

PENTECOST

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AT SALEM ALLIANCE

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WHAT'S INSIDE

This guide gives you five days of short devotions to help prepare your heart for Pentecost. Give yourself some time to read the passages and ponder the questions. Listen for what Holy Spirit is speaking to you and give yourself space and freedom to respond as you feel led. As part of your response, you are welcome to come to the church during business hours this week to interact with some reflective and creative elements.

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DAY 1: MONDAY

Who is Holy Spirit?

What comes to your mind when you think of Holy Spirit?

If someone asked you, how would you describe Holy Spirit to them?

Holy Spirit is one of the equal members of the Trinity who, while present throughout all of Scripture,¹ becomes more of a central figure in the New Testament. Holy Spirit was present at the conception of Jesus and at Jesus' baptism which inaugurated His earthly ministry and was present with Him throughout His ministry.² During Jesus' time on earth, He explained who Holy Spirit is and what Spirit would do when Jesus would no longer be physically present on earth.

In addition to Jesus' descriptions, Paul and the other New Testament writers give us a very detailed and holistic picture of who Holy Spirit is. Read over the following descriptions and underline how you have experienced Holy Spirit in your life.

¹ Genesis 1:2; Numbers 11:17, 25; Judges 3:10, 13:25; Psalm 51:11

² Luke 1:26–37; Matthew 3:13–17

- He is our advocate (**John 14:16**)
- He will never leave you (**John 14:16**)
- He leads us into all truth (**John 14:17**)
- He teaches and reminds (**John 14:26**)
- He is our comforter/encourager/counselor (**John 15:26**)
- He testifies about Christ (**John 15:26**)
- He convicts (**John 16:8**)
- He guides and declares the future (**John 16:13**)
- He speaks for the Father and the Son (**John 16:15**)
- He speaks to us (**Acts 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11; 1 Timothy 4:1**)
- He confers with us (**Acts 15:28**)
- He forbids (**Acts 16:6**)
- He intercedes for us (**Romans 8:26**)
- He can be experienced in fellowship (**2 Corinthians 13:14**)

Spend some time writing out a prayer of gratitude for Holy Spirit and how He cares for you.

DAY 2: TUESDAY

What is Pentecost?³

Just before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus told His followers to wait for Holy Spirit to come to them. After Jesus ascended, His followers were obedient and were attentively waiting for Holy Spirit to come. Then, on the day of Pentecost,⁴ “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! 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!”

Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that. No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

‘In the last days,’ God says,

³ Story from **Acts 2:1–8, 11b–21**

⁴ “Held 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the Festival of First Harvest. It was one of the three annual festivals (**Deuteronomy 16:16**), a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops.” *Life Application Study Bible*, 1816

‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.
In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on my servants—men and women alike—
and they will prophesy.
And I will cause wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below—
blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
The sun will become dark,
and the moon will turn blood red
before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.
But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD
will be saved.”



As you look at the picture,⁵ depicting Holy Spirit in the form of a dove⁶ and the flames or tongues of fire descending on Jesus' followers, try to put yourself in their shoes. What would you have been thinking and feeling? What do you think that experience might have been like?

We, too, have been given Holy Spirit and can experience His filling in our life.⁷ What questions do you have about Holy Spirit and His filling in your life?

We can always invite Holy Spirit to continue to fill us. Spend some time asking Holy Spirit to come and fill you even more.

⁵ Picture taken from DeYoung, Kevin. *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*. Crossway, 2022.

⁶ **Matthew 3:16**

⁷ **John 16:7; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13–14**

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY

History & Significance of Fire

“By itself, the Pentecost story in Acts 2 looks kind of bizarre. But seeing what happened on the day of Pentecost within Scripture’s larger narrative makes the story more clear. Luke, the author of Acts, is a historian, not a news reporter. He’s telling us what happened by drafting a story that intentionally [connects to] repeated Old Testament patterns and themes. And this is not the first time that a divine, brilliant fire shows up out of nowhere and doesn’t burn anything up.

In the Hebrew Bible, mysterious windstorms with fire or lightning are consistently associated with two things: God’s presence and the formation of a temple.

Yahweh becomes present to Moses through the fire of a burning shrub called the seneh tree. In that famous scene, God speaks in Moses’ own language and tells him he’s standing on holy ground, implying this place is like a temple. And then God promises to empower Moses to help him set Israel free from oppression.⁸

Moses delivers his people from slavery, and they travel to Mount Sinai, where a bigger fire blazes on the mountain as a wind and fire (lightning) storm kicks up.⁹ Like before, this fire signals God’s presence, marking this mountain as God’s dwelling place and a symbolic temple. The people are confused, amazed, and even panicking in fear.¹⁰ But God assures them that he is partnering with them for their good, not to harm them. And he gives ten commandments for life that everyone agrees to follow.

Later, when the tabernacle is built on that same mountain, God shows up in a huge column of fire, hovering above it. The fire signals God’s presence and marks this space as his dwelling place.¹¹ When Israel

⁸ Exodus 3

⁹ Exodus 19:18–20

¹⁰ Exodus 20:18

¹¹ Exodus 13:21–22; 40:34–37

builds a permanent temple, the same fire shows up as God's 'dwelling glory.' This is a tangible sign that God's presence has settled in his temple, in the midst of his people's community life.¹²

The stories of Moses and the burning bush, Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple all include fire that shows up when God's presence arrives and marks his dwelling space or temple. In Acts 2, Luke is hyperlinking to these previous divine-fire scenes to give a background to the Pentecost story. The divine fire has previously rested on Yahweh's temple spaces, so where does it rest in this scene? ...

