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Rain, Wind and Fire

Understanding the work of the Holy Spirit

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Acknowledgements

Something as massive and comprehensive as the iFollow Discipleship Resource doesn't just "materialize" in our consciousness. It spent years in people's minds before the real work began, and then it has gone through many hands in its development and bringing to market.

We wanted to acknowledge those who have been involved all along, citing what each person contributed. But the most we can do in the space we're allowed is list them, recognizing that we will almost inevitably leave some out who deserve mention.

From the earliest days, we need to list Monte Sahlin and Paul Richardson—from the Center for Creative Ministry—Gerry Chudleigh, Dan Savino, Jere Wallack, and Kermit Netteberg (who were all from the North American Division or from the NAD Church Resource Center). We also need to mention Debra Brill, who has been part of the process all along. From the iFollow Taskforce, we need to add Loren Siebold, Dave Gemmell, and Meredith Carter. And, finally, the entire Mind Over Media team, led by Ray Tetz, who helped us bring the resource to completion.

We also want to acknowledge all the advisory team members, writers, and editors who have been a part of this process, both those who worked on what became the iFollow Pastor's Edition and those who worked on the iFollow Discipleship Series books—both the authors and those who wrote or identified what we've come to call "the donut," the surrounding material.

Good work, all. For some, we thank you for your vision to attempt something new and "game-changing." For others, we thank you for your tenacity, sticking with the work even when it was in obscurity and with far too little pay. And we thank you, the reader, for staying on us to get it done, and for your eagerness to try something new and somewhat different from what the church typically offers.

Dan Day

Executive Editor, iFollow Series

About iFollow

The iFollow series is designed to help individuals grow as disciples in a group setting. Discipleship falls into several areas of focus, demanding a wide palate of conversation. In order to assure that the iFollow series is broad enough and flexible enough to serve the needs of various congregations, we've created a set of categories into which the books are developed. These include:

- Journey
- Discovery
- Witness
- Church Life
- Leadership

About This Title

We are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Several biblical references tell us about being “baptized with the Holy Spirit,” “receiving the Holy Spirit,” or being “born of the Spirit.” We also read stories of the Holy Spirit enabling people to do extraordinary, often very strange things!

Sometimes the idea of being influenced by a spirit, even if it is the Holy Ghost, can be intimidating. After all, Jesus' description of the Spirit to Nicodemus made Him sound rather unpredictable and uncontrollable. But the Holy Spirit is a gift of Jesus Christ Himself, and is meant to be our Comfort.

This iFollow Bible Study Guide will take you on an in-depth journey of how Scripture describes the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. You'll also learn about how to test a spirit, the Holy Spirit's relationship to us, and how the Holy Spirit helped form the Adventist Church.

This leader's guide includes all the information you need to start and lead a small group through *Rain, Wind and Fire*:

- Step-by-step instructions for getting started
- Detailed information on leading a group
- Tips for conducting meetings
- Discussion questions for each chapter
- Spiritual growth activities
- Web links and additional resources



Order Participant Bible Study Guide from adventsource.org
402.486.8800
or your local Adventist Book Center

iFollow & Adventist Fundamental Beliefs

The iFollow series is structured around the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It provides a way for people to experience, study, and discuss various beliefs. *Rain, Wind and Fire* includes study and discussion that will strengthen members in the following fundamental beliefs:

- Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- Prophecies
- Holy Scriptures
- Holy Spirit
- Trinity
- Father
- Son

By including our beliefs throughout this series participants will experience these beliefs not as standalone doctrine, but as an integrated part of their growth as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Who Can Use This Resource?

Who might benefit from this series? What settings are these study guides intended for? Here are some possibilities:

- An elder of a local church looking for a resource to lead a prayer meeting group that meets once a week in your church
- A small group leader looking for a new curriculum
- A Sabbath school class
- A leader of a home Bible fellowship
- Anyone who wants to deepen their walk with God

This guide will help you as a small group leader understand the value of “group life.” It will lay the foundation for beginning a group and keeping it going.

Tips for Success

Group Dynamics

An intimate small group has many benefits to the Christian struggling to connect with God on a personal level. For one thing, it provides a sense of accountability. Some Christians need a friend or two to look them in the eye each week and ask, “How’s it going with your walk?”

Others need to practice methods and ideas among friends. They need to hear others’ stories of success and failure. They need to experiment and grow with a group. They need to gain knowledge and perspective from fellow Christians and they need encouragement when they feel like giving up.

As you lead your small group, keep in mind that Christ works through three primary means to help us grow: the Holy Spirit, the Word, and through God’s people. Each of these work together to impact our growth in Christ. The Holy Spirit speaks to our minds and hearts directly (see 1 Cor. 2:6-16). The Bible is a primary means of giving us instruction, correction, and reproof, etc. (see 2 Tim. 3:16).

The Value of a Focused Group

How does a leader help ensure that the group doesn’t simply become a social club? Group focus is key to not only experiencing fellowship as a group, but in specifically growing in your devotional life outside the group.

Let’s begin by asking, “Why come together?” We learn together to love God more deeply and love one another more authentically. Matthew 22:37-38 teaches us that the greatest commandment of Scripture is summarized in this dual-direction of loving—upward and outward, loving God and loving each other.

