

Help Is Here

Finding FRESH STRENGTH and PURPOSE
in the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT

STUDY GUIDE | FIVE SESSIONS

MAX LUCADO

WITH ANDREA LUCADO

 HarperChristian
Resources

Help Is Here Study Guide
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Requests for information should be addressed to:
HarperChristian Resources, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

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Note from the Author

I began attending church as a youngster. I was barely into my double-digit years before I was reading my Bible, memorizing Scriptures, and doing my level best to obey every command that I heard preached from the pulpit. I hoisted the backpack of good Christian living and set out to scale the lofty peaks of morality, spirituality, and devotion.

Always tell the truth. Never lag in faith. Pray more. Do more.

Believe me, I tried to tackle that mountain. But that trail grew steep. Peer pressure, raging hormones, and guilt conspired to convince me that I would never make it. Can a fifteen-year-old suffer spiritual burnout? This one did.

Maybe you know the feeling. The fire inside you is running low. It's not for lack of searching. The Lord knows you've tried. At least you *hope* he knows. You've signed up and stood up for everything you know to be right and good. Yet why this cold wind in the face? Why this uphill struggle? These gray skies? This empty spot?

It feels as if life is fading away . . . drip by drip, little by little, day by day.

If that describes what you are feeling right now, the Lord has something—actually, *someone*—you need to know. He is the heaven-sent Helper. The ally of the saint. Your champion, advocate, and guide. He will comfort you and direct you. He

will indwell you, transform you, sustain you, and—some-day—deliver you into your heavenly home.

The Bible makes more than a hundred references this *someone* that we know as the Holy Spirit. He is the ultimate teacher (see John 14:26). He is the wind of God (see John 3:8). He is your intercessor (see Romans 8:26). He is the seal of heaven on the saint (see Ephesians 1:13). He is the dove of peace who calms you, the gift-giver who equips you, the river of living water who flows out of you to refresh the world (see John 7:37–39).

In this study, we will ponder the amazing benefit of the divine presence. Whether this is a fresh encounter or your first encounter, it does not matter. God wants you to have the energizing strength of the Holy Spirit. He wants you to know help isn't just coming . . . it is already here. Challenges come with life, but they need not *define* your life. Help is here.

How to Use This Guide

*T*he Holy Spirit. What comes to mind when you hear that name? If you are like most people, the term itself seems a bit mysterious. God the *Father* is easy enough to grasp. We can comprehend that image. God the *Son* is manageable as well. But God as . . . *Spirit*?

This is the purpose of the *Help Is Here Study Guide*. Over the course of the next five sessions, you will embark on a journey to discover what the Bible says about this third member of the Trinity. You will discover how he can be your ally, your strength, and your guide. You will see that he can give you peace in this world. You will look at his role as your intercessor, your advocate, your giver of spiritual gifts, and—ultimately—your guarantee of eternal life to come.

Now, before you begin, keep in mind that there are few ways you can go through this material. You can experience this study with others in a group (such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any other small-group gathering), or you may choose to go through the content on your own. Either way, know that the videos for each session are available for you to view at any time by following the instructions provided on the inside cover of this study guide.

Group Study

Each of the sessions are divided into two parts: (1) a group study section, and (2) a personal study section. The group study section is intended to provide a basic framework on how to open your time together, get the most out of the video content, and discuss the key ideas together that were presented in the teaching. Each session includes the following:

- **Welcome:** A brief introduction to the topic for you to read on your own.
- **Share:** A few ice-breaker questions to get you and your group members thinking about the topic and interacting with each other.
- **Read:** A key passage for you and your group members to read through together before you watch the video teaching.
- **Watch:** Six key points from the video teaching to help you follow along, stay engaged, and take notes.
- **Discuss:** Six questions to help you and your group members reflect more on the material presented in the teaching and apply it to your lives.
- **Respond:** A short personal exercise to help reinforce the key ideas.
- **Pray:** A place for you to record prayer requests and praises for the week.

