



STUDENTS

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

UNSTOPPABLE  
GOSPEL

TRUE STORY

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

FALL 2016  
RONNIE FLOYD: GENERAL EDITOR

LifeWay | Students





# SESSION

# 1

## UNSTOPPABLE MISSION



**WHEN WAS  
SOMETHING IN YOUR  
LIFE DEFINITELY  
WORTH THE WAIT?**





# THE POINT

THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS US TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

### FACT:

THE LIGHT BULB WAS A 70-YEAR-OLD INVENTION BY THE TIME THOMAS EDISON STARTED DEVELOPING THE CARBON FILAMENT. PEOPLE HAD BEEN WAITING 70 YEARS FOR DEPENDABLE ELECTRIC LIGHT BEFORE EDISON MADE IT A REALITY.

Maybe we're impatient or maybe we're influenced by a world of instant gratification, but when we want something, we want it now!

- **Two minutes waiting in the fast food drive-thru line. Too long.**
- **Eight seconds to reheat a Krispy Kreme® donut. Forget it.**
- **Fifteen seconds for a movie to stream to your computer. Just read a book.**

However, some things are worth waiting for.

- **The fine craftsmanship that goes into a new iPhone®.**
- **The right moment for the perfect "prom-posal."**
- **The crisp, clean feeling of a new driver's license featuring your picture.**

Some things are just worth the time it takes to get them.

Jesus told His disciples the same thing at the end of His ministry on earth, wait. He was about to give every believer an incredible gift: the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. They couldn't have fully appreciated what that meant at the time, but they waited nonetheless.

When the Holy Spirit came, He empowered the disciples for a mission that was unstoppable. From one small dot on a map, they took Christ's message across the world, and we continue this mission today.

The gift of the Holy Spirit was worth the wait.

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? ▶ ACTS 1:4-8,12-14



<sup>4</sup>While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

<sup>7</sup>He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

<sup>12</sup>Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup>When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

## THE SETTING

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection just happened, and every event He foretold came to pass. Then, Jesus spent 40 days after His resurrection teaching His disciples about the kingdom of God. He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to give them the power to be witnesses of the gospel to the world. Christ then ascended into heaven, and the disciples waited and prepared to receive the power Christ promised.

## ► ACTS 1:4-5

The life of a Christian is not just difficult, it's impossible. Following Jesus means...

- **Loving people even when they hate you.**
- **Doing the right thing at school, even when it affects your grades.**
- **Forgiving people who don't deserve it.**

*"We can't live this impossible life on our own power. Christ died so we can live in the freedom of His grace and power." #BSFL*



**What are three of the most difficult aspects of the Christian life for you to live out personally?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

When Jesus called us to this impossible life, He never sugarcoated how difficult it would be. He said:

- **Those wanting to follow Him must deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Luke 9:23**
- **His followers will endure suffering. John 16:33**

Christ never expected us to live this impossible life on our own power. Jesus lived His earthly life connected to and empowered by God. Jesus lived and died in a way that no person could, so that we can live in the freedom of His grace and power.

**WHAT DOES IT  
LOOK LIKE TO WAIT  
ON THE LORD?**



In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus told His followers of a gift He promised earlier— the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit would descend on believers, empowering them to preach the gospel. From that moment forward, God's people would be connected with Him like never before.

It's impossible to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit. All aspects of our lives require the Holy Spirit's empowerment! From prayer, to growth, to hearing God's Word, the Holy Spirit empowers us to know God, enjoy Him, and make Him known. Our purpose, fulfillment, impact, and comfort are all bound up in God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the mark of a saved life and the guarantee of a promised future. Power this vast shouldn't be contained or hidden.





## ► ACTS 1:6-8

Like we often do, the disciples focused on earthly plans instead of eternal purpose, asking Jesus if the Spirit's coming meant Israel would experience political restoration. Jesus didn't correct them; instead, He refocused them on the mission He called His people to carry out.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came, we would:

**RECEIVE POWER:** The Greek word for power is *dunamis*. Words like *dynamite* and *dynamic* come from it. This power from the Holy Spirit caused a few believers to turn the world upside down with the gospel.