This iFollow discipleship resource will give you a clear focus for your group. By agreeing that your focus will be to become more Christlike (Romans 8:29) through strengthening the inward disciplines each person will grow as a disciple of Jesus.

Starting a Group

Establishing a strong foundation before you begin a small group can make or break the experience for everyone involved. The following is intended to be a quick reference list and is not meant to be exhaustive. You can find excellent books and seminar material giving greater depth on starting small groups.

Motivation Check

God plants passions and desires in our hearts to accomplish His will. Do you have an interest in getting a small group together? Why? What do you want to have happen? Are you willing to learn? Are you willing to explore new ways to hear God’s voice? Reflect on your motivations and/or needs.

Groups that begin simply to give a teacher an opportunity to teach or a leader an opportunity to lead are shallow ground for laying a foundation. Deep values make a strong foundation. If you feel convicted to begin a group, bring that conviction before God in prayer. Ask Him to cleanse your motivations and fill you with His will for beginning a group.

Leadership Support

Talk with your local church leadership. It's a great way to clarify your reasons for starting a group. Sit down with your pastor or head elder and explain what is on your heart. The act of talking through your ideas can sharpen your focus.

Outline your plans. Share when, where, how long you plan to meet, and what materials you might use. Show the study guides you plan to use, along with this leader's guide. And ask for prayer and support. You may even go so far as to suggest your church choose a leader or point person to encourage a small group ministry in your church.

By keeping in contact with your local church leadership, several things will happen. You will potentially receive their support, encouragement, and prayers. They will be better prepared to deal with criticism or attacks on your group if you keep leaders apprised of your plans.

Find a Partner

A crucial step is finding a partner. This kindred spirit should be someone with the same passion you have to begin a small group. By praying for, finding, and meeting with this person, you can begin to build a plan for a group meeting.

Don't neglect this step. There are many benefits to having a partner. This individual may be an apprentice who learns under your leadership or it might be a peer. Having an assistant takes pressure off you and provides balance in the group's ebb and flow. It also gives you a back-up leader if you cannot attend a group meeting.

Materials

Make sure you review the participant guide. Have a complete copy on hand, and become familiar with the overall approach and content. When you invite people to join your group you are in a far better position to compel them to join if you are familiar with the participant guides.

Invite People to Join

How do you build a group? Where do you begin? There are two general approaches: the personal invitation and the general announcement. Both work—though a personal invitation may bring together a more predictable number. If you use the general announcement approach (in the church bulletin, from the pulpit, in the church newsletter, etc.), we encourage you to use a sign-up sheet or online survey. This way you can plan on the numbers and have enough booklets on hand to lead the group.

What about group size? Small group theories vary on exact numbers. Some suggest no more than 12. Others recommend groups get into 4's for deeper sharing. Five to 12 people are recommended for the dynamics of a group to allow people to fully interact.

When too many people join a small group, the opportunity for everyone to share is limited. Don't be afraid to have a cut-off number (12, for example). If there is enough interest, begin a second or third group.

Conducting Group Meetings

How do you conduct group meetings? Here's a quick list to get you started. These suggestions are meant to be adapted to the unique circumstances and needs of your group.

The Meeting Place

A small group can meet at the church, in a park, or perhaps in a lunchroom or other private location at work. But the home atmosphere is conducive to group life. There's no place like home for group control.

As the leader, find a host or hostess to provide a place to meet. Since the leader will be dealing with the details of group time, sharing the responsibility of hosting gives someone else in the group a sense of belonging and purpose. Invite the host to provide light refreshments. Arrange seating so that everyone is on the same level, and in a circle so everyone can see each other.

Childcare arranged before the meeting is a tremendous benefit. Have childcare in a place other than the host's home since it will cut down on interruptions to the group. Perhaps a teenager can care for children in one of the other member's homes.

A rotation basis might be used in sharing this responsibility as well as providing refreshments. Stick with one meeting place for the duration of the meeting. Otherwise people might forget the location of the evening's meeting and precious time can be wasted driving to the wrong house.

Formatting Your Meetings

The format you choose may vary. This series suggests the following elements:

- Arrival/refreshment time
- Welcome
- Prayer
- Review/overview of chapter
- Discussion questions (included in leader's guide)
- Spiritual growth activities (included in leader's guide)
- Closing prayer

Some groups include music. Others may want to meet for a meal (potluck style), but this could become a barrier to some who may not have time to prepare anything.

First Session Details

We recommend meetings last 60-90 minutes. People need a chance to get acquainted, enjoy light refreshments, and get settled before starting. Make time for this informal settling in. But choose a formal starting time and stick with it. Time flies in small groups. Make the final decision on time frames as a part of your group's covenant.

A Group Covenant

Clarification of the group's purpose is helpful to its direction and success. Taking time to talk about the goals of your small group (deepening our personal walk with Christ) will give members a sense if this group is for them. The first meeting can be a trial event to give guests a chance to politely bow out. Ask for a commitment through a card or personal contact after the meeting. Don't corner people into making a public commitment. They may bow under pressure, but never really commit. Often the track record of attendance will reveal this when they quit coming.

You may make up a group covenant beforehand or with the group. It might read something like: "I commit myself to attending every session (excepting emergencies) of this group, with plans to meet every Tuesday evening from 7:00 to 8:30 in the months of February, March, and April. I also make a commitment to read each lesson before all meetings."