If you are doing this study in a group, make sure you have your own copy of the study guide so you can write down your thoughts, responses, and reflections and have access to the videos via streaming. You may also want to have a copy of the

Help Is Here book, as reading it alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights. See the “recommended reading” section at the end of each session for the chapters in the book that correspond to the material you and your group are discussing. Finally, keep these points in mind:

- **Facilitation:** If you are doing this study in a group, you will likely want to appoint someone to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. If *you* have been chosen for this role, there are some resources in the back of this guide that can help you lead your group through the study.
- **Faithfulness:** Your small group is a place where tremendous growth can happen as you reflect on the Bible, ask questions, and learn what God is doing in other people’s lives. For this reason, be fully committed and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members.
- **Friendship:** The goal of any small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God, and build friendships. So seek to make your group a “safe place.” Be honest about your thoughts and feelings . . . but also to listen carefully to everyone else’s thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Keep anything personal that your group members share in confidence so that you can create a community where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

If you are going through this study on your own, read the opening Welcome section and then reflect on the questions that follow in the Share section. Go through the Read section and record your responses in the space provided. Watch the video and use the prompts to take notes. Finally, personalize the questions and exercises in the Discuss and Respond sections and record your thoughts. Close by recording any requests you want to pray about during the week.

Personal Study

As the name implies, the personal study section is for you to work through on your own during the upcoming week. Each exercise is designed to take you deeper into passages of Scripture so that you can further explore the ways, wonders, and workings of the Holy Spirit in your life. Go at your own pace, doing a little each day or all at once, and spend a few moments in silence to listen to what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you. Each personal study will include the following:

- **Opening:** A brief introduction to lead you into the personal study.
- **Scripture:** A few passages on the Holy Spirit for you to read and review.
- **Reflection:** Questions for you to answer related to the passages you just read.
- **Prayer:** A short prayer that you make your own and pray back to God.

How to Use This Guide

Note that if you are doing this study as part of a group, and you are unable to finish (or even start) these personal studies for the week, you should still attend the group time. Be assured that you are still wanted and welcome even if you don't have your "homework" done. The group studies and personal studies are both intended to help you hear what God wants you to hear and how to apply what he is saying to your life. So . . . as you go through this study, be listening for him to speak to you as learn about the Holy Spirit and know that his *help is here*.





SESSION ONE

Our Powerful Ally

Paul traveled through Turkey and arrived in Ephesus, where he found several disciples. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we don’t know what you mean. What is the Holy Spirit?”

ACTS 19:1-2 TLB

Welcome

We could all use a little help sometimes. Perhaps this is why two of the Beatles' catchiest hits included lyrics like, "I get by with a little help from my friends," and, "I need somebody, help! Not just anybody, help!"

That last part is very true. Sometimes when we need help, we don't need it from just anybody. We need supernatural help. We need big things to happen. We need a person in our lives to change. We need our own hearts to change. We need the type of help that a fellow human cannot really provide and the type of help that we can't muster on our own.

Enter the *Holy Spirit*.

Now, Christians have all sorts of opinions and reactions when it comes to the Holy Spirit. Some nod their heads and say, "amen." They deeply believe in the power of the Spirit and have witnessed it in their lives. Some roll their eyes. To them, the Holy Spirit is a biblical figure that doesn't have much to do with their faith today. Others scratch their heads. They don't know much about the Holy Spirit or understand who he is and what he does in their lives.

No matter where you fall on this spectrum, this session will help you understand who the Holy Spirit *actually* is and how he can *actually* help in your life. (Because we could all use a little help from our friends, right?) You will discover that when it comes to your need for *supernatural* help, the Holy Spirit is your best friend.

He didn't just exist in the book of Acts. He isn't a mysterious figure that you can never get to know. The Holy Spirit is here, alive, and well, moving and breathing in you and through you—and his power will help you.

Share

If you or any of your group members don't know each other, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of the following questions:

- What do you do when you need help with the bigger challenges in life?

— *or* —

- What thoughts or images come up when you hear the name *Holy Spirit*?

Read

At the start of each session, you will be given a passage of Scripture to read that relates to the key themes and ideas that will be presented in the video teaching. Break into groups of two to three people to read through this passage, and then take a few minutes to write down your responses to the questions that follow. Share your answers before you re-join the main group.

If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:15–17

- What does Jesus instruct his followers to do if they love him? Why do you think that he emphasizes this point to his disciples?

- Jesus told his disciples they already knew the Holy Spirit. Do you feel like you *know* the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

Watch

Now it's time to watch the video for this session, which you can access by playing the DVD or through streaming (see the instructions printed on the inside front cover). Fill in the blanks below as you follow along, and also record any thoughts that stand out to you. (See the answer key at the end of this group section if you get stuck or miss any of these blanks.)

1. Followers of Christ have been given access to the _____. Just like a big brother, he chooses each day to be our powerful _____.

