



VOL. 3

Holy Spirit & Bible

MILESTONES

Connecting God's Word to Life





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MILESTONES / INTRODUCTION

Milestones was developed by the creators of *Bible Studies for Life: Students*, which exists to point students and student leaders to the application of biblical teaching to everyday life through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources. Every lesson within *Bible Studies for Life* contains a bible study that points students to Jesus, is rooted in Scripture, and provides application for living in today's context. The topics and subjects chosen in each quarter of *Bible Studies for Life* fit within a larger framework called *Levels of Biblical Learning*. *Levels of Biblical Learning* consists of ten theological topics we believe students should grasp before graduating high school. These include:



Within these ten topics are 52 theological statements, which make up the core content students would be exposed to and learn each year as they go through *Bible Studies for Life*. The quarterly topics and Scripture passages that make up each lesson in *Bible Studies for Life* are tied the framework of *Levels of Biblical Learning*, which guides the Scripture selection.

While we are able to connect students to the *Levels of Biblical Learning* and the theological statements in each lesson of *Bible Studies for Life*, we wanted to provide a resource capable of going deep into the weight and significance these levels have for personal faith and discipleship. This is what *Milestones* seeks to do. Over the course of six volumes, each of the 52 theological statements will be explored in depth, noting both the theological importance and personal application each has for everyday life. By going through these six volumes, we hope students will grow in their personal knowledge and understanding of God and His world. We also pray that God will use these resources to equip another generation to boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel in a world where Jesus—the truth—is desperately needed.

MILESTONES / HOW TO USE

This Bible-study book includes eight weeks of content for group and personal study. Each session is divided into the following components:

ENGAGE

Each session opens with a *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, which gives an overview of the session's topic. Following the statement, each session contains an introduction to help your group as you begin your time together, setting up a natural transition into the material for each week.

DISCUSS

The Discuss section expands upon the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*. During this time, groups will explore Scripture, answer questions, and engage with additional content to help explain the session statement.

LIVE IT OUT

The Live It Out section is designed to close out your group time by calling out three specific points of application under the headings of Christ, Community, and Culture. By doing so, this section seeks to demonstrate specifically what the session material teaches us about Christ, how to live in Community, and how to engage with Culture.

DOING, BEING, AND APOLOGETIC STATEMENTS

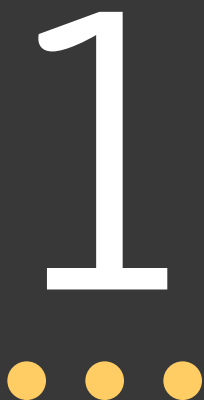
This section also contains Doing, Being, and Apologetic statements. These statements are directly related to the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement*, and provide opportunity for the group to expand on what these doctrinal truths communicate about us as individuals, how we are to live, and how we might engage culture apologetically.

DEVOTIONS

Three personal devotions are provided for each session to take students deeper into Scripture and to supplement the content introduced in the group study. With biblical teaching and introspective questions, these sections challenge students to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to respond in faith.

LEADER GUIDE

At the back of this book, you'll find a leader guide to help you prepare each week. This guide will help you gain a broad understanding of the content and learn ways to engage with students throughout your time together.



ALL GOD'S PEOPLE



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING STATEMENT

Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is given a spiritual gift to be used to serve the church.



I grew up in a small, rural town—and by “small” I mean there were 27 people in my entire high school class. However, the summer before my senior year, my family moved a few hours away into the city. A few days after moving, I went to my new school to register for classes. Let’s just say, the experience was quite overwhelming for this small-town kid.

When have you felt a little out of place? What made that situation tough to handle?

Fortunately for me, my cousin attended my new school. And we happened to be the same age, shared many of the same classes, and were super close. Not to mention, she was a star athlete and was well-loved by everyone at the school. Immediately, Kari made sure I knew how to get around, but more importantly, she made sure I never felt left out. She introduced me to her friends, and they began involving me in all the things they did together. She helped me belong.



ALL BELIEVERS RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

School hallways are full of divisions. Think about it: jocks and cheerleaders, band nerds and goths, cool kids and mean girls. There's something about being human that makes us look for ways to divide ourselves. Sometimes it's harmless (like choosing a specific gaming system or sports team), but sometimes it's not. History is full of painful discrimination based on race, gender, class, religion, and geography.

Think about your daily life and the things you participate in. What divisions have you created, even if you didn't intend to be divisive?