Is a group covenant necessary? There are several benefits to this step. People know what to expect. Set dates and let people know there is an ending to this group. A covenant also motivates people to show up. We tend to stick by plans we verbalize and commit to on paper. Some group members may want to write their commitment statements inside their study guides.

Ground Rules

Before you formally begin meeting as a group, a few ground rules will help for a smooth flow. These suggestions can help prevent conflict, embarrassment, or inappropriate behaviors that might disrupt a group or hurt someone's feelings.

- a) **Confidentiality.** Talking to those outside the group about things discussed in the group breaks the bond that holds the group together. Respect the thoughts of others and don't share them outside the group. Of course you will discuss some things with others, but be careful. If you are not sure about an issue, ask. People in the group will not be open if they have to worry about having their dirty laundry hung out for everyone to see.
- b) **Time.** You will do your group members a big favor by agreeing to start and end on time. It is not thoughtful to others to stretch times. People have personal schedules. Babysitters may be waiting. Others may have early appointments. You can always say, "I'll stay by for a little while if you want to talk more about that issue" or "Call me tomorrow."
- c) **Silence.** No person should ever feel obligated to share at any time. If a person feels uncomfortable responding to a question, other group members should respect that person's choice to remain quiet. A simple way for this person to respond is, "I'll pass on that one" or "I'd rather not share right now."
- d) **Criticism.** Some group members may struggle with giving lots of advice, even judging others. This is a great way to destroy a group. We recommend a leader never tolerate one person criticizing another in a group. Emphasize a focus on "ideas" rather than "John's idea." Remember: listen always, only share advice when asked, and never judge others.
- e) **Interrupting.** Establish a rule that no interrupting is allowed. Some members are so talkative they will not allow others to get in a word. Leaders may need to gently interrupt a talkative person as a means of giving others a chance to share. A leader may talk to an overly talkative attendee outside a meeting to gently remind them of the group's purpose to help everyone grow.

Discuss these rules and consider voting on them. Ensure complete buy-in from every group member. It will help avoid surprises or hurt feelings.

Tips for Success

Here are some simple tips for helping your group maximize the benefits of their time together. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a brief gathering of suggestions that can help you as a leader.

- a) **Cycles.** Groups go through cycles. Examples of these include periods of resistance to leadership, times of deep bonding, initial distrust, superficial sharing, frustration with the flow, etc. Your group may move back and forth between stages. This is normal.
- b) **Breaks.** Don't encourage members to commit to the group forever. Each iFollow book has six chapters, so before you start the next book you can give people the opportunity to drop out or new members to join.

- c) **Agendas.** Some people join groups but do not commit to the purpose of the group. They have an agenda and see the group as an opportunity to press their views. We recommend a direct and firm approach in dealing with these types of people. It may be best to talk with them outside the group and let them know they have a right to speak about their interest, but the group has chosen a different topic.
- d) **Anger.** It is possible, given the nature of small groups and the vulnerability of members, that someone is going to get angry. Anger is an acceptable emotion that can express itself unacceptably. Attacking others, regularly using foul language, banging objects, and shouting are not acceptable in a group. Gently respond to an angry member by suggesting they use “I” messages instead of “you” messages. “I feel angry when...” vs. “You make me feel angry....” “You” messages put others on the defensive and the angry person avoids owning their feelings.
- e) **Superficiality.** Some groups never seem to break through to deep levels of sharing. There is hesitancy and a shallow level of sharing on a facts level vs. feelings, opinions, and needs. This may occur because the trust level of the group has not thoroughly developed. Some ideas for this include: allowing time for trust to develop, reviewing the questions asked in the group, being vulnerable as a leader, and assessing attitudes in the group that might hinder trust (i.e. a critical or judgmental spirit, lack of confidentiality, etc.).

When You Need Help

Sometimes a group leader is overwhelmed by a difficult situation and does not know where to turn. Difficulties arise in the group that seem beyond the leader’s ability to deal with the problem. The forces of evil are certainly at war against God’s people gathering to grow spiritually. When the going gets tough, what can you do? Where do you go for help?

- a) Remember, these group members are not just your people; they are God’s people. You are not alone in caring for your group members. The Lord is by your side doing wonderful things in the hearts of these members. Claim Bible promises for strength, wisdom, and discernment in leading your group. Pray for members by name in your personal devotional time.
- b) Recognize the value of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. As a group leader, you do not have all gifts. Lean on other members in the group. Some may be more discerning than you. Let their insights be a guide. Others may have spiritual wisdom. Allow their ideas to show the way. If the group faces a difficulty, use care and bring it up in the group. Pray together about problems.
- c) Look for appropriate support or help outside your group. Some churches request group leaders meet in their own group for encouragement and training. Meet as needed with a spiritual mentor, pastor, or elder in your church. Seek advice as needed from those with more experience than you. This may lead to a phone contact to someone with a specialty in dealing with the challenge you face in your group.
- d) Sometimes changes need to take place in the group structure. A person may need to leave. A volatile situation may require an individual to join another group. Reconciliation may need to take place outside group time. Occasionally a group leader discovers another person in the group might be the best person to lead while they assist. Don’t think of this as stepping down. Affirm spiritual gifts in your group. If you are attempting to lead a group but have better gifts at hospitality, be the host or hostess and allow someone else to lead if God brings this person to your group.
- e) Study and educate yourself by attending training classes on small group leadership. Look for books, DVDs, seminars, or conference on training group leaders. You are a valuable asset to the body of Christ. Take care of your gifts by developing them for the glory of God.
- f) Avoid burnout. Take care of yourself as a group leader. Don’t run too many groups in a row. Take breaks. Perhaps it would be best on occasion to join a group and NOT be a leader in order to be fed, gain new strategies, and feel less pressure. There is no glory in being a workaholic in the church. Be balanced.