**BE WITNESSES:** They were witnesses to the power of Jesus while He was on earth and witnesses to the power that would soon come to them through the Holy Spirit. The mission of every believer is simple: Tell the world how the gospel of Christ has changed your life.

**TELL EVERYONE:** Jesus made the expansion plan clear: Start at home and keep moving outward until everyone hears the gospel. The faithfulness of these believers is evident now. Even the chance to study God's Word is a result of believers spreading the gospel in the power of the Spirit and moving outward. You were once someone's, "ends of the earth."

The same Spirit who descended on believers at Pentecost and turned the world upside down for Jesus is alive today in those who place their faith in Christ. This means that whether you're on a mission trip, the Internet, or at school, you can carry the gospel to the ends of the earth in your own neighborhoods.

We are empowered to be on mission to our city, nation, and world.

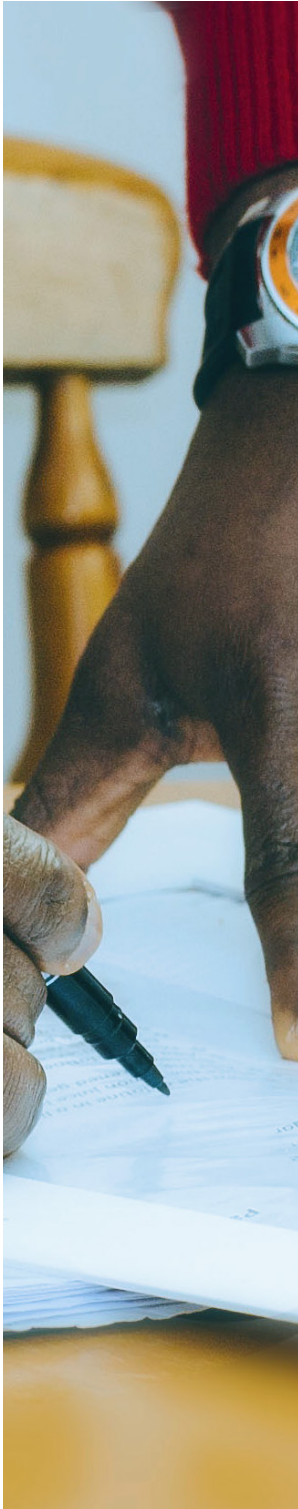
**WHY IS THE ORDER OF JESUS' PROMISE SO IMPORTANT (RECEIVE POWER, BE WITNESSES, TELL EVERYONE)?**



"Contrary to our superficial thinking, there never was a distinction in his [Jesus'] mind between home and foreign missions. To Jesus it was all world evangelism."<sup>1</sup> —Robert Coleman

**How does this statement challenge the way you think about spreading the gospel to the world?**

1. "Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2010), 18."



## ACTION POINT

God has a great plan for you, just like He did for the disciples. Studying the Bible is about more than reading God's Word—we have to apply what we learn. Read Acts 1:6-8 and answer the questions below. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this passage?

## THINK IT THROUGH:

What areas of your life do you need the Holy Spirit's power to transform?

Why is it important for us to remember that we are called to be witnesses of the gospel?

Do you know people who need to hear about Jesus' power?  
How can you share with them?



## ► ACTS 1:12-14

What did the disciples do while they waited on God's promise? They met together and prayed. Not for a quick meeting, but they prayed continually and waited 10 days until the gift of the Holy Spirit arrived at Pentecost. We often view prayer as an alternative to taking action, but the disciples knew better. They realized that prayer is the greatest single action believers can take to prepare our hearts to see God do great things. Three things are clear in these verses:

**Prayer is primary.** Usually, we treat prayer like a last resort. Prayer wasn't a last resort for the early church or just an agenda item—it was the agenda. Prayer is designed as the primary power source for believers, not simply a backup system for emergencies.

