

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE + STREAMING VIDEO

FIVE SESSIONS

JIM CYMBALA

CARRY

THE

FLAME

LET JESUS RENEW YOUR HEART
AND REVIVE THE WORLD

CARRY THE FLAME

A BIBLE STUDY ON RENEWING YOUR HEART
AND REVIVING THE WORLD

STUDY GUIDE | FIVE SESSIONS

JIM CYMBALA

WITH REBECCA ENGLISH LAWSON



HarperChristian
Resources

Carry the Flame Study Guide
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Requests for information should be addressed to:
HarperChristian Resources, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

ISBN: 978-0-310-16075-5 (softcover)
ISBN: 978-0-310-16076-2 (e-book)

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Published in association with the literary agency of Ann Spangler & Company 1415 Laurel Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

First printing February 2023 / Printed in the United States of America

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A NOTE FROM JIM CYMBALA

It's a sad reality, but the church in America today is in a place not founded in the New Testament. The system in most churches seems to be, "You, the clergy, do all the work. We, the churchgoers, will sit in the pew, and if you're fortunate, we'll come to church a couple times a month." Sure, we love the Lord. We've put our faith in him. But many of us are content just to sit in church on Sunday and leave the work of ministry to the leaders.

Jesus did not suffer on a cross for six hours so we could go to church once a week! No, he died so we would be saved . . . and then he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and poured out the Holy Spirit on the early church. Why? So he could send people out to *carry the flame* of the gospel into a world that is in need of his light and love. He did not pour out his Spirit on just the twelve apostles. He used many others to do the work of ministry—men and women who never went to seminary, were not ordained ministers, were not famous personalities. He used everyday folks who had one thing in common: they were available.

I recently wrote a book called *Fan the Flame* to encourage pastors and leaders to persevere in their ministry of spreading the gospel. Now, in this Bible study, I want to inspire *you* to do the same. Often, we're tempted to sit back and say, "God can't use me. I'm too old. I'm too young. I'm not educated enough. I don't know enough Bible verses." God wants to dispel that kind of thinking. He can use little children. He can use the newest believer. He can use a person who dropped out of school in the third grade. We look at people and think, "Impossible!" But today, God is using ordinary, everyday people to build his kingdom.

So, you and I need to take a hard look—an honest look—inside ourselves and our churches. One day everything we own will be gone, and we will stand before the Lord of the harvest and have to give an account of what we did with the salvation he gave us. Did we share it? Did we serve him? Or did we just leave it all up to our leaders?

The people on the platform were never intended to do *all* the work of the Lord. There are too many people today who need to hear about Christ to leave it to the few who have seminary degrees and titles in the church. God has chosen each of us to play our part in his kingdom. So give yourself to the Lord Jesus. You have no idea what God can do through you if the flame of his Spirit touches your heart and you are yielded to his will.

— Jim Cymbala



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

If you think you're too inexperienced or not "qualified" enough to be used by God . . . think again. God has called *every* believer to serve him. He sent his Holy Spirit to empower *you* to do whatever assignment he has given you. With God, nothing is impossible.

In this study, you will look at the stories of ordinary people—most from the book of Acts—whom God used in extraordinary ways to carry the flame of the gospel. Each person was different. Each person was called to serve the Lord in unique ways. But every one of them was available to God. They simply wanted to be at his disposal. The same is true today. God is still looking for people who are open to hearing from him and willing to obey.

Before you begin this study, keep in mind there are few ways you can go through this material. You can experience the study with others in a small group (such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or home group), or you may choose to go through the content on your own. Either way, the videos for each session are available for you to view at any time by following the instructions provided on the inside cover of this study guide.

Group Study

Each of the sessions in this study are divided into two parts: (1) a group study section, and (2) a personal study section. The group study section provides a basic framework on how to open your time together, get the most out of the video content, and discuss the key ideas together that were presented in the teaching. Each session includes the following:

- **Welcome:** A short note about the topic of the session for you to read on your own before you meet as a group.
- **Connect:** A few icebreaker questions to get you and your group members thinking about the topic and interacting with each other.
- **Watch:** An outline of the key points covered in each video teaching to help you follow along, stay engaged, and take notes.
- **Discuss:** Questions to help your group reflect on the teaching material presented and apply it to your lives. In each session, you will be given four suggested questions and four additional questions to use as time allows.