Master or Slave?

A final thought on the use of resources: some people become so engrossed in a resource that they become enslaved to it. The resource becomes the master, not the tool.

Use this iFollow resource as a tool and recognize its limitations. There will be times in a small group when the next discussion question is not nearly as important as listening to the member whose husband just left her, or the man whose father just passed away, etc. Be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit in your group.

Chapter One

Forgotten God

These discussion questions come out of the Bible Study section of the Participant's Guide. Each participant is encouraged to read the chapter and review these questions before coming together as a group. *Additional notes in this Leader's Guide are in italics. They are to help expand and guide the study to make it interesting and applicable to your group. Media and web resources are also included.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What version of the Bible do you use and why? What are your favorite verses in that version?
2. What is your least favorite version of scripture and why? Like the example of "Holy Ghost" versus "Holy Spirit," does your least favorite version render anything in a way that is confusing or disturbing to you?

*Fundamental Belief #1
Holy Scriptures*

*Fundamental Belief #5
Holy Spirit*

3. Are there parts of scripture that you feel should be avoided? What about for certain ages?
4. How can we set up checks and balances so we don't neglect certain parts of the Bible that intimidate or confuse us?
5. What other parts of the Christian experience, such as the Holy Spirit, are beyond our control?

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Go around the group and ask if anyone has any other areas/concepts of the Bible that they overlook, don't understand, or avoid. Have other group members respond to each other, maybe offering a balancing perspective or texts that can help the fear of these subjects subside.



The Forgotten God

Personal

1. What do you think is the primary reason people struggle with the Holy Spirit?
2. Of these three categories—unfamiliar, unpredictable, and uncontrollable—which is the scariest for you and why?
3. What is the strangest thing you have ever heard regarding the Holy Spirit?
4. Without skipping ahead to other chapters in this book, how do you think early Adventists felt about the Holy Spirit?
5. How have you personally viewed the Spirit? What kinds of metaphors do you use?

Scriptural

1. **Read John 3** and pretend you were Nicodemus. What three questions would you have asked Jesus after hearing His description of the Spirit?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.



2. **Read 1 Kings 18** and answer the following questions:
 - a. In what ways do you see people acting like the prophet's of Baal, trying to get their god's attention?

 - b. How did Elijah respond to the Baal prophets' approach of getting their god's attention?

3. **Reflect on 1 Samuel 19:**
 - a. Based on how the Spirit interacted with Saul what disturbing conclusions can you draw?

 - b. Contrasting Saul's experience with the more gentle description of inspiration found in 2 Peter 1:21. How can you reconcile these two pictures?

 - c. Can you think of other times when the Spirit came upon someone in a forceful/unexpected way?

Practical

1. When at church, count how many times the Spirit is specifically mentioned.

2. When at church, see if people refer to the Spirit as a "He" or an "It"

3. Spend a moment each day praying for a deeper revelation of, and relationship with, the Holy Spirit.



Media Resources

with excerpts from the resources

◆ Books

Chan, Francis & Yankoski, D. (2009). *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook

This book provides the inspiration behind this chapter. This is a fabulous introductory—or re-introductory—text on the Holy Spirit. Very readable, lots of stories, and lots of challenging questions. You will enjoy it.

Fee, Gordon & Stuart, Douglas. (2003). *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

This is a classic work to help Christians understand basic biblical interpretation. Written by Gordon Fee, a man whose advanced materials are used by many seminarians to help them perform exegesis.

Lightfoot, Neil. (2010). *How We Got the Bible* (3rd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks

A readable history of how we got the Bible, which can help us understand why we have so many versions. This can be very helpful when exploring different versions to use and what their strengths and weaknesses are.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org>

This is the official research website of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It not only contains numerous articles on the Holy Spirit but a wide variety of subjects related to scripture. You will appreciate this resource for in-depth study.

www.crazylove.org

This is the official site of Frances Chan—author, speaker, and missionary. Frances pastored a large successful church in California before leaving it all to be a missionary in China because he felt he began hearing his name more than Christ's at his church. He is a radical disciple for Jesus and this site contains writings and sermons that will bless you.

www.christianitytoday.com

This site allows you to search most of the articles in the largest Christian magazine in the world. Numerous pieces on the Holy Spirit, as well as the Bible, are available in full text.

iTunes University App

This is available on most smartphones and is a great asset for any researcher. This resource offers free classroom lectures from leading universities all over the world and contains numerous lectures on the Holy Spirit. Just search for what you need. Happy downloading!

Chapter Two

History of the Spirit

These discussion questions come out of the Bible Study section of the Participant's Guide. Each participant is encouraged to read the chapter and review these questions before coming together as a group. *Additional notes in this Leader's Guide are in italics. They are to help expand and guide the study to make it interesting and applicable to your group. Media and web resources are also included.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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3. Are there parts of scripture that you feel should be avoided? What about for certain ages?
4. How can we set up checks and balances so we don't neglect certain parts of the Bible that intimidate or confuse us?
5. What other parts of the Christian experience, such as the Holy Spirit, are beyond our control.

