


Anchored

in the **Holy Spirit**

A 5-PART SERIES ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN OUR LIVES

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This series is designed to be used in a small group setting with or without a leader. Some sections will need someone to facilitate, so choose someone from your group to facilitate those sections. There is not a leader's guide.

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When we pray for revival we are praying for more of the presence of God to fill our lives, our communities, and the world. In the presence of God there is breakthrough. So we pray for more of God's presence to fill us, that we would experience breakthrough and freedom. We pray for more of God's presence to fill our campuses and communities, that we would experience breakthroughs of justice and liberation. We pray for more of God's presence to fill our world, that revival would come.



Introduction: Invitations from God

In this 5-part series, you will see that God is active in the communities and people around you and invites you to participate in that through encountering the Holy Spirit.

In each session you will learn about an anchor concept of God's presence, and you will have a chance to experience the Holy Spirit together as a group.

Each encounter with the Holy Spirit is meant to be an anchor encounter—something you can come back to many times throughout your life as a disciple of Jesus. But each encounter is also just a start, an invitation to keep experiencing the intimacy, power, and breakthrough of God's presence with you and to keep diving deeper as a disciple in the Holy Spirit.

THREE INVITATIONS FOR YOU:


- 1 God is inviting you to be filled with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.**

Presence is powerful. It's the reason why millions of people will travel hundreds of miles to see a loved one. And it's why people all over the world gather for huge celebrations just to be in each other's presence. It's why married people move into the same space and friends find jobs in the same city as each other, so they can be together. We have incredible technology that enables people from all over the world to talk and see each other over Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok; yet, it still doesn't match the joy, the power, the sense of connection that comes from being in the presence of those we love. There's nothing quite like presence.

The same is true about God. God's deepest desire is to be close to us and for us to be present to God. This is who the Holy Spirit is: God's presence filling God's children. God is inviting you to encounter the Holy Spirit and to be filled.
- 2 God is inviting you to listen to and respond to the Holy Spirit.**

It is not your responsibility to initiate. God is the one who is initiating and inviting you to respond and grow in sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leadership. Each session is a chance to experience God in a way that you can come back to for the rest of your life. So let the Holy Spirit lead. Then choose to trust God, and take the risk to respond in obedience.
- 3 God is inviting you to fall more in love with Jesus and to trust that it is always worth following when the Holy Spirit leads.**

Taking steps to obey God grows our trust in God. We will need to be able to trust God if our relationship is to endure during hard times. When you take steps to obey God, you are expressing trust in God, which opens you up to experience even more of God's presence, love, and goodness.



By responding, you will grow in your personal knowledge of God's goodness and love for you. Knowing the Holy Spirit this way will anchor you through seasons of disappointment and disillusionment.

When it feels tough to obey Jesus and surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading, it will still feel worth it because of the anchor experiences you have with the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will remind you that God is good and loves you. God's presence makes surrender worth it.

DISCUSS

Which invitation feels exciting? Which invitations bring up anxiety or nervousness?
What are your hopes for this series?

Group Prayer: Take turns praying one at a time. Bring to God how you hope to grow in the Holy Spirit through this study.

Closing: Choose one person to read this prayer of blessing.

May you know how near, how deep, and how powerful God's presence is, and may you dive deeper in living life in response to Jesus' leading. May you be anchored in the Holy Spirit.




Anchor 1: God's Presence is the Real Promise

STARTER QUESTION

Think about someone you love. What is one of your favorite moments of being in their presence? Why was this so enjoyable?

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 33:7–19 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Prior to this passage: God has delivered the people of Israel from 400 years of slavery and brings them to Mount Sinai to give them a new covenant—a forever promise of an intimate relationship with God, a fresh start, a new identity, a land for them to thrive, flourish, and reign in, and a calling to be the light of God's love for the whole world. But as God is making this covenant, the people of Israel start worshipping a statue and indulging in selfish acts. Imagine you're getting married, and in the middle of the ceremony your future spouse cheats on you in front of your eyes. This is what that moment was like. In response, God tells Moses that he isn't going with them after all. They will still get all the promises—the land, new identity, freedom, security, wealth... everything except for God's presence.