Our Powerful Ally

2. The Holy Spirit is the executor of God's will, come to infuse us with _____. He equips us not to just get by but to actually _____, shine forth, and live the abundant life that Jesus spoke about so often.

3. Challenges come with life, but they need not _____ your life. Help is here. And he comes with the promise of _____.

4. The power of the Holy Spirit does not only apply to us as _____. Yes, the Spirit is always there to fill us when we approach him. But sometimes he pours out his power over entire _____.

5. You can be a part of this great outflowing of power. A contributor to this raging _____. For you have something to offer to others who are _____.

6. When the Living Water of our Lord and Savior pours into our _____, the Holy Spirit flows out of us and electrifies the dead places of the world. This is how _____ happens.

Discuss

Take some time to discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions.

1. Do you have an ally in your life—someone who is on your side and supports you? If so, how does it feel to have that person in your life?

2. From what you know about the Holy Spirit, how could he be an ally for you?

3. Read aloud John 14:16. How is the Holy Spirit described in this passage? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in this same way?

4. Read aloud Acts 1:4 and 8. How is the Holy Spirit described in this passage? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in the way that he is described here?

5. Read Isaiah 44:3-5. How does this passage speak differently about the Holy Spirit as compared to the other two passages? Describe a time, if any, that you felt the Spirit's power flow out of you or you felt the Holy Spirit's power flow from someone else.

6. How do you hope this study will impact your understanding of the Holy Spirit?

Respond

The Bible records more than a dozen metaphors to describe the work of the Holy Spirit. On your own, look up the following passages listed under each of the images below. Then write down what the verse says about that particular role of the Holy Spirit.



Matthew 3:16–17



Acts 2:3–4



John 7:37–39

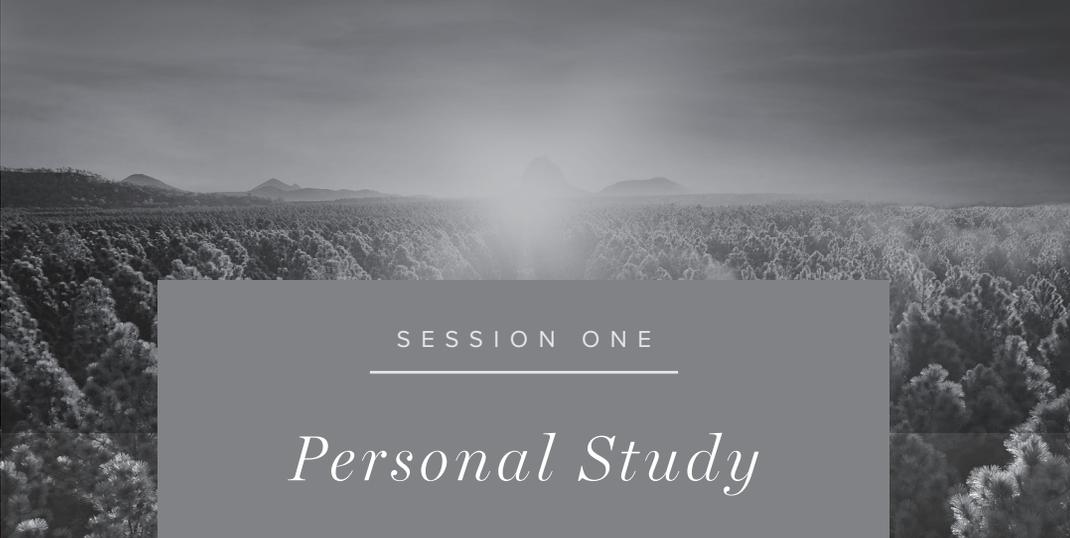
Pray

End your group time asking if anyone has any prayer requests to share. Write those requests down in the space below so you and your group members can pray about them in the week ahead. Finish by asking one person from the group to close your time in prayer.

Name	Request
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

WATCH ANSWERS: (1) HOLY SPIRIT, ALLY; (2) STRENGTH, THRIVE; (3) DEFINE, POWER; (4) INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES; (5) FLOOD, THIRSTY; (6) HEARTS, REVIVAL





SESSION ONE

Personal Study

You are on a journey toward a better understanding of the Holy Spirit and his work in your life. A key part of that growth, regardless of where you are spiritually, involves studying Scripture. This is the goal of these personal studies—to help you explore what the Bible has to say and how to apply God’s Word to your life. As you work through each of these personal studies, be sure to write down your responses to the questions (you will be given a few minutes to share your insight at the start of the next session if you are doing this study with others). Also, if you are reading through *Help Is Here* alongside this study, you may want to first review chapter 1.