*Fundamental Belief #2
Trinity*

*Fundamental Belief #3
Father*

*Fundamental Belief #4
Son*

*Fundamental Belief #5
Holy Spirit*

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Have everyone in the group come up with an analogy to explain the Trinity for someone who is unfamiliar with the subject. Common metaphors have been things like water (ice, vapor, and liquid, etc.). Discuss each metaphor and its advantages and its shortcomings. What does our lack of a perfect metaphor reveal about God?



History of the Spirit

Personal

1. What is the value of a heresy? What does it enable the Christian community to do?
2. Why is theological precision (in terms of our words) important?
3. How can theological precision become counterproductive?
4. If a word doesn't appear in scripture, does that make it unbiblical? What other words do we use, besides "Trinity," that don't appear in the Bible?
5. Do you feel Christianity is large enough to allow for certain disputes over doctrinal matters? How much variance should be allowed?

Scriptural

1. **Deuteronomy 6:4** contains the *Shema*, or daily Jewish prayer. Read it and answer the following:
 - a. If God is "One," how can there be three?
 - b. **Read Genesis. 2:24** and compare it to **Deuteronomy 6:4**. How can this help us understand the *Shema*? (The word for "one" is the same in both passages.)



- c. How can **Genesis 1:26** also help us understand the plurality within divine singularity?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11.

- a. What phrase within this passage points to the Holy Spirit as being a unique individual instead of an impersonal force?

- b. When we envy someone else's spiritual gifts how does this verse keep our ego in check?

3. Check out Romans 8:14-16, 26.

- a. How closely connected to us is the Spirit?

- b. Focusing on verse 26, what in this verse reveals that the Spirit is divine and not just a random, created energy?

4. Look at Luke 4:14 and Acts 10:38.

- a. If "Spirit" simply meant "power" how would these two verses read? Would they make sense?

- b. Why do you think scripture has for linking the Spirit with power so frequently?



5. **Read Jesus' words in Matthew 12:31-32.**
 - a. What does blasphemy mean?

 - b. How might someone sin in the way Jesus describes in this passage?

 - c. What does this passage imply about the Spirit?

6. **Read the story in acts 5:1-11** and answer the following:
 - a. Who was being lied to?

 - b. What are the implications of this concerning the Spirit?

Practical

1. How might the knowledge of the Spirit's personhood affect the way you pray?

2. How does knowledge of all the historical fights and discussions help you engage others who may have a different view than you on theological matters?



Media Resources

◆ Books

Whidden, Woodrow, Reeve, John W., & Moon, Jerry. (2002). *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald

Written by three outstanding Adventist scholars, this book really hones in on many of the common issues asked of the Adventists' development of the Trinity belief. It is very readable while maintaining a scholarly approach. This is the textbook for this issue and I heartily recommend it, as many of the ideas were instrumental in shaping this chapter.

Gulley, Norman. (2011). *Systematic Theology vol. 2: God As Trinity*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press

This is a much heavier tome, but very in-depth. Gulley's series on systematic theology is an invaluable resource for Adventists wanting to do serious research into the Adventist approach to classical doctrines like the Trinity. A wonderful reference, even if it's a little pricey and lengthy.

Bock, Darrell L. (2004). *Breaking The Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone's Asking*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books

While the DaVinci code isn't in the news anymore, the effects of the book can still be felt. The novel by Dan Brown called into question many things Christians took for granted and not a little doubt was agitated among believers. Bock does a good job fielding the questions about doctrine, as well as church councils that made decisions on doctrine, in a readable little book that isn't too expensive.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

<http://blogs.bible.org/bock>

This is the official blog of Dr. Darrell Bock, professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has written extensively on the formation of Christian doctrine, and several pieces on his blog may be helpful as we grapple with how some of our major doctrines developed.

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=JJBjFMNU>

This short video provides a survey of some Trinitarian texts with nice music and imagery—great for an intro for small group discussion if you have a projector or television that can stream web content.

<http://robbell.com/everything-is-spiritual-2006-tour-film/>

Noted author and speaker Rob Bell has an explanation of the Trinity from the book of Genesis in a film that is available for download on his website. While not everything Bell says will harmonize with Adventist theology, much is good and challenging as we look for glimpses of this important doctrine in the Hebrew Scriptures. This Trinitarian portion of the video can also be found throughout YouTube community with a careful search.

<http://rzim.org/just-thinking/the-trinity-as-a-paradigm-for-spiritual-transformation>

On Ravi Zacharias' website he has a wonderful article on the Trinity that links the sometimes ethereal doctrine to practical spiritual development.

Chapter Three

Purpose of the Spirit

These discussion questions come out of the Bible Study section of the Participant's Guide. Each participant is encouraged to read the chapter and review these questions before coming together as a group. *Additional notes in this Leader's Guide are in italics. They are to help expand and guide the study to make it interesting and applicable to your group. Media and web resources are also included.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, how would you describe the relationship of the Spirit and Jesus?
2. How have you heard people talk about the Holy Spirit being subservient to Christ, or Christ being subservient to the Father? Is there a way to preserve their unique roles without diminishing their divinity or authority?
3. Based on what you have been taught, or heard in sermons and discussion, what purpose have people typically ascribed to the Holy Spirit?
4. How do we develop a relationship with the Spirit?
5. How can we place a greater emphasis, or maybe even an equal emphasis, on the Spirit without slipping into the trap of simply wanting His power?