- **Respond:** A short personal exercise to help reinforce the key ideas.
- **Pray:** A place for you to record prayer requests and praises for the week.

If you are doing this study in a group, make sure you have your own copy of the study guide so you can write down your thoughts, responses, and reflections—and so you will have access to the videos via streaming. Finally, keep these points in mind:

- **Facilitation:** If you are doing this study in a group, you will want to appoint someone to serve as a facilitator. This person will be responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during discussions and activities. If *you* have been chosen for this role, there are some resources in the back of this guide that can help you lead your group through the study.
- **Faithfulness:** Your group is a place where tremendous growth can happen as you reflect on the Bible, ask questions, learn what God is doing in other people's lives, and draw near to Jesus together. For this reason, be fully committed and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members.
- **Friendship:** The goal of any small group is to serve as a place where people can share, grow in the Lord together, and build friendships. So make your group a "safe place." Be honest about your thoughts and feelings, but also listen carefully to everyone else's thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Keep anything personal that your group members share in confidence so that you can create a community where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

If you are going through this study on your own, read the opening Welcome section and reflect on the questions in the Connect section. Watch the video and use the prompts provided to take notes. Finally, personalize the questions and exercises in the Discuss and Respond sections. Close by recording any requests you want to pray about during the week.

Personal Study

The personal study is for you to work through on your own during the week. Each exercise is designed to help you explore the key ideas you uncovered during your group time and

delve into passages of Scripture that will help you apply those principles to your life. Go at your own pace, doing a little each day—or tackle the material all at once. Remember to spend a few moments in silence to listen to what the Holy Spirit might be saying to you.

Each study session contains five days of exercises. On each of the five days, you will find a short devotional to read followed by a few verses of Scripture to help you dig into a key topic from that week’s video. You will also engage in a few questions and exercises designed to help you apply the truths of the Scripture to your own life.

Note that if you are doing this study as part of a group and are unable to finish (or even start) these personal studies for the week, you should still attend the group time. Be assured that you are wanted and welcome even if you don’t have your “homework” done. The group studies and personal studies are intended to help you hear what God wants to say to you and how to apply what he is saying to your life. So as you go through this study, be listening for him to speak to you as you learn what it means to carry the flame of God’s love to the world.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

BEFORE GROUP MEETING	Read the Welcome section (page 3)
GROUP MEETING	Discuss the Connect questions Watch the video teaching for session 1 Discuss the questions that follow as a group Do the closing exercise and pray (pages 3–8)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 1	Complete the daily study (pages 10–11)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 2	Complete the daily study (pages 12–14)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 3	Complete the daily study (pages 15–16)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 4	Complete the daily study (pages 17–18)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 5 (before week 2 group meeting)	Complete the daily study (pages 19–21)

SESSION ONE

GOD USES ORDINARY PEOPLE

*After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also,
and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place
where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest
truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the
harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

LUKE 10:1-2 NKJV



Welcome | READ ON YOUR OWN

In this study, we will be looking primarily at stories of people in the book of Acts who made themselves available to the Holy Spirit. But in this first session, we are going to look at some people—seventy of them—whose story is found in the Gospels.¹

One day, as Jesus went about ministering, he called seventy people to assist him. Their assignment was to go, in groups of two, to all the towns and places where he was about to go. They were to pave the way for Jesus—to tell people about him, love them, and help them.

God wants to use us in the same way. No matter where we live, there are people who are lonely, empty, and afraid. Jesus calls us to go before him into their lives, tell them about the salvation he offers, and manifest through our lives his love and compassion for them.

The seventy people whom Jesus sent out didn't represent the apostles or church leaders. They were just ordinary disciples who were born again through the Holy Spirit as they believed the message of the cross. It's unlikely they were scholars who could recite the Bible (which at this time was just the Old Testament) to support their points. They just knew Jesus had saved them.

When Jesus gave this assignment to these seventy people, they could have said, "I'm not ready," or, "I don't know enough Scripture," or, "I'm just a new Christian—send one of the disciples like Peter or John." But they understood that Jesus had called them to do a job, and they believed that he would equip them with the tools they needed to do it.

God isn't looking for *ability* among his people, he's looking for *availability*. He wants us to step out in faith and do what he's calling us to do. He wants us to carry the flame of his love into people's lives.