**Prayer brings courage.** For all the disciples knew, the same people who crucified their Lord might come for them as well. Courage in the face of fear pushed the early church to dive into prayer. In times of anxiety and fear, when we fall at the feet of Christ, He will raise us up in faith and power.

**Prayer unites believers.** The disciples were united in prayer. They were single-minded and joined together as one. Continual prayer encourages us to prioritize God's plan over our own. Disunity and conflict often happen because so many Christians fight for their own plans instead of God's purpose. When the church prays as one, great things happen.

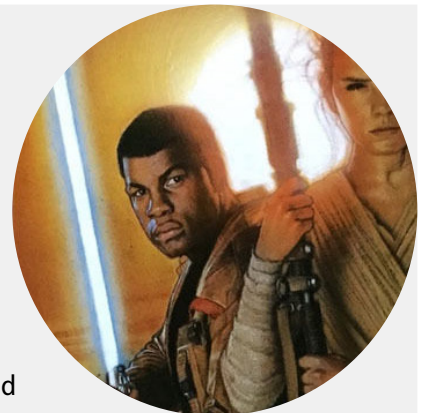
## HOW IS PRAYING WITH OTHERS FOR A SPECIFIC MISSION DIFFERENT FROM PRAYING ALONE?



## ACTION POINT ►

The Force is prominent in the "Star Wars" movie series. It can be used to enhance natural abilities or increase mental power. It also has a "dark side" that feeds on fear, anger, and hate. Unfortunately, there are those who embrace it for their benefit. The Force is not personal, nor does it have a will or plan. It is simply a force.

Sometimes we mistakenly view the Holy Spirit this way. We fail to see God's Spirit as a teacher and transformer who empowers us to do God's will, instead seeing Him as an impersonal "force" that exists for our benefit. Read this passage again, and list characteristics that show the Holy Spirit is a personal, loving, and transformational God.





# LIVE IT OUT

**CHRIST SAID IT IS BETTER FOR US THAT THE SPIRIT CAME,  
AND I WANT TO LIVE LIKE I KNOW THAT IS TRUE. I DON'T WANT  
TO KEEP CRAWLING WHEN I HAVE THE ABILITY TO FLY.<sup>2</sup>**

FRANCIS CHAN

## BIBLE READING PLAN



**DAY 1:**  
ACTS 1:1-26

**DAY 2:**  
ACTS 2:1-24

**DAY 3:**  
ACTS 2:25-47

**DAY 4:**  
ACTS 3:1-26

**DAY 5:**  
ACTS 4:1-22

**DAY 6:**  
ACTS 4:23-5:11

**DAY 7:**  
ACTS 5:12-37

### ► CHRIST

Living in the power of the Holy Spirit starts with spending time in God's Word and prayer. When we study His Word and spend time with Him, the Spirit begins to work more and more in our lives. This week, make personal time with God a priority. Set aside 15 to 30 minutes a day to read God's Word and pray about what is on your heart.

### ► COMMUNITY

Make prayer a priority with your group, not an afterthought. Create a prayer list as a group based on Acts 1:8. Pray for each item together as a group.

We're praying for our schools, that You would \_\_\_\_\_.

We're praying for our city, that You would \_\_\_\_\_.

We're praying for our nation, that You would \_\_\_\_\_.

We're praying for our world, that You would \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Francis Chan, Forgotten God Quotes, "Good Reads [accessed September 2015]. Available from the Internet: [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)



## ► CULTURE

This may be the first time you have realized that the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to share the gospel. Read each of the verses below. How can the Holy Spirit make a difference in your life through each of these promises?

### HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

#### **EPHESIANS 1:13**

He guarantees our salvation.

#### **ROMANS 8:26**

He prays for us when we do not know what to pray.

#### **GALATIANS 5:22-23**

He makes our hearts and actions more like Christ.

#### **2 CORINTHIANS 3:17**

He is our freedom.

#### **1 CORINTHIANS 2:12-16**

He helps us distinguish God's wisdom from the world's wisdom.