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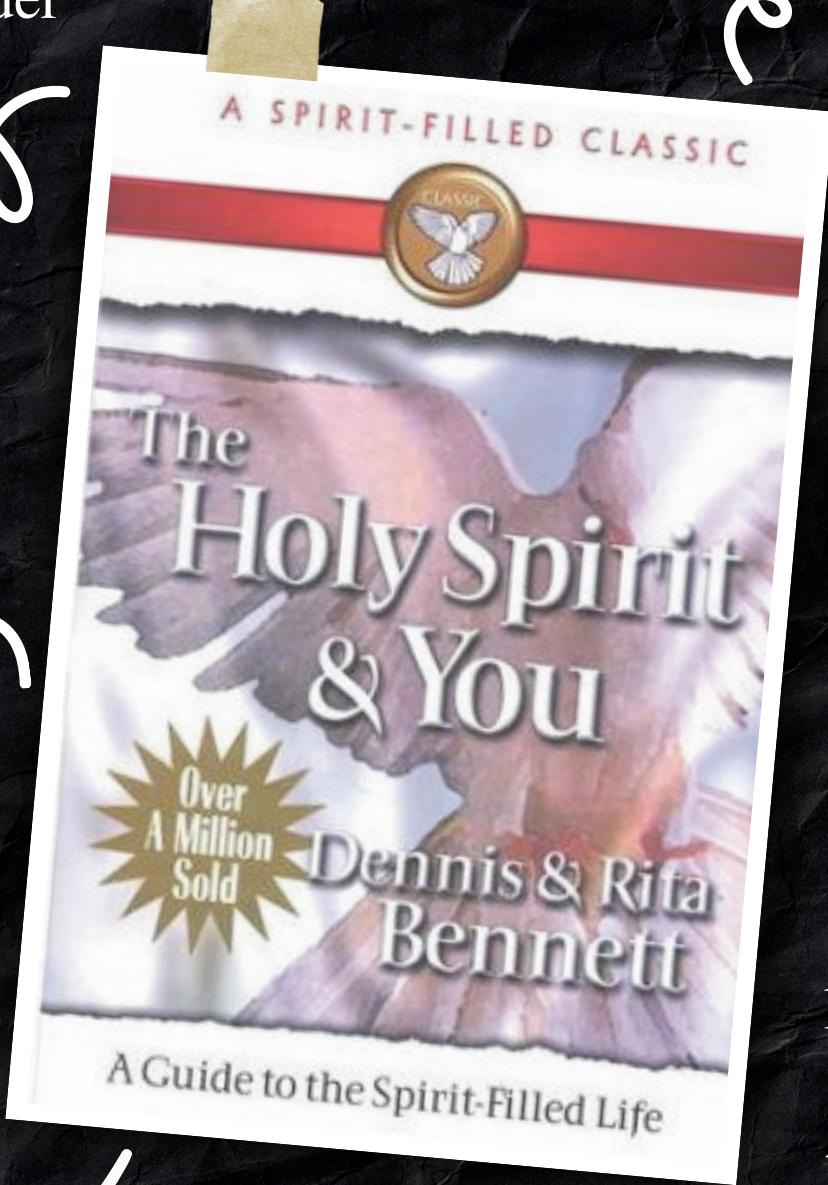
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The Holy Spirit and You

Participant Study Guide

Two Rivers Church

Chapter 1 – The First Step

Chapter Summary:

Spiritual hunger is normal. God invites believers to desire more of His presence and empowerment.

Key Scriptures:

Acts 1:4–8; Luke 11:9–13; John 7:37–39

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Irenaeus** emphasized Christian life as participation in the Spirit's living work.
- **Augustine** described the Spirit as the bond of love drawing believers into communion with God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of “spiritual hunger” do you recognize in yourself or the church today?
2. How does Acts 1:8 connect the Spirit’s power to mission and witness?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 2 – The Overflow

Chapter Summary:

The Spirit-filled life is ongoing—an overflow that shapes character, witness, and daily obedience.

Key Scriptures:

Ephesians 5:18; Romans 8:10–11; Psalm 23:5

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **John Chrysostom** stressed continual reliance on the Spirit for holy living.
- Eastern Christian writers often spoke of the Spirit's work as God's life "energizing" believers.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does “be filled with the Spirit” suggest about daily Christian life?
2. Where do you most need the Spirit’s overflow right now?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 3 – What Do the Scriptures Say?

Chapter Summary:

Scripture—especially Acts—presents the Spirit's empowering work as part of normal church life.

Key Scriptures:

Acts 2:1–4, 38–39; Acts 10:44–48; Acts 19:1–6

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Justin Martyr** referred to prophetic and spiritual gifts in early Christian life.
- **Tertullian** argued that spiritual manifestations continued in the church of his day.

Discussion Questions:

1. What patterns do you see repeated across Acts?
2. Why must Scripture govern spiritual experience?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 4 – Preparing to Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Chapter Summary:

Preparation emphasizes repentance, surrender, humility, and openness to God's work.

Key Scriptures:

Psalm 51:10–12; James 4:6–8; Romans 12:1–2

Historical & Theological Connections:

- The **Desert Fathers** emphasized humility and repentance as protection against spiritual pride.
- Historic Christian spirituality links openness to God with ongoing formation and holiness.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does “preparation” look like without becoming striving or pressure?
2. What attitudes most hinder openness to the Spirit?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 5 – How to Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Chapter Summary:

Receiving is rooted in God's promise and approached by faith, yielding, and trust.