The church is called to be altogether different. When Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit came upon His life to strengthen Him (Isa. 42:1) and to anoint Him to preach the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18). Jesus carried out this ministry for three years before giving His life, being raised from the dead, and ascending to heaven. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit after he left to help us carry out this same ministry of living in obedience to God and being witnesses to the lost and poor (John 16:7).

The unity and love that exists among the church is one of the clearest examples of how Christ makes a difference in our lives.. In fact, the church today functions as Christ's body on earth (1 Cor. 12:13). How can a body be divided? Is there any way we could separate an arm or an ear, and each part would be better off? No way. Our bodies function best when all parts are connected and working in unity.

The same is true of the church. Here's the key: the Holy Spirit creates this essential unity. The Holy Spirit comes into the lives of all Christians at the moment we're saved (Rom. 8:9). Without the Spirit, there's no possibility of unity within the church, but because of Him, we are knit together in unity and love (Eph. 4:3-4). This brings awesome benefits: We experience God's love, and the world sees the difference He makes in our lives.

How has being part of the church helped you to experience love and acceptance?

When have you experienced the Spirit strengthening you or prompting you to share the gospel?

GIVEN A SPIRITUAL GIFT

We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Some of you are awesome at math; others are gifted musicians.

What are you particularly good at? What would you say is one of your weaknesses?

Why is it a good thing that people have different strengths?

Life is richer because we're all unique. If we were all good at the same things, then there wouldn't be anything to appreciate about everyone else. And if we all had the same weaknesses—if everyone was bad with numbers, for example—then we'd *all* be in trouble.

God designed the church to work similarly. Not only are we connected together as one body, but each of us has a specific function within the life of the church. Scripture calls these spiritual gifts—special abilities or capacities given by the Holy Spirit to all believers which empower us to effectively minister to others.

Read Romans 12:4-6.

Just like the nose has a different purpose than the knee, so each person in the church has a different role to play. When we all fulfill our responsibilities, the church functions smoothly and transforms lives. When the preachers preach and teachers teach, people learn and grow. When the evangelists share, the lost are saved. When the servants serve, the encouragers encourage, and the leaders lead, the church makes a difference. However, when someone decides to stay home, go to the lake, or participate in sports instead of in the church, a part of the body is missing. The church can't operate at full capacity.

It can be easy to think some gifts are worth more than others. However, all gifts—and all people—are equally valuable. Each one of us has the gift God has appointed. Discern your giftedness and put it to good use. When you do, God will use you to make a powerful difference in others' lives for the sake of His kingdom.

What are some ways God has gifted you? How can you put those gifts to use in your church?

What's happens when Christians don't plug into a church?

FOR SERVING THE CHURCH

Jesus promised that, after He ascended, He would send the Holy Spirit as our Helper (John 16:7, 14:26). He helps us in practical and immediate ways. For instance, the Spirit helps us resist temptation and opens our eyes to understand Scripture. In a much broader sense, the Holy Spirit helps us to fulfill the purposes for which we were originally created:

- By the Spirit, we are born again and made to live in a relationship with God (John 3:5).
- By the Spirit, we are given gifts that allow us to reflect God's character to others in unique ways.

What role does the Holy Spirit play within the Trinity? How does it relate to the work done by Christ?

Some things are better done alone, like taking a test. Others require teamwork, like basketball. We're often tempted to think of our faith as a personal reality. Although we will ultimately answer to the Lord as individuals, our faith is to be lived out in community. This involves using our spiritual gifts to the best of our abilities to build up others in the church (Eph. 4:11-12).

If we all go to church with the focus on *being* served, but no one's doing the serving, we all leave empty. But when we focus on serving others, everyone leaves filled, encouraged, comforted, and built up. This is the way our spiritual gifts are designed to work—to build up the church so we most effectively fulfill the purpose for which God created us.

Why is it so important to serve others instead of looking for others to serve us?

How have you used your gifts to build up the church?



BEING // As members of God's family, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and have received from Him gifts to be used in serving the church. Exercising these gifts is a privilege and responsibility, and God works through us to impact others.

DOING // Because the Holy Spirit resides in the lives of all believers and has given us all a spiritual gift, we should work to discern that gift and then exercise it in building up the church.

APOLOGETIC // Whereas many see the Holy Spirit as an energy or force, the truth is the Holy Spirit is a person, co-equal with the Father and the Son within the Trinity, and is Himself God.

CHRIST

In one of the most familiar passages in Scripture, John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus we must be born of the Spirit to be part of God's family. Today, we are called to live by the Spirit to be in a continued relationship with Christ (Gal. 5:16-18). This means desiring and doing the right things and putting away things that don't line up with God's desires.