*Fundamental Belief #2
Trinity*

*Fundamental Belief #5
Holy Spirit*

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Have the group share a time when the Spirit really worked through a worship experience, or a life experiences that revealed something about Jesus to them.



Purpose of the Spirit

Personal

1. Before this lesson, what would you have said was the purpose of the Holy Spirit?
2. What makes us so drawn to the power of God instead of a personal relationship with God?
3. Why do you think Jesus said it would be good if He left? Why is the Spirit better?
4. How does the Spirit's work of recreation inform our ministries and lifestyles?

Scriptural

1. **Read Acts 1:8** and answer the following:
 - a. Empowerment of the Spirit is linked with what activity?
 - b. If there is a lack of the Spirit's power, what, according to this verse, may need to happen given the geographical progression present in the text?



2. One of the challenges among some Christian traditions is to place a high value on the arts. Read Exodus 35:30-35 and answer the following:
 - a. What gifts did the Spirit give in this passage?

 - b. Are these gifts typically highlighted in church?

 - c. Note the context of verse 35. How do these gifts point people to God?

 - d. Is this kind of empowerment by the Spirit threatening to some people in church? (Think in terms of the arts.) How might we celebrate and place more emphasis on these kinds of gifts for ministry?

3. Knowing that we are to be baptized with the Spirit, and olive oil is a metaphor for the Spirit, read Exodus 28:41. Then compare it with Exodus 19:5-6 and 1 Peter 2:9.
 - a. Based on Exodus 19, what was God's intent for His people?

 - b. What do you think caused God to elect the Levites as priests instead of His original plan?

 - c. What does the baptism of the Spirit do for all believers?

 - d. What is the function of a priest?

**Practical**

1. Spend some time this week looking for new metaphors of the Spirit in Scripture.

2. How can you, with the power of the Spirit, reveal Jesus to someone this week in light of your calling described in 1 Peter 2:9?



Media Resources

◆ Books

Venden, Morris. (1986). *Your Friend, the Holy Spirit*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press

A book by beloved Adventist writer and scholar Morris Venden. This book is still available through www.adventistbookcenter.com

Smith, Dennis. (2009). *Transformed By the Spirit: The Story of Juan Cubero*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald

A nice testimony of how the Spirit works in people's lives to bring change and recreation. It's a quick read and a nice break from some of the heavier theological works recommended in this leader guide.

Cymbala, Jim & Merrill, Dean. (1997). *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Heart of His People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

The amazing story of the development of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. This book has inspired millions of people and will help foster a desire to see the Spirit work to bring people closet to Jesus. Great read.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=W6P6GWNX>

This is a great short video by Jim Cymbala, the lead pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, that covers who the Spirit is and what His purpose is. It's only four minutes, so you have time!

<http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/45693-10-crucial-works-of-the-holy-spirit>

This is a nice "Top Ten" list outlining the various works of the Holy Spirit in our lives with scriptural references.

<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/holy-spirit/article/go/0/the-work-of-the-holy-spirit/>

Cited in this chapter, this is the link to the complete article by Frank Hasel on the work of the Spirit. It's an easy read and provides some good thoughts from an Adventist perspective.

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/5-misunderstandings-about-holy-spirit>

Titled "Five Misunderstandings About the Holy Spirit," this article resonates well with everything we've discussed so far.

Chapter Four

Sorcerers and the Spirit

These discussion questions come out of the Bible Study section of the Participant's Guide. Each participant is encouraged to read the chapter and review these questions before coming together as a group. *Additional notes in this Leader's Guide are in italics. They are to help expand and guide the study to make it interesting and applicable to your group. Media and web resources are also included.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you catch yourself being the most selfish?
2. How have televangelists like Benny Hinn contributed to a skewed idea of the Spirit's role and power?
3. Do you think programs like "40 Days of Prayer and Fasting" for the purpose of a greater experience with the Spirit are productive or counter-productive? Why?
4. Many times we view prosperity preachers with suspicion as they make promises of cars, houses, and financial miracles. However, we as Adventists sometimes have placed a significant emphasis on becoming sinless. Do you think it's possible to present a view of having victory over sin as a kind of prosperity preaching, in the sense that you would be living a "perfect" life?
5. How have you seen an inaccurate emphasis on the Spirit's power affect churches?

*Fundamental Belief #17
Spiritual Gifts and Ministries*

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Ellen White frequently cites the narratives about Simon the Magician and Seven Sons of Sceva and likens them to Spiritualism, the practice of contacting the dead for insight. Spiritualism was prevalent in her day and it's still around today, though not always in the same form. In what ways do you see spiritualism in contemporary culture and how has it influenced our view of the Holy Spirit?



Sorcerers and the Spirit

Practical

1. In what ways have you seen leaders or churches use gimmicks in ministry?
2. Have you ever had a time where you attended a conference or purchased a book that you had high hopes for, but in the end it amounted to very little? What happened?
3. What abuses have you seen in churches that appears to be attempts at manipulating the Holy Spirit?
4. Deliverance ministries are still a very real thing. Do you think they are valid or dangerous?