Key Scriptures:

Luke 24:49; Acts 8:14–17; Galatians 3:2–5

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Cyril of Jerusalem** taught expectation of the Spirit's ongoing work in believers.
- Historic practice emphasizes prayerful reception as gift, not achievement.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does “receiving” differ from “earning”?
2. What would it mean to trust God’s promise more simply?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 6 – Introduction to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Chapter Summary:

Gifts are Spirit-given abilities meant to build up the church and serve others in love.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:1–11; Romans 12:4–8; Ephesians 4:11–13

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Origen** viewed gifts as Spirit-enabled service strengthening the church.
- Early Christian teaching stressed gifts should produce edification and unity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are gifts given, according to 1 Corinthians 12?
2. How can gifts be used in ways that strengthen—not divide—the church?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 7 – Tongues and Interpretation

Chapter Summary:

Tongues can function in personal prayer and corporate settings when interpreted for edification.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 14:1–19, 27–28; Acts 2:4; Romans 8:26

Historical & Theological Connections:

- Many early writers connected spiritual prayer with deep dependence on God.
- Modern renewal movements emphasize aligning practice with Paul’s instruction for order.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Paul emphasize as the purpose of public spiritual speech?
2. Why does interpretation matter in corporate worship?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 8 – The Gift of Prophecy

Chapter Summary:

Prophecy in the New Testament strengthens, encourages, and comforts—exercised humbly and tested.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 14:3; Acts 11:27–28; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21

Historical & Theological Connections:

- The **Didache** reflects early Christian prophetic activity with ethical safeguards.
- The church historically stresses testing and accountability for spiritual speech.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does 1 Corinthians 14:3 say prophecy should accomplish?
2. What safeguards keep prophecy healthy and Christ-centered?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 9 – Gifts of Healing

Chapter Summary:

Healing is a gracious gift of God for restoration and witness, approached with compassion and humility.

Key Scriptures:

James 5:14–16; Acts 3:1–10; Matthew 10:7–8

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Irenaeus** referred to healings occurring among Christians as part of witness.
- Historic pastoral care pairs prayer with gentleness, not blame.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we pray for healing faithfully without pressure?
2. How should the church care for people when healing does not occur?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 10 – The Working of Miracles

Chapter Summary:

Miracles are acts of God that reveal His power and confirm His message, always pointing to Christ.

Key Scriptures:

Acts 5:12–16; John 2:1–11; Hebrews 2:3–4

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Gregory of Nyssa** acknowledged miraculous works connected to God's presence.
- The tradition emphasizes signs should lead to worship and obedience, not spectacle.

Discussion Questions:

1. What purposes do signs and miracles serve in the New Testament?
2. How can we keep attention on Christ rather than “spiritual excitement”?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 11 – The Gift of Faith

Chapter Summary:

A special Spirit-given faith brings extraordinary confidence in God for specific moments or needs.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 11:1–6; Acts 27:21–25

Historical & Theological Connections:

- Christian tradition often distinguishes saving faith from Spirit-empowered bold confidence.
- Many renewal testimonies emphasize faith as a gift that serves others.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is this gift different from ordinary faith?
2. How might God use extraordinary faith to strengthen the church?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 12 – Discerning of Spirits

Chapter Summary:

Discernment helps the church recognize what is from God and what is not, protecting truth and love.

Key Scriptures:

1 John 4:1–3; Acts 16:16–18; Matthew 7:15–20

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Ignatius of Antioch** warned churches to guard unity and truth against deception.
- Historic pastoral wisdom teaches discernment should be humble, not suspicious.

Discussion Questions:

1. What tests does Scripture give for discernment?
2. How can discernment remain loving and pastoral?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 13 – Word of Knowledge and Word of Wisdom

Chapter Summary:

These gifts involve Spirit-given insight and guidance for specific situations—requiring humility and care.

Key Scriptures:

John 4:16–19; Acts 5:1–11; James 1:5

Historical & Theological Connections:

- **Augustine** connected wisdom to humility and love of God.
- The tradition warns that “certainty” without love can harm rather than heal.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why must these gifts be practiced with humility and restraint?
2. What safeguards help prevent misuse?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 14 – The Excellent Way

Chapter Summary:

Love is the foundation and measure of Spirit-filled living; gifts without love distort spiritual life.

Key Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22–23; John 13:34–35

Historical & Theological Connections:

- The Fathers consistently taught love is the clearest sign of holiness and maturity.
- Historic spirituality sees fruit as the “proof” of genuine spiritual power.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Paul place love above all gifts?
2. How do you see the Spirit growing fruit in your life?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 15 – Consecration

Chapter Summary:

Spirit-filled living is sustained by surrender—offering ourselves to God in ongoing holiness.

Key Scriptures:

Romans 6:13; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 12:1

Historical & Theological Connections:

- Holiness traditions (including **Wesley**) emphasized consecration as ongoing, grace-filled surrender.
- Historic discipleship stresses daily obedience as the soil where gifts remain healthy.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does consecration look like in daily routines?
2. How does surrender become freedom rather than burden?

Notes & Reflection:

Chapter 16 – The Narrow Way

Chapter Summary:

Discipleship is Spirit-empowered obedience—daily following Jesus in humility, perseverance, and faith.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 7:13–14; Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:16

Historical & Theological Connections:

- Early Christian discipleship emphasized formation through faithfulness, not spectacle.
- **Bonhoeffer** later echoed this: real discipleship is costly obedience to Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the Spirit empower obedience over time?
2. What “next step” of discipleship is Jesus inviting you into?

Notes & Reflection:

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