abba, You don't need us. You could care for this world without inviting us to take part in Your redemption story. But somehow, You chose us. You entrust us with being vessels of Your Holy Spirit. You believe we can reflect a true image of who Christ is to the world by the way we love You and love others. You are faithful even when we aren't. Holy Spirit, strike a match in us. May our lives be consumed with Your holy love, and may the reality of Your grace and mercy canvas this world ... like WILDFIRE. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THRIVE ON THIS:

The same Holy Spirit that ignited the hearts of the first Christians is ready to set our hearts ablaze with passion for God and others.





NOTES





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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am humbled with gratitude toward those without whom the *Wildfire* study would not be possible.

To the original Thrive team and Cove Church: Jackie, Sandra, Shannon, Janet, Katie, and Karen—there would be no *Wildfire* without you. Each of you is a conduit of the grace of Christ in my life. You inspire me daily.

To my family: Spike, Rily, Parker, and Sophie—you are so supportive of my nerdy obsession with Jesus. I hope I am as supportive of you as you are of me.

To John Tanner and Tommy Gray—you were able to see something in me I couldn't see for myself. Thank you for calling out, affirming, encouraging, and developing the work of the Spirit in me and through me. The world needs more men like you.

To my brothers and sisters at Seedbed—you are as you seem: humble, gracious, gifted, and kind. I join you in sowing for a great awakening!

But ultimately, all my praise and gratitude is laid at the feet of my Savior. To You, sweet Jesus, I owe everything.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rica McRoy was born in Orissa, India, but her family immigrated to America when she was two years old. She was raised in a loving, devout Hindu home. A self-professed nerd, Rica has been a voracious reader since she was a little girl. At the age of twenty-eight, she finally said yes to Christ's offer to be part of His great redemption story and her life has never been the same.

When Rica's love for books collided with her passion for Jesus, God ignited in her an insatiable hunger for His Word. Rica has participated in numerous Bible studies, but in the past few years she has answered God's call to facilitate, teach, and write studies for women.

Rica has been married to her husband, Spike, for twenty-two years. They have three children, Rily, Parker, and Sophie. Rica has practiced optometry in southeast Huntsville for nineteen years. Locally, she engages in ministry at Lincoln Village, the New Hope Children's Clinic, and the Downtown Rescue Mission. Her heritage gives her a burden for the gospel to be declared and demonstrated throughout the nations.

Rica's prayer for the Thrive ministry is for women of all ages to know the great delight of being fully known and fully loved by Christ, and for that knowledge to compel them to share His grace in radical ways.

Will God ever ask you to do something you are not able to do? The answer is yes—all the time! It must be that way, for God's glory and kingdom. If we function according to our ability alone, we get the glory; if we function according to the power of the Spirit within us, God gets the glory. He wants to reveal Himself to a watching world.

HENRY T. BLACKABY

Beloved,

I pray that in the course of the past eight weeks your knowledge, experience, and love of the person of the Holy Spirit have grown exponentially. May the world around you be illuminated by the wildfire of His power and presence, alive in you!

Keep burning bright! In Christ's love and mine,

Rica



ISBN-13: 978-1-62824-554-7



Experience the rare, purified air of the Holy Spirit for yourself.

Rica McRoy was born into a devout and loving Hindu home. She immigrated from India to America as a toddler and had a head-on collision with the grace of Jesus Christ at the age of twenty-seven. Rica lives with her husband, Spike, and three children in Huntsville, Alabama, where her passion is for people of every nation, tribe, and tongue to be able to see the hope to which Christ has called them.