Scriptural

1. **Read the story of Samson (Judges 14-16)** and answer the following:
 - a. Where do you see evidence of Samson taking the Spirit for granted?
 - b. Where do you see Samson using the Spirit for his own purposes?
 - c. What were some of the results of Samson's abuse of the Spirit?



BIBLE STUDY

- d. Is there any good news at the end of the story for those who have been seeking the wrong things?

2. How does Jesus description in **Matthew 25:31-46** of what will happen at His return relate to the subject of this chapter?

Personal

1. Do you think the frequency in which we say words like “Lord” and “Father God” in prayer reflect a similar approach as the Sons of Sceva? How often do you say God’s name in prayer as filler or out of habit?



Media Resources

◆ Books

Weisberg, Barbara. (2005). *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism*. San Francisco: HarperOne

This is a readable and fascinating history into one of Adventism's favorite subjects to worry about. This will give a great background to what was happening in Ellen White's culture when she wrote on the subject of spiritualism.

Jones, David W. & Woodbridge, Russell S. (2011). *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

An interesting look at the prosperity gospel phenomenon and how it has affected the preaching of the Gospel, particularly in American culture.

Bull, Malcolm, & Lockhart, Keith. (2007). *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (2nd ed.). Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press

This is a fascinating history of Adventism in America that covers a variety of issues from a non-Adventist perspective. The book has several chapters that touch on spiritual gifts and power structures in the church you may find relevant to this study.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

Do a search on www.YouTube.com for “Lord of the Rings Intro” and watch it. Then have a discussion about how that opening prologue illustrates human nature/sinfulness when it comes to power.

<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0278.htm>

This is a sermon on grieving the Spirit by renowned preacher Charles Spurgeon. May be useful in discussion about how we are to interact with the Spirit.

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1936/03/paul-and-simon-magus>

This is an old article from Ministry Magazine talking about Paul and Simon Magus (the magician). May be a good resource for further practical application questions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Magus_in_popular_culture

An interesting list of Simon the Magician in popular culture that may be good fodder for how spiritualism and errant ideas about Bible stories influence us.

Chapter Five

Pentecostal Problems and Corinthian Conundrums

Each of the participants in your group should have read the chapter and done the Bible study for this week. After a welcome and prayer, provide a short overview as you get started to make sure everyone begins at the same place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the value/danger of reading perspectives outside your own theological tradition?
2. What reasons do you have for thinking that the books of Acts/Corinthians are the same or different in regards to experiencing the Holy Spirit?
3. How often should we reexamine positions that we feel are cut and dry? After all, if we keep reexamining everything we will never build off those who have gone before, and if we don't reexamine anything we may unwittingly embrace error.
4. The theological term "eisegesis" refers to us reading our own ideas into the biblical text, instead of getting the ideas out of the biblical text (exegesis). In what ways can we make sure we aren't performing eisegesis?
5. What gifts does your church seem to place the most emphasis on?

*Fundamental Belief #17
Spiritual Gifts and Ministries*

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Make a list on a PowerPoint or a whiteboard of all spiritual gifts Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Go through each one and have the class share whether or not they have witnessed it in their church. For those they haven't, have them imagine what it may look like and what the reaction would be if it presented itself in their faith community.



Pentecostal Problems and Corinthian Conundrums

Personal

1. What spiritual gifts do you wish you had?
2. Have you ever witnessed a miracle?
3. In what ways do you see followers of Jesus losing their focus on His return? Do you think it's strictly materialism or have we occupied people's time with things other than Jesus in the church so they have lost sight of Him?
4. Many Adventists will declare that medical work is the "right arm" of the gospel. Do you think this is a good thing to say, or does it smack of the pride that Paul tried to rid the Corinthians of?

Scriptural

1. Spend some time going over **Acts 2** and **1 Corinthians 14** and answer the following:
 - a. What major differences do you notice between the two instances of tongues?
 - b. What similarities do you notice between the accounts?
 - c. Some scholars believe Paul makes a statement in **1 Corinthians 14:4** that is negative when it comes to "edifying oneself." Do you think he is being negative or drawing a contrast? Is it bad to be edified?



- d. Do you think the account in **Acts 2** is *xenolalia*, *akolalia*, or *glossolalia*?

2. Since Paul shuffles the order of gifts in his lists in **1 Corinthians 12-14**. What lesson can we derive concerning their importance?

3. **Read Revelation 21:1-7** and answer the following:
 - a. Many Christians talk of not being able to wait until they get to heaven—but where is our final home?

 - b. In this passage, what truly makes this our future home special?

 - c. What causes people to focus on streets of gold and what animals they will have for pets in heaven instead of simply being reunited with Jesus?

Practical

1. Instead of gossiping, how can you frame your concerns about other faith's beliefs without being overly critical?

2. Think of a mnemonic device in the form of an object that you can place around your house that can serve as a metaphor that reminds you of looking forward to seeing Jesus again.



Media Resources

◆ Books

Keener, Craig S. (2012). *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

Simply massive, this commentary covering only the first couple chapters of Acts is a great addition to any reference library. Keener is a genius and this commentary will give you more information than you can imagine about the first couple passages in Acts.