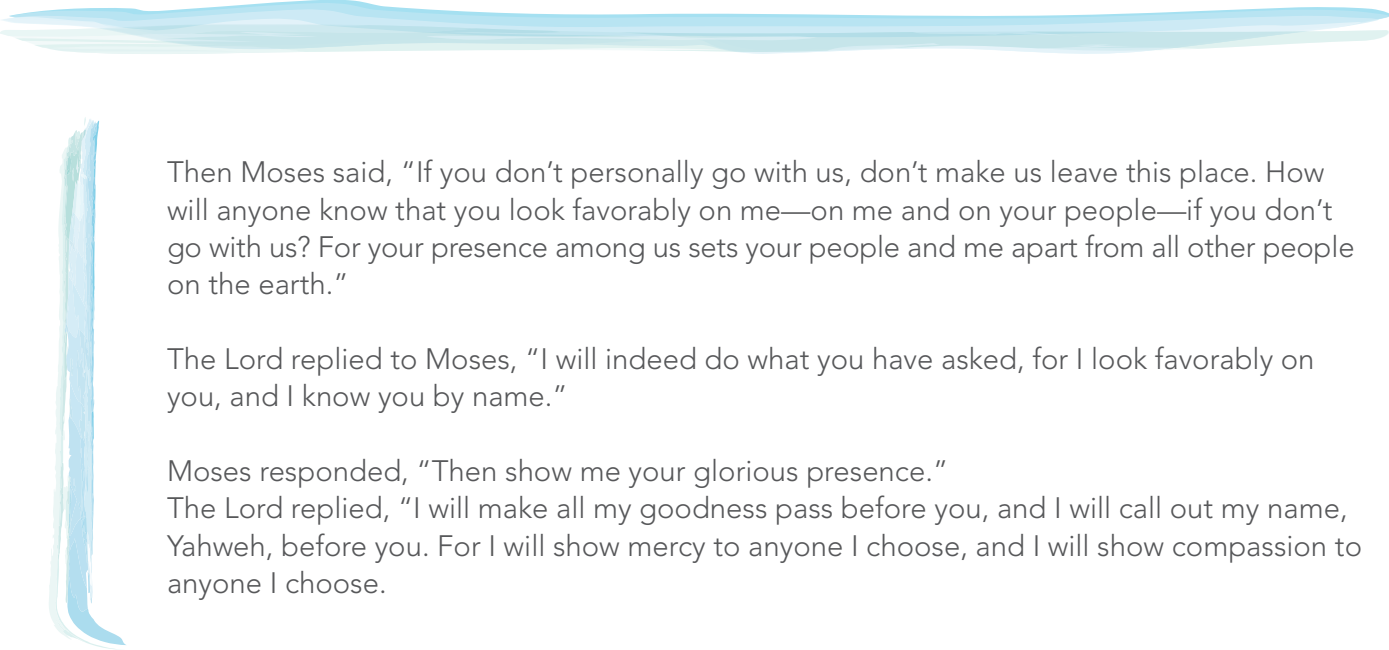


It was Moses' practice to take the Tent of Meeting and set it up some distance from the camp. Everyone who wanted to make a request of the Lord would go to the Tent of Meeting outside the camp.

Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in the entrances of their own tents. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses. When the people saw the cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand and bow down in front of their own tents. Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

One day Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Take these people up to the Promised Land.' But you haven't told me whom you will send with me. You have told me, 'I know you by name, and I look favorably on you.' If it is true that you look favorably on me, let me know your ways so I may understand you more fully and continue to enjoy your favor. And remember that this nation is your very own people."

The Lord replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you."



Then Moses said, “If you don’t personally go with us, don’t make us leave this place. How will anyone know that you look favorably on me—on me and on your people—if you don’t go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth.”

The Lord replied to Moses, “I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you, and I know you by name.”

Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.”

The Lord replied, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.


DISCUSS

1. How does the description of the Tent of Meeting describe the kind of relationship God wants to have with his people? How does this inspire worship in Israel?
2. Moses has an interesting talk with God. What does Moses make a case for? How does God respond? How is God’s presence better than the promised land?
3. Are there ways we want God’s promises over God’s presence? How come?

ANCHOR CONCEPT: GOD’S PRESENCE IS THE REAL PROMISE

Moses and the Israelites would rather stay in the desert with God than in the promised land without him. They realize that even if God gives them all he promised: a land of their own, abundant resources, no enemies, thriving, ruling, and flourishing... it will be NOTHING compared to living in God’s presence. The presence of God is life itself. God’s love, God’s power, God’s compassion, God’s justice all flows from God’s presence.

To have intimacy and relationship with the Living God is the real promise. From the beginning, God’s original intention was always to be with his people—in the garden, God walked and talked and was present to them, but they wanted control for themselves—and it opened up distance in their relationship. Throughout the story of God there are many ways that God seeks to be present to his people, but over and over God’s desire to be close clashes with our hunger for control. In Jesus, God makes a new move to come closer by dwelling with us, like us: taking on human form! Jesus is closer, and more relatable, but this still is not close enough for God. Jesus was God dwelling with us, but still not dwelling in us. So Jesus tells his disciples that when he leaves, he will send the Holy Spirit and that it will be better. What could be better than Jesus being physically present with them?



Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead so that we could live resurrection lives. We often think of this as the whole gospel. But the whole gospel is that Jesus' full work was to die, rise, and ascend to heaven so that he could pour out the Holy Spirit and fill us with God's presence and resurrection power. The Holy Spirit is Jesus' Spirit in us, not next to us. In us. Filling us.

The promise of God's presence is the promise to fill us with the Holy Spirit. We participate in this by inviting the Holy Spirit to fill us and making space to experience the presence of God.

ANCHOR ENCOUNTER: SOAKING PRAYER

Soaking prayer is where you sit in God's presence and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Choose someone to facilitate this time. Everyone else can close their eyes.

1. Open in prayer.
2. Play a worship song that is 5–7 min.
3. As the song begins, invite people to surrender to Jesus anything on their mind and heart they need to give to him. For some examples: It may be tasks, responsibilities or concerns. It may be someone they need to forgive or ask for forgiveness. It may be something they need to confess. It may be a burden or heartache they have been carrying. Whatever it is, give that to Jesus and place that in his hands.
4. Then listen and be still. Notice how the Spirit is meeting you and listen for if the Spirit is saying anything to you.
5. When the song is over, pray to close.

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE AWAY?

1. What came up for you during the soaking worship time?
2. What are you realizing about God's presence?



A DEEPER DIVE

Do the soaking prayer exercise 2–3 more times on your own.

Notice how you feel when you do soaking prayer—distracted, busy, burdened, joyful? Share this with the Holy Spirit.

How did God meet you during soaking worship? Thank God for meeting with you.



Anchor 2: God's Presence is Intimate, and Intimacy Requires Surrender

Briefly discuss last session's Deeper Dive.
How did God meet you in soaking prayer this week?


STARTER QUESTION

Remember a time that you asked someone you love to do something for you. Did they do it? Or did they complain about it? Or even not do it? How did that make you feel?

This week we are diving into the reality that God's presence is intimate, and we respond to that with surrender and obedience.

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE: JOHN 14:16–27 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Prior to this passage: Jesus is with his disciples in the upper room, having his last meal with them. He has just washed all twelve of his disciples' feet. Shortly after they start eating, one of them, Judas, leaves to betray him, setting in motion the next 24 hours where Jesus will be arrested, beaten, and crucified. The following words are spoken by Jesus shortly after Judas has left.



And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them." Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."



DISCUSS:

1. Who does Jesus say the Holy Spirit is? What role does the Holy Spirit have?
2. Why do you think Jesus equates loving him to obeying his commands?

ANCHOR CONCEPT: GOD'S PRESENCE IS INTIMACY, AND INTIMACY REQUIRES SURRENDER

God desires deep intimacy with his people, to share in his life-giving presence. The joy, the love, the community, and the intimacy that the Father has with Jesus and that Jesus has with the Spirit... God wants to share this intimacy with us. In this passage, Jesus extends this intimacy to his followers.

"...you are in me and I am in you."

God's presence is intimate. But we also learn from Jesus that loving God means obeying God's commands. Obedience cannot earn nor gain God's love because it was God who first loved us. The way we love God back is through obedience. When we obey, our intimacy with God deepens, and we experience more of God's presence, character, and love in the Holy Spirit... which makes us more alive!

So why obedience? Because obedience sparks two things:

1. **Trust.** Obeying Jesus' commands shows that we trust him. It shows that we trust his character, goodness, and love for us. When we do what Jesus says, we are choosing to trust that his ways are better than our ways even when we don't feel like it.
2. **Surrender.** Obeying Jesus' commands shows that we want to be CLOSE WITH GOD even when it means giving up personal desires.

Our intimacy with God deepens when we obey, when we surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit. And that deepening intimacy means that we experience more of God's presence, more of Jesus' peace, and we find rest as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

God's presence is intimate, and we experience this by deliberately choosing to surrender and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit.

ANCHOR ENCOUNTER: SURRENDER PRAYER.

Surrender prayer is where you practice surrendering to Jesus. And then, in response to the Holy Spirit, commit to taking specific steps of obedience.



Choose someone to lead this prayer time.

1. Open in prayer, giving thanks for God's presence with you.
2. Invite the group to take turns praying out loud, one at a time, confessing reasons why they have a hard time obeying or surrendering to Jesus.

