

Dig Deeper

Welcome to Encounter 2010! We are excited that at the start of the year you have chosen to study the scriptures. We want you to get the maximum benefit out of your investment. Therefore, we want to encourage you at the beginning to **share what you learn with somebody else**. You do not have to be an expert. You do not have to have all the answers, but if you really want to grow this year, it starts with that one simple decision: share what you learn with somebody else. This is the year for you to “dig deeper.”

Each week, we will prepare this GPS (Grow, Pray, Serve) guide to help you “dig deeper.” It is designed for you to use with a small group (5 or 6 people) of family members, friends, neighbors or co-workers and takes no more than an hour to share. Before you conclude you can’t do it, let us share how simple it is:

1. **Pray** now that God would give you the courage to invite 5 people to share with you for 6 weeks as you study these lessons.
2. **Decide** when and how you are going to meet. Some people will meet virtually (online) and some will meet actually (in a space or at a place). Decide on the time and place.
3. **Plan** your first meeting. *Keep it simple: greet and meet (some people add “eat” to that guide :o)*. This guide is designed to lead you through your group meeting. It begins with a group prayer, then an icebreaker, then discussion of the study, then closing prayers for group members.
4. **Rejoice** that God is using you and working in your life to make you a blessing to others!

Group Prayer: *Gracious God, we thank you for the privilege of gathering in your name. We will never be the same and we thank you in advance. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

Icebreaker: *If you could achieve one thing in this New Year, what would it be and why?*

Group Discussion:

The Holy Spirit is where it all begins. Everything in the Christian life starts with the Spirit and since these lessons are all about experiencing the Holy Spirit in your life, let me suggest some ways to experience His Person, His enabling, His purpose, and His benefits:

- Romans 8:9 teaches that if we do not have the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to Christ. The good news is if we are unsure, we can experience the person of the Spirit right now. As a group, let’s share this experience with each other so that we will all have the assurance that we are saved. **Repeat this together:**

God, we admit that we are sinners. We have missed the mark. (Romans 3:23). We know that we cannot save ourselves. We believe that Christ died on the cross to pay for our sins (Romans 5:8), and we now receive Him by faith as our Savior. We thank you that your Word says, “As many as received Him, to

them He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12). We thank you for saving us and we confess that we are now your children. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Now as a group, celebrate the confession that each of you just made.

1. The scriptures teach that the moment we accept Christ (*as you just did!*), the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us and will never leave us. Our faith is not based on how we feel, but on the fact of the Word of God. God promised it and it is so, whether we feel like it or not. Thank God now as a group that the Holy Spirit is now living inside each of you.
2. We cannot do anything in the Christian life apart from the enabling power of the Spirit; all our self-efforts are doomed to failure. Examine your life now. *Is there some area of challenge or failure where you just cannot seem to get it together?* As a group with your hands open and your palms turned upward, pause now and pray this prayer together, “*Lord, we give this to you. Give us the victory. Amen.*”
3. The Spirit's purpose is to glorify Christ. To give glory is to give credit and honor. Share with your group now 2 things in your life for which you have to give Christ glory now. *How have you been kept? How have you been blessed?*
4. There are benefits to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. *Which benefit of the Holy Spirit do you need most in your life right now?* Be bold in sharing it and ask your group members to share with you in prayer that God would bring it to pass in your life.

Challenge: when we examine how we use our time, abilities and money—we discover what has really been important to us up to this point in our lives. Which one of these things represents the greatest challenge for you right now? Break the silence and ask the group to pray for you in that area.

Group Takeway: Because we have trusted in Christ, we are saved based on the fact of God’s Word. The Holy Spirit is now living inside us. We have power to live life now in the right way.