In your own words, explain what it means to “live by the Spirit”?

How does your life show that you live by the Spirit?

What will you do this week to put away the desires of the flesh to live by the Spirit?

COMMUNITY

The Holy Spirit gives every believer a spiritual gift to be used for serving others. Have someone read aloud each Scripture pertaining to spiritual gifts below. What gifts do you see in each passage?

- **Romans 12:6-8:**
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-11:**
- **Ephesians 4:11-13:**

What specific gifts do you think God has given you?

How will you use your gifts to serve those in your church?

CULTURE

The Holy Spirit gifts some to be evangelists (Eph. 4:11). Evangelism means simply sharing the good news of Christ with the lost. We may be tempted to think: *If I'm not gifted in that area, then I don't have to share.* But this isn't the case. Paul told Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). Everyone, gifted in this area or not, is called to evangelism.

Who do you know who is far from God and needs to know of the hope found in Jesus?

How will you go about sharing with them this week?

Session 1

DEVOTIONS

A DIRECT PRESENCE

Think about where you live on the timeline of redemptive history. As we seek to walk with God, we can do so with the comfort and confidence that the Holy Spirit's presence is within us. What we experience as normal in our daily walk with Christ, the disciples had to wait to experience. But they had Jesus' promise. Let's take a look:

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it you're going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. The one who doesn't love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me. "I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

JON 14:22-26

The Holy Spirit made it possible for Jesus' messy, imperfect disciples to remember what Jesus said, including John, whose words we just read. We benefit directly by having such a well preserved record of Jesus' teachings. By the Spirit's ministry as the Counselor, we are able to sit at Jesus' feet and learn directly from Him.

What does this passage say takes place spiritually when we read our Bibles?

If you were to have an in-person conversation with John, do you think he would take credit for his own Gospel? What do you think he would say?

A FIRST GLIMPSE

We get these beautiful glimpses of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. He has always been present, but He has not always been so obvious to mankind since the fall. Mankind was created to model the fellowship within the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Take a look at the very first words of the Bible.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

GENESIS 1:1-3

As you read, highlight where you see the Holy Spirit in this passage.

Was God able to pour out the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? Why do you think He waited until the New Testament? Explain.

Was the Holy Spirit less powerful in Genesis than He was in the Gospels? What is the difference between the Spirit's role in this passage and in the New Testament?

A PROMISED COUNSELOR

When we see the Holy Spirit named the “Counselor,” it can give the idea that the Holy Spirit exists only to make us feel better, but is there more to His ministry? The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, too. This is a crucial ministry, but sometimes we can mistake shame and guilt from the enemy for conviction from the Spirit.

When the Spirit convicts us, we feel compelled to repent and are filled with hope. But shame is from the enemy and leaves us with no hope. The result of the Holy Spirit’s conviction is repentance. The result of the enemy’s shame upon us is despair.

Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

JOHN 16:7-11

Think about the difference between conviction and shame. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you examine your heart.

- **What is the Holy Spirit convicting you of now?**

- **What do you think the enemy is trying to shame you for right now?**

Why do you think the Holy Spirit wasn’t sent until Jesus ascended to heaven?

LEADER GUIDE / SESSION 1

ENGAGE

Start the session by reading the *Levels of Biblical Learning Statement* on page 6. Then, use the introduction provided as a way to begin your group time before transitioning to the Discuss section.

DISCUSS

Be sure to read the Discuss section on pages 7-9 before coming together as a group. Doing so will allow you to be familiar with the material and will help you select which portions of the material you would like to cover in the allotted amount of group time. Look for places in the Discuss section where you can add a personal anecdote to a question or a Scripture passage to share in addition to what has been provided. Making preparations like these will help your group time run more smoothly and be more effective in the end.

LIVE IT OUT

After your group works through the Discuss section, take some time to move through the application found in the Live It Out section on pages 10-11. Look for specific, personal ways you can connect with the material from your own past. Sharing a personal story or illustration that connects with the lesson is a great way to connect with students and creates an atmosphere where students also feel comfortable sharing.

WEEKLY LEADER TIPS

- Introduce the personal devotions that follow Session 1, and remind students to complete the session devotions on pages 12-15 before your next meeting.
- Challenge students to memorize the Levels of Biblical Learning Statement for Session 1.
- Encourage students to be in the habit of building into their personal prayer lives with what they have learned this week.

WEEKLY LEADER NOTES