1 The Holy Spirit for Dummies

...

The Holy Spirit can feel like an anomaly even if you have been a Christian for a long time. So today, spend some time taking inventory on what you know and believe about the Holy

Spirit and where those beliefs came from. Remember, you are not alone in your questions or misunderstandings of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' own disciples had questions about him! Read how Jesus explained the nature of the Spirit to his followers in the following passages.

John 14:16: *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever.”*

John 14:26: *“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

John 15:26: *“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.”*

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.”*

1. When did you first learn about the Holy Spirit? What were you taught?

2 The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

We often associate the Holy Spirit with Jesus' time on earth and after he ascended into heaven. This is understandable, since as you learned in yesterday's study, Jesus did talk about leaving us with the Holy Spirit after he left. But the Spirit existed long before Jesus came to earth. In fact, he is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. Read the passages below and see what you can learn from these Old Testament writers and how they related to the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26–27: *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”*

Psalms 139:7–10: *Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

Nehemiah 9:19–20: *“Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the wilderness. By day the pillar of cloud did not fail to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst.”*

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1. Before reading these passages, what role did you think the Holy Spirit played before the coming of Christ?
2. How is the Holy Spirit described in these passages?
3. According to Ezekiel 36:26–27 and Nehemiah 9:19–20, how does the Spirit guide us?
4. Does knowing the Holy Spirit is present throughout Scripture, and not just in the New Testament, change the way you think about or understand him? If so, how?

Prayer: *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (Psalm 139:7–10). In Jesus’ name, amen.*

3 The Holy Spirit As Your Ally

Burnout, stress, and anxiety can take over our lives if we're not careful. Whether it's stress about work, family, politics, or finances, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we have to keep it all together all the time—that everything is up to *us*. But this just leads to more stress. Perhaps you know what it's like to hit a wall or be at the end of your rope. But when you're in a difficult season, you can always find hope in the Holy Spirit. He is your ally—someone who is there for you to support you. He can help take the load off so you can rest and feel peace. Read what Paul says in Romans about how the Spirit can be your ally in times of need:

Romans 8:5–11: *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.*

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Our Powerful Ally

1. Describe a time in your life when you felt burned out or overwhelmed. How did you try to cope with that burn out?
2. According to this passage, what is the difference between living in the flesh and living in the Spirit?
3. Think about a personal experience you have with living according to your flesh. How could the Spirit have helped you during that time?
4. What is something new you learned about the flesh and the Spirit from this passage?

Prayer: *Holy Spirit, thank you for being my ally. May I rely on you during my times of need. I often feel anxious and overwhelmed by what's going on in my life. I feel like it is up to me to fix it. Help me not rely on my flesh but rather on you to get me through. Bring me peace during times of anxiety and hope during times of distress. Remind me to rely on your power and not my own. In Jesus' name, amen.*

4 Thriving in the Spirit

...

Have you ever driven home, pulled into your driveway, and realized you don't remember how you got there? You were on autopilot, and muscle memory kicked in to get you home. You can live your life this way as well—on autopilot, unaware of what's really going on around you, and unaware of the depth of life that Jesus is inviting you to experience. The Holy Spirit can help you live a life where you're not just surviving on autopilot, but you're actually *thriving*. Read what the Bible says about this invitation you have to thrive in Christ.

John 10:10: *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

Romans 15:13: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Ephesians 1:19–20: *I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from*

Our Powerful Ally

the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms (NLT).

2 Corinthians 5:17: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

1. Are you on autopilot right now, or do you feel like you're thriving? Explain.
2. According to these verses that you just read, what can the Christian life look like?
3. From what you've learned about the Holy Spirit so far, how can he make this sort of life possible?

4. In what areas of your life do you need the Holy Spirit to help you go from surviving to thriving?

Prayer: *God, you have made abundant life possible through the power of your Spirit. The same Spirit that conquered the grave lives in me—what a promise! Help me to believe in that promise today. Life can feel so monotonous. I can feel indifferent to my work, my family, and my community. But I don't want to live on autopilot. Allow your Spirit to work in me and show me what I can so easily miss in my life. May I appreciate what you have given me and feel a sense of passion for all that I have. In Jesus' name, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I pray, amen.*

For Next Session: *Write down any insights or questions you want to discuss at the next group meeting. In preparation for the next session, read chapters 3 and 7 in Help Is Here.*