Examples: "Jesus, I recognize that I like to be in control of my own life, and that desire or control makes it hard to trust you. Jesus, I'm afraid to obey your commands because it may make me feel uncomfortable. Jesus I'm afraid you don't have my best interest in mind. Jesus, I don't want to be seen as fanatical or weird."

3. After a few people have gone, move the group into a time of listening to the Holy Spirit. Ask Jesus, 'How are you inviting me to surrender to you? Where are you calling me to obey your commands?' Take one minute of silence and invite the group to listen to God. Afterward, have them share what they heard. Based on what comes up, tell the Holy Spirit if you are willing to take this step of surrender, of obedience. If you're not willing or ready yet, tell God why not. Is there fear present?
4. Close the time in prayer, thanking him for what has been spoken and given, and ask the Holy Spirit to give each one courage to take the next step of surrender.

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE AWAY?

1. What came up for you in the surrender prayer?
2. Were you at a place to take a step of obedience? Why or why not?
3. What are you learning about God's presence?



A DEEPER DIVE

Do this surrender prayer 2–3 more times on your own.

Each time ask Jesus, 'What is one way you are asking me to obey (surrender) today?' Write down what comes up, share with a friend, and then try to do it.

Maybe it is to surrender your lunch hour and eat with a stranger. Maybe it is to surrender your morning, and spend time reading the Bible. Maybe it is to surrender your spending money and buy food for someone in need. Maybe it is to surrender your isolation and confess with a trusted Christian friend what has been weighing on your heart.

After you take a step of surrender, talk to Jesus about what that was like for you. You will discuss this in the next session.



Anchor 3: God's Presence is Power and God's Presence Empowers


Discuss last session's Deeper Dive. How is God meeting you through surrender prayer?

STARTER QUESTION

Have you ever been in the presence of someone powerful?
What was it like for you?

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:1–13 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Prior to this passage: After Jesus dies and is raised to life, he gives his disciples final instructions to wait for the Holy Spirit to fill them with power and be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. And then he leaves. This Holy Spirit was promised by God for thousands of years and would no longer rest on a select few people but on all who surrender to Jesus as Lord and Savior and are living in relationship with him. So the disciples do just that. v 120 men and women meet together, in a house, in Jerusalem, praying and waiting for what Jesus says will happen. Then, out of nowhere, IT HAPPENS. His words come true.



On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"



DISCUSS

1. What happens when the Holy Spirit fills the believers? Make a list of what you notice.
2. What does it look like when the disciples are operating in the power of the Holy Spirit?
3. How do the people respond to the disciples?

ANCHOR CONCEPT: GOD'S PRESENCE IS POWER AND GOD'S PRESENCE EMPOWERS.

The Holy Spirit baptism of the disciples comes in physical signs—of fire and wind. This is reminiscent of when God the Father came to Israel on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19. This time it is not scary and terrifying, but it is intimate and partnering. God's presence, the Holy Spirit, fills every believer who is present and they are given the power to speak in different languages. Not only are the believers filled with the intimate presence of God, but they also are given supernatural power to speak beyond their own abilities in other languages. And the crowds that gather hear the wonders of God spoken in their own heart languages... and they can understand it.

This is the disciples' first encounter with the Holy Spirit, and they take the risk to speak up and step out in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Throughout the stories in the book of Acts, we see how the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples with supernatural power to heal, deliver people from demons, to prophesy, and to do many other miracles. And all the signs, wonders, and miracles that they do bring credibility to the message of the good news of Jesus.


The Holy Spirit still empowers followers of Jesus by filling them with God's presence and power for supernatural ministry. Isn't that amazing? Today and everyday, we can partner with the Holy Spirit in supernatural power... all by listening to the Holy Spirit, and following the Spirit's lead.

ANCHOR ENCOUNTER: LISTENING PRAYER

Listening prayer is one of the most important practices for followers of Jesus. Listening prayer is where we make space to listen and discern in community what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

Choose someone to lead this time.

1. Open in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to remove any barriers and open your hearts to receive.
2. Then ask, "Holy Spirit, is there anything you want to say or give in this time?"
3. Take a few moments of silence, listening to God. Close in prayer after 1–2min.



Share with each other what came up during this time. As a group, use the questions below to discern if what you heard was from the Holy Spirit.

- Does it align with Scripture?
- Does it glorify Jesus?
- Does it match Jesus' character?
- Would it help people to know Jesus?
- Is there a next step?

Close with this prayer: *Thank you Jesus for meeting us through your presence, through the Holy Spirit. Seal what you have spoken to us in this time. Amen.*

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE AWAY?