This is the moment when God's divine fire identified the new temple, the new place where Heaven and Earth overlap, which is the Church community made of Jesus' people. Not a mountain, not a beautiful building or a sacred place or space—God's temple is made with unexpected men and women. God's dwelling place is in people who bear witness to the risen Jesus by choosing to live in his way of love. And the whole world is eventually going to meet God through this community of people who love God and others like Jesus does.”¹³

Imagine what it would look like if you had a visible representation of Holy Spirit on you. What would your daily life look like, would it be different or the same?

¹² **2 Chronicles 7:1**

¹³ “What Is Pentecost? And Why Is It Important? A New World Begins” by Ben Tertin & BibleProject Team

Knowing that you do have Holy Spirit on you and in you, what does that mean to you?

What does or could this look like lived out every day?

DAY 4: THURSDAY

Purified for Holy Living

In addition to representing God's presence and identifying where He dwells, fire is also used throughout Scripture as a way for God to purify His people. He is described as a consuming fire. (**Hebrews 12:29**)

Holy Spirit not only comes on us to fill us but to purify us for holy living. Read the story of the Prophet Isaiah's cleansing and call from **Isaiah 6:1–8** below.

¹ It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies!

The whole earth is filled with his glory!"

⁴ Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.

⁵ Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies."

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷ He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."

⁸ Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?"

I said, "Here I am. Send me."

Just as Isaiah was purified, we too are in an ongoing purification process. This ongoing process can also be referred to as sanctification, as we allow Holy Spirit to change us into being more like Christ. Spend some time

reading **1 Thessalonians 5:16–24** and **1 Peter 1:13–25** below and answer the following questions. These verses highlight some of the ways Holy Spirit works in us and how we can join Him in the process.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

¹⁶ *Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

¹⁹ *Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.*

²³ *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*

1 Peter 1:13–25

¹³ *Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

¹⁷ *Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

²² *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the*

heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

²⁴ For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

What has the purification process looked like in your life?

How do you still need purification for holy living?

What are some of the things that are hindering you from fully surrendering to Holy Spirit’s purifying work in your life?

DAY 5: FRIDAY

Empowered Temples

Romans 8:11 says, *“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.”* The Spirit of God, who has the power to raise Jesus from the dead is the same Spirit we have inside us. That is a lot of power!

So what can this power look like?

Read **Galatians 5:16–24** below and underline how Holy Spirit empowers us:

¹⁶ *So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.* ¹⁷ *The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.* ¹⁸ *But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.*

¹⁹ *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,* ²⁰ *idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division,* ²¹ *envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

²² *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.* ²⁵ *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of*

our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Some other example of Holy Spirit's empowering work include:

- The power to preach the Gospel (**Acts 1:8; 4:31; 1 Corinthians 2:1–5; 1 Thessalonians 1:4–5**)
- The power to put to death the sinful nature and live as Jesus did (**Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16**)
- Giving each member of the Body of Christ gifts of the Spirit for ministry (**1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; Romans 12**)

Because we have Holy Spirit in us and on us, we get to bring the peace, presence, and power of Jesus wherever we are.

What are the fruits Holy Spirit is producing in you?

What are some of the giftings Holy Spirit has empowered you with?

How are you using those fruits and gifts?

As an act of surrender and worship, prayerfully ponder what an action step could be this week.

Instructions and times for in-person interactive elements throughout the week

Times:

Tuesday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Wednesday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am - 2:00pm

Instructions:

Start your time In the Worship Center using these prayer prompts:

- Begin your prayer time by telling God how you are feeling in this moment, bringing all that you are carrying to him.
- Spend some time surrendering to Him, whether that is in the area of control, fear, worry, inadequacies, etc. He longs to carry your burdens.
- Ask for a fresh filling of Holy Spirit power. Sit with open hands to receive from Him.
- Spend some time thanking Him for His Spirit and His empowering work in your life.

You are a purified, empowered temple. Yet, we can often find ourselves believing the lies of the enemy that keep us from living fully in Holy Spirit's power.

As you look at the side walls in the Worship Center you will see some of the lies that the enemy tries to get us to believe. Take a moment to think about which lie or lies tend to hinder you from living in the full power of Holy Spirit. You could also write your own lie. Write the lie(s) on a post it note on the tables at the front and then make your way out of the Worship Center and into the lobby.

As you leave the Worship Center you will see “firepits” in the lobby. Take the lie you wrote down, wad it up, and throw it into the “fire” as a visible representation of giving that lie to the Lord so He can do His purifying work in you.

Then, write your name under one of the flames on the wall, declaring that you are an empowered temple, purified and walking in all of Holy Spirit’s power.

We would love to see you at church this weekend to continue to engage with Pentecost.

We will have services at the normal times:

Saturday 5:00 pm

Sunday 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am

And we would love to have you come to the Pentecost Worship Night on Sunday evening at 6:30pm.