Connect | 15 MINUTES

If any of your group members don't know each other, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of the following questions:

- What is your primary goal or hope for participating in this study? (In other words, why are you here?)

— or —

- What is something you have done recently to bless someone else?

Watch | 20 MINUTES

Now watch the video for this session, which you can access by playing the DVD or through streaming (see the instructions provided on the inside front cover). As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Outline

- I. God calls ordinary people to carry the flame of his light and love to others.
 - A. The seventy people Jesus sent out were not ordained, famous, or likely highly educated. They are never even named in the Bible.
 - B. This shows us that God can use anonymous people, or people who don't know a lot of Scripture, to do his work. He simply wants people who are available to him.
- II. We are called to pave the way for Jesus in people's lives.
 - A. God wants us to do more than go to church once a week. He wants us to be available 24/7.
 - B. Going before Jesus means paving the way for him to come into people's lives.
- III. The fields are ripe unto harvest. In other words, people need Jesus.
 - A. The harvest was an urgent matter to Jesus. He urged the seventy to tell people about him.
 - B. The harvest field is made up of every race, background, age, economic status, and culture.
- IV. The laborers are few. Too many Christians are letting the leaders do the work of ministry.
 - A. Most of us settle for "I just go to church on Sundays." But Jesus is saying, "You've got to get out there and love people—because the laborers are few!"
 - B. God is sovereign, yet he chooses to spread the gospel through ordinary people.
 - C. People are lonely, empty, broken, and afraid to die. Jesus is sending us to them.
- V. When we step out in faith to share Christ's love, God will equip us.
 - A. The seventy didn't have the New Testament yet; they just had Jesus' verbal teaching. God can do the impossible through us when we are available to him.
 - B. Jesus is the head of the church, and we are the body. A healthy body obeys the head.
 - C. We don't have to worry about what to say. God will give us the words to minister to people.
 - D. Jesus hung on a cross for us. So let's consecrate our lives to him! Let's be available to carry the flame of his love to the people around us.

Notes

Discuss | 35 MINUTES

Take some time to discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions. There are some suggested questions below that will help you begin your discussion, but feel free to pick any of the additional questions as well as time allows.

Suggested Questions

1. In Luke 10:1, we read, “The Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go” (NKJV). Take a moment to read verses 3–12. What are some of the instructions that Jesus gave to these seventy individuals? What were some of their assignments?
2. When Jesus told these seventy that “the harvest is plentiful” (verse 2) he was saying that people were in need of his love. Who is someone you know who is hurting, empty, lonely, or fearful? How might God be calling you to minister to that person?
3. Consider this statement from the teaching: “We have to be available and have the simple faith to step out like the seventy disciples did. They just went and did what God told them. The miracle happens, the blessing comes, when you do what God tells you.” What blessings have you received simply by making yourself available to God?
4. Often times, God does not reveal the entire plan to us when he calls us to take a step of faith. We have to take the first step of obedience, and then God shows us the next step. What step of faith do you sense that God is calling you to take today?

Additional Questions

5. Think about some of the people who have carried the flame of the gospel into your life. Who are some of these ordinary people who helped pave the way for *you* to know Jesus? What was it about them that drew you to the Lord? How can their lives inspire you to share Jesus with others the way they did with you?
6. What is your biggest obstacle to sharing the love of Christ with other people—fear, not feeling ready, not having the right training, being a new Christian, being too busy, simply not wanting to? How can God help you face this obstacle head on and overcome it?
7. God is sovereign and all-powerful. He doesn't need our resources or anything we can bring to accomplish his purposes in this world. Yet, he *chooses* to use us! Why do you think God desires to partner with us in his mission to bring lost people to himself?
8. Consider this statement from the teaching: "It's not ability that God is looking for . . . it's availability." What does it mean for you to be available to God?

Respond | 10 MINUTES

Take a few moments to reflect on this truth that God doesn't want your *ability*, he just wants our *availability*. Review the outline for the video teaching and any notes you took. Use the following questions to write down your most significant takeaways from this session.

What spoke most to your heart from the video teaching?

What do you sense God is stirring you to do as a result?

How will this impact your service to others this week?

Pray | 10 MINUTES

Praying for one another is one of the most important things you can do as a community. So use this time wisely and make it more than just a "closing prayer" to end your group. Be intentional about sharing prayer requests, reviewing how God is answering your prayers, and praying for each other as a group. Use the space below to write down any requests so that you and your group members can continue to pray about them in the week ahead.

Name	Request

SESSION ONE

PERSONAL STUDY

Every believer in Christ has a work assignment. Whether you recognize it or not, God has gifted you in unique ways to take the gospel to the people around you. This week, you will have the chance to explore a few passages of Scripture to see how God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for him in this world. As you work through these exercises, be sure to write down your responses to the questions, as you will be given a few minutes to share your insights at the start of the next session if you are doing this study with others.

DAY 1

GOD IS CALLING YOU

When Jesus called seventy people to go ahead of him into all the places where he was about to go, he chose *ordinary* people. They were like us—not famous, not trained for ministry, not highly educated—yet still important to Jesus. He wanted them to pave the way for him.

God has a calling for every single follower of Christ. The problem is that we sometimes think the work of the gospel is only for pastors, leaders, or really “talented” people. We think we’re not equipped to do anything great for God.

Think about this in your life. Maybe you’re from a small town with little opportunities. Maybe you’ve never been to college. Maybe you’ve been beaten down by sorrow or hardship or failure and think that God couldn’t possibly use you. Maybe you’re young, or your family thinks your ideas are crazy, or you have no money. But none of these things disqualifies you from serving Jesus! The only thing that can disqualify you is *unwillingness*.

When the great missionary Hudson Taylor was first called to serve the Lord in China, he was a young man with no training and little support. His fellow missionaries thought he was odd, but his faith in God and love for the Chinese people outshone all opposition and eventually resulted in thousands coming to Christ. Years later he wrote:

God chose me because I was weak enough. God does not do His great works by large committees. He trains somebody to be quiet enough, and little enough, and then He uses *him*.²

God is drawn to weakness. When we realize that we can’t do anything for him on our own, that’s when he says, “Here’s a person I can work through.” When Jesus uses a weak person to do great things for his kingdom, he gets all the glory. So be encouraged. God is calling you!

Read | 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 and Hebrews 11:32–35

Reflect

1. According to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:26–31, what kind of people does God call for his service? How might some of the words in this passage apply to you?
2. Why does God call people who are weak, lowly, and despised (see 1 Corinthians 1:28)? How does it glorify God when you depend on his strength?
3. Sometimes, we let past failures or life circumstances keep us from sharing Christ with others. But have you ever thought that your past difficulties might actually have *prepared* you to help others? What are some things you have experienced that could be a stepping stone for you to help people who are going through the same things?
4. How do you think God could take what you consider weaknesses and turn them into strengths, just like he did with Hudson Taylor (see Hebrews 11:33–34)?

Pray | End your time in prayer. Ask God to strengthen your faith and give you the willingness and courage to step out in obedience to serve him.

DAY 2

WHAT IS YOUR ASSIGNMENT?

When Jesus sent out the seventy, he instructed them to go “two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Luke 10:1). God has a job for you too! He wants to use you in his work of saving people and growing them to maturity in Christ.

Sometimes, you might be tempted to think that because you aren’t a great speaker or singer or leader, you don’t have much to offer. But God has deliberately designed every person with particular gifts and tendencies. He has called you—and every other follower of Jesus—to serve him in ways that are perfectly suited to you.

One woman in the Bible, Dorcas, served widows by sewing them clothes (see Acts 9:36). A man named Tertius helped the apostle Paul write his letters (see Romans 16:22). Several men in the early church distributed food to believers in need (see Acts 6:1–6). Epaphras wrestled in prayer for the members of a particular church (see Colossians 4:12). What about you? You could help in the children’s ministry at your church so parents could take part in the service. You could minister to people in a local shelter. You could visit those who are shut in or lonely. You could reach out to refugees. You could serve as a receptionist or financial manager or parking attendant in your church. The possibilities are endless.

Of course . . . God doesn’t necessarily want us to come up with our own ideas about how we can serve him. No, he has prepared and crafted each of us for a specific assignment. So, how do you know what your job is? Simple. Ask God. The Holy Spirit will speak to you, put opportunities in front of you, and burden your heart. As God begins to lead you in a direction, he will confirm his guidance in his Word and through godly counsel from mature believers. As you step into God’s purpose for you, he will use you powerfully to change lives.

Read | James 1:5–7 and Romans 12:6–8

Reflect

1. Sometimes you might feel prompted in your heart regarding a particular ministry, but you're not always sure if it's God leading or your own idea. This is especially true if loved ones think you're headed in a wrong direction. According to James 1:5–7, what does God promise to provide when you need direction? What is required on your part?
2. In Romans 12:6, Paul says that “we have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” While all of us are called to the work of God's kingdom, we don't all serve in the same way. How has God uniquely called *you* to share his love with others?
3. God will often call you to serve people who are different from you—in looks, race, economic background, culture, living circumstances. How open are you to letting go of what is comfortable or familiar and following Christ into his will for you?
4. You might think that your part in God's work is insignificant, but that's not true. God is the one who chose your task, and your work is needed. “Whether large or small, each person's assignment serves to advance the divine mission.”³ How does this encourage you today?

Pray | End your time in prayer. Ask God to show you your work assignment—and keep on asking until you hear from him.

“

When I first got the idea of moving to New York City, people in my very small town said, “You’re crazy. You’re gonna get shot, and you’re gonna die there.” There were times when I was wrestling with God, “Is this really from you, or am I just going crazy?” So I said, “Lord, if this is what you’re calling me to do, then I need to know for sure.” So I wrote out a list of really practical things and said, “Lord, I want to see you answer these prayers so I know this is what you’re calling me to do.” And he answered every one of them. Now it’s been five years, and I can say that the Lord has been so faithful every single day.

”

Anna

DAY 3

OPEN YOUR EYES

Before Jesus sent out the seventy, he told them, “The harvest is plentiful.” In another verse, he said something similar: “Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). Jesus wasn’t talking about a harvest of fruit and grain but of people! The Lord wants us to notice the men, women, and children around us—people who need the gospel.

We live in a busy world. We all have multiple demands on our time. But sometimes we can get so wrapped up in our own needs and responsibilities that we don’t notice the people God brings across our paths—the lonely neighbor, the hurting family member, the overwhelmed young mother, the salesperson at our door, the hungry homeless person.

Jesus noticed people. You would think he would have gotten tired of them constantly following him and wanting his help. But Matthew 9:36 tells us that “when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus cared more about people’s needs than about guarding his privacy. He saw their heartbreak and loneliness and spiritual need. The question is . . . do we?

As Lettie Cowman, author of the devotional *Streams in the Desert*, poignantly put it, “I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good work, therefore, any kindness, or any service I can render to any soul of man or animal, let me do it now. Let me not neglect or defer it, for I shall not pass this way again.”²⁴ When the Lord calls us to take the gospel to others, he isn’t making a light request. It is an urgent matter: “The harvest is plentiful! The fields are ripe! Open your eyes—people all around you are in need!”

The individuals God brings into our lives are often hiding great pain—but many of them are ready to receive the gospel. So let’s ask the Lord to help us see people as Jesus does.

Read | Mark 6:30–34 and Acts 3:1–10

Reflect

1. When Jesus told the seventy that the harvest was plentiful, he was saying that people were ready to receive the gospel. How could knowing this make you more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading with each person the Lord brings across your path?
2. In Mark 6:30–34, the disciples had just returned from ministering the gospel, much in the same way that the seventy had done, and Jesus wanted to take them to a quiet place to rest. But when Jesus and his disciples arrived at their destination, they discovered they were not alone. How did Jesus handle this interruption of their plans? What did Jesus see in the crowds that we might have missed if we had been in his place?
3. Sometimes we are quick to notice the needs of people we feel close to but not so open to loving people who look different from us, or who frustrate us, or who hold views with which we disagree. How can you develop God's heart for people you would not naturally love on your own?
4. In Acts 3:1–10, when Peter and John went to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, they met a man who had been lame from birth asking for money. Instead of ignoring him, they “looked straight at him” (verse 4). They didn't consider this man an annoyance but a divine appointment. What do you think the Lord could do through you (and in you) if you saw people the same way that Peter and John saw that man?

Pray | End your time in prayer. Ask that the Lord will open your eyes to really see the people you come across and give you his heart for each one.

DAY 4

WHERE ARE ALL THE WORKERS?

