



# Discussion Notes

Rivers • Longing: The Spirit is Life

June 7, 2026 • Dave Solmes

## Main Theme:

We begin this series about the Holy Spirit by discussing “Longing.” What does it mean to long for the life the Spirit offers? Within our community, this question has arisen because of our appreciation of the many stories we have read about in the book of Acts. We believe that God has poured out his spirit upon many generations, and so we ask, “What does God have for us, or from Acts to Us?”

## Sermon Outline:

*Ephesians 4:3 — “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*

There are three instructions that direct our longing for the Holy Spirit:

### Every Effort:

This word effort is not about human striving. This is about next steps in our human surrendering. We all have a different “next effort” based on our present relationship with the Holy Spirit: (Tyler Staton – The Familiar Stranger)

- Unknown: I know very little about the Holy Spirit.
- Fearful and/or Cautious in my relationship with the Holy Spirit.
- Available: Trust is high, grace abounds and my heart and mind is wide open to a growing relationship the Holy Spirit.

### Keep Unity:

In order to keep something, we first have to have something. What has the Holy Spirit given us?

- When someone becomes a Christian, they are adopted by the Spirit into a new relationship with Christ and one another. This is made possible by:
  - Forgiveness of sins, and the giving of a new heart and mind.
  - Personal knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is.
  - Power, in order to be obedient in our asking, receiving, and obeying Holy Spirit.

- Psalm 42:1–2 says, *“As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him?”*
- Human longing leads us to God or away from God.
- Longing becomes worship when we bring all of ourselves to God.
- James 1:14-15 says, *“each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”*
- Jesus invites longing and thirsty people.

### **The Gift Bond of Peace:**

The "bond of peace" is not merely the absence of conflict; it is our active involvement and commitment to live in a peace-filled relationship with the Holy Spirit.

- A bond forms as the Holy Spirit guides people into the truth about Jesus.
- A bond forms as the Holy Spirit shines light on lies that have become our truths that are not helping us whatsoever.
- A bond forms when we sense the Holy Spirit, and His power, enabling us to do things that the Spirit is asking.

Making room for the Holy Spirit involves beginning where you are in your relationship, and taking next steps to keep the unity that we are gifted with when we become Christians.



# Study Questions

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## Engage:

- Read the text, Ephesians 4:3. At your initial reading, what stands out to you?
- What questions do you have about the text?

## Observe:

- Context: As the Holy Spirit fills people, they are called to a unity that is gifted to them. This is not a natural thing. It is a supernatural impartation of all the things necessary to unite followers of Jesus.
- Make Every Effort: This is not human effort and striving. This is about surrendering. In what ways are we called to prioritize a surrendered relationship with the Holy Spirit? Why is surrender the only responsible posture?
- Keep Unity: As a Christian we are not simply asked to get along with people. Our collective responsibility is to unite with the Spirit. Personal knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is, and ensuring we are obedient in asking, receiving, and obeying the Holy Spirit, unites people.
- Bond of Peace: What activities and practices does the Holy Spirit use to unite and bring peace to a person and a group of people?

## Apply:

- How would you describe your relationship with the Holy Spirit:
  - Unknown: I know very little.
  - Fearful and/or Cautious: I am hesitant to open my mind, heart and soul.
  - Available: Trust is high, grace abounds, and my heart and mind is wide open, to a growing relationship the Holy Spirit.

- What next step and effort are you being called to right now in your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- As a Christian we can feel alone, like an outsider, or united with the Spirit and others. What do you feel right now?
- Have you ever thought that peace is a bond that unites us with the Holy Spirit and with others? We don't have to be in conflict or double-minded. What are the characteristics of someone at peace with the Holy Spirit?
- Pray for each other.