Fee, Gordon D. (1987). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing

Considered by many to be the best Bible commentary on 1 Corinthians. Fee is widely respected in the field of exegesis and this would make a great reference for your library.

White, Ellen G. (1911). *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press

This is a classic work that needs to be read by every Adventist exploring the Holy Spirit. The citation is of the original version, but it has been republished in numerous editions and is easily found with a search on Amazon.com or Adventistbookcenter.com

Hovenden, G. (2002). *Speaking in Tongues: The New Testament Evidence in Context*. London: Sheffield Academic

This is a challenging work from an Anglican Charismatic scholar. While it is technical in places, it is very thorough and provides several historical and theological insights that are very refreshing. The author is also aware enough to admit that what his tradition claims is tongues may or may not be what is happening in the New Testament.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/07/health/07brain.html?em&ex=1163221200&en=68a14207571439c2&ei=5087%0A&_r=0

This is a fascinating look at the neuroscience of speaking in tongues.

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1974/03/tongues-in-the-corinthian-church>

An old article by a respected Adventist scholar on the phenomena in Corinth. Good discussion points here.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/may-web-only/imb-ban-speaking-in-tongues-baptism-baptist-missionary.html>

A fascinating look at the issue of speaking in tongues within Southern Baptist missions.

<http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/5405/archives/issue-2012-1516/the-problem-with-nostalgia>

An interesting editorial by Bill Knott on Adventists and nostalgia. This could lead to a discussion of theological nostalgia—old ideas that we have either been given new light on, or damaging cultural ideas we hang onto because they are familiar, even if they aren't helpful.

Chapter Six

Adventecostal

Each of the participants in your group should have read the chapter and done the Bible study for this week. After a welcome and prayer, provide a short overview as you get started to make sure everyone begins at the same place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your reaction to early Adventist worship experiences?
2. What is the most surprising thing you read in this chapter?
3. What reasons do we readily allow Ellen White in having supernatural gifts, but quickly discourage contemporary people from seeking them?
4. Knowing Adventist history, where might you still disagree with modern Pentecostals and their practices? How would you build your case?
5. Why don't we see these kinds of experiences in our churches anymore?

*Fundamental Belief #17
Spiritual Gifts and Ministries*

*Fundamental Belief #18
The Gift of Prophecy*

An In-depth Group Discussion Idea

Locate a video or video clips of Charismatic worship services. Using Paul's guidelines in 1 Corinthians 14, assess whether what is happening conforms to a biblical model. YouTube has ample examples of a variety of services. An interesting example is the video by Earl Hughes entitled, "I'll be Gone." While the service is rather crazy, the music is not—which can make for some interesting discussion.



Adventecostal

Personal

1. What is the craziest, or most uncomfortable, worship experience you've ever?
2. Have you ever had a deeply emotional worship experience that left an impression on you?
3. Have you ever attended a Pentecostal worship service? What was it like?
4. What was the most surprising thing you read in this chapter about Adventist history?

Scriptural

1. What do the following passages suggest that may help revitalize our prayer meetings?
 - a. **John 14:13-14**

 - b. **Mark 11:24**



c. **James 5:13-20**

d. **Matthew 10:5-8?**

2. **Read 1 John 4:1-6** and answer the following:

a. What caution is given in this passage?

b. How can this passage help us avoid being too fearful of fresh experiences?

3. **Look at Mark 9:38-41** and answer the following:

a. What caution does this passage especially have for proud Seventh-day Adventists?

b. What makes Jesus' words in this passage so hard to follow?

c. How can this passage help us form good interfaith friendships without compromising important differences?



Media Resources

◆ Books

Collins, Kenneth J. (2003). *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press

An interesting biography that traces Wesley's thoughts and experiences, including the charismatic ones. This book provides some good backdrop for what Adventism grew out of.

Knight, George. (1993). *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Comprehensive Survey of Millerism and America's Fascination with the Millennium in the Nineteenth Century*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press

Out of print, but still available online, this Adventist deals with the lead-up and immediate aftermath of the Great Disappointment that launched the Adventist church. Well written and worth a read.

Synan, Vinson. (1997). *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing

This is a comprehensive history of the Pentecostal movement, including contemporary movements. This is a MUST read for anyone interested in the subject.

Tomkins, Stephen. (2003). *John Wesley: A Biography*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing

"Another Wesley biography that focuses more on the person than the theology. Still a valuable resource when dealing with the theological roots and personalities that shaped the Adventist church.



Web Links

With sample excerpts from the website

<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/Charism-ALW.html>

The series of articles written by Arthur White on charismatic experiences within early Adventism. A must read, despite the bias.

<http://www.memorymeaningfaith.org/blog/2012/04/2012-ellen-whites-issues-symposium-threads-from-an-old-fabric-holy-flesh-movement-indiana.html>

A blog chronicling new discoveries into the history of the Holy Flesh Movement that inspired some of Ellen's harshest critiques. A fascinating read.

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1972/05/the-case-for-divine-healing>

An older article from Ministry Magazine regarding divine healing. An easy read with some good stories.

<http://www.tacticalfaith.com/miracles-week/>

This links to three videos (at the bottom of the page) containing presentations by respected scholar Craig Keener. Keener wrote a two volume work on the subject of miracles and these presentations were given on that subject during a Symposium at Beeson Divinity school.