1. What came up for you during the listening prayer time?
2. What are you learning about God's presence?



A DEEPER DIVE

Make a plan to practice listening prayer. You can either gather together to do the listening prayer exercise again this week, or you can practice it on your own.

When you do listening prayer on your own, make sure to write down what words or images God speaks to you, and then check them with your community.



Anchor 4: God's Presence Brings Revival


Discuss last session's Deeper Dive. How have you been practicing listening prayer? How is God meeting you?

STARTER QUESTION

Is there anywhere in your life where you want to see God break through? What would it look like to see God do amazing things in you, on your campus, and even in your family?

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE: ACTS 4:23–35 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Prior to this passage: Filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John miraculously heal a man who was crippled since birth. The community's religious leaders are upset by both the miracle and their message about Jesus. Peter and John are arrested and beaten unjustly. Eventually they are released, but they are told to stop proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior. This is how the community of Jesus' followers responded.



As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying,

'Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.'

"In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.



DISCUSS

1. What stands out to you about the believers' prayer?
2. How does God respond to their prayer? What happens as a result of them being filled with more of the Holy Spirit?
3. When you encounter hardships, trials, and sufferings, do you turn to God to ask for more of God's presence? If not, what do you turn to instead?

ANCHOR CONCEPT: GOD'S PRESENCE BRINGS REVIVAL, SO WE ASK FOR MORE.

The believers respond to hardship by coming to God together in prayer and asking for MORE of God's presence. And God responds by filling them with more of the Holy Spirit. The result is that the community of believers experience a breakthrough of God's presence and power. This is a picture of REVIVAL!

Revival is a season of breakthroughs in **word, deed, and power** that ushers in a new normal of God's Kingdom experience and fruitfulness.

This is exactly what we see happening in this passage. They proclaim God's word more boldly (**word**), perform miracles, signs and wonders (**power**), and live out the true justice of Jesus' teaching to "love your neighbor as yourself" (**deed**). God's presence, the Holy Spirit, is flowing through the believers in word, deed, and power—and with great fruitfulness! Many are coming to faith, and no one among them has need. Everyone is providing for everyone else. And the result is the launch of a movement that starts communities of Jesus' followers all across the world. Because they pray to be filled with more of God's presence and power, they experience massive God-sized breakthroughs in their community and in their own lives.


God's presence alone can bring the breakthrough we long for. So we ask for more of God's presence and power in our world. This is what it means to pray for revival.

ANCHOR ENCOUNTER: PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

Praying for revival means praying for more of the Holy Spirit and for breakthroughs in word, deed, and power.

Choose someone to lead the prayer time.

1. Open in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to give you words and images on how to pray for breakthrough.
2. Take a moment of silence and listen together to the Holy Spirit.
3. After a few moments, invite people to pray out loud, one at a time, what they are feeling led by the Spirit to pray.

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4. Close the prayer time by asking the Holy Spirit to fill you like you see in this passage—with more presence, more power, more love so that you may boldly share God's love through word, deed and power, so many may know and follow Jesus.

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE AWAY?

1. What was praying for breakthroughs and revival like for you?
2. How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit?
3. What's one thing you want to take with you from this study series?

A DEEPER DIVE

Set a time to gather again and pray for breakthroughs together. Start with areas you would like to see breakthrough and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to pray. Combine this with the kinds of prayer you learned in this series—soaking prayer, surrender prayer, and listening prayer—as you pray for breakthrough.

KEEP GOING DEEPER. WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

We have seen how God's presence is the real promise, God's presence is intimate, God's presence is power, and God's presence brings revival. But don't stop here. There is much more to learn about living a life shaped by and led by the Holy Spirit. How do you want to keep growing?

Here are a few recommendations. Take time to pray together about what next step the Spirit is leading you all to take.

1. Attend the next **Empowered Conference**. Encounter the Holy Spirit and learn how to partner with the Holy Spirit in listening prayer, prophecy, healing, and more.
2. Gather some friends to pray for revival and practice what you've learned.
3. Read *Longing for Revival* by James Choung and Ryan Pfeiffer.
4. Grow in the Holy Spirit with friends. Check out the *Holy Spirit on Campus Workbook*, a coloring workbook with lessons about how the Holy Spirit speaks to us and fills us with power for ministry, and practical exercises to help you take risks in responding to the Spirit's leadership.
5. Read *Miracle Work* by Jordan Seng, a down-to-earth guide about Supernatural ministry.

Find all these resources at nso.intervarsity.org/library/anchored-spirit