When you think about how amazing it is that Jesus wants you to partner with him in building his kingdom, it would seem as if no believer would want to miss out. Yet when Jesus sent out the seventy to work in his harvest field, he made a sad statement: “The workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2). The same is true in our day. *Where are all the workers?*

In America today, many Christians are content to just go to church once a week (if that). Some are more concerned with buying a new car, pursuing a better job, or getting the latest iPhone than they are in fulfilling their assignment from God. But Jesus was clear when it came to addressing what our priorities should be:

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31, 33).

Jesus wants his church to be winning souls and making disciples. We find that after he told the seventy about the problem—“the workers are few”—he then told them what to do about it: “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2). God is calling us to go—but he is also calling us to pray!

Prayer has to be the foundation of all God’s work. As theologian and preacher A.B. Simpson wrote, “There is no ministry which will bring more power and blessing upon the world and from which we ourselves will reap larger harvests of eternal fruit than the habit of believing, definite, and persistent prayer for the progress of Christ’s kingdom.”⁵ Yes, the workers are few, but if we bring the need to him in prayer, there’s no telling what he will do to revive his church and raise up men and women to minister Christ to people who need him.

Read | Ephesians 6:18 and 2 Chronicles 7:14

Reflect

1. Consider the church in America today—not just your own church but God’s people at large, as best you know. How do you think we are doing in taking the gospel of Christ to the men and women in our cities and neighborhoods and families? Why are there so few workers?
2. Remember what Jesus instructed the seventy to do about this problem—“Ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers into his harvest field” (Luke 10:2). What further insights does Paul provide in Ephesians 6:18 into how you can pray about this need?
3. What are some ministries or churches you could be praying for? List them below. Be sure to add your own church and pastor to the list! Perhaps you could commit to praying regularly for the leaders and workers in these groups—that the Lord would work powerfully through them as they send out workers into his harvest field.
4. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, we find several conditions and promises of prayer. If God’s people were devoted to praying consistently and fervently that the Lord would send out workers into his harvest field, what do you think would happen?

Pray | End your time in prayer. Ask the Lord to awaken his church and to send out more and more workers for the building of his kingdom.

DAY 5

GOD WILL EQUIP YOU

Hopefully, God has stirred your heart this week about an assignment that he is calling you to do. But maybe you are still not sure if you can really step out to do what he's leading you to do. But remember—if Jesus is calling you to do a job for him, he will equip you for the task. God will never set you up for failure!

The seventy were not powerful or imposing figures. In fact, Jesus said that he was sending them out “like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:3)! As they approached towns they had likely never visited before, walking in pairs, they probably asked one another, “Where should we start this time? What if these people don't like us?” Other than the basic instructions Jesus had given them, these servants had no idea what they were doing.

But Jesus opened doors and hearts that the seventy could never have opened on their own. We know this because when the seventy returned to Jesus after completing their mission, “They returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name’” (Luke 10:17). These brave individuals stepped out in faith, knowing nothing except that Jesus had saved them and sent them . . . and they saw the power of God change lives. Not only that, but their hearts were filled with joy in the process!

None of us has what it takes on our own to win people to Christ or effectively disciple believers. But when the Holy Spirit leads us into service for the Lord, he will work powerfully within us to draw people to himself and grow them to maturity. We will experience the joy of living out his purpose for our lives.

So trust God's leading. He will be with you as you step out in obedience and faith.

Read | Luke 21:13–15, Colossians 1:18, and 2 Chronicles 16:7–9

Reflect

1. Jesus told his disciples that when they testified about him, they were to make up their minds “not to worry beforehand” about what they would say because he would give

“

If you feel like the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, don't let fear or doubt get in the way of a blessing that God has for you and for others. If the Holy Spirit, who is the creator of the universe, is putting something on your heart, it's almost the same thing as when Moses had the burning-bush encounter. You may not be visually face to face with God, but he's speaking to you in your heart. When you act in obedience to what he's telling you, he will do exceedingly abundantly above anything you ask or think, because nothing's impossible for him. Don't think that because you don't have any initials behind your name or you're not an ordained minister that the Lord can't use you. All throughout the Bible, God uses his people, and we have him inside us to give us the power to do great things.

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them “words and wisdom” that no one could contradict (Luke 21:14–15). How would it help you to step out in faith if you made up your mind beforehand that you would not worry about the results but instead trust the Lord to speak and work through you?

2. According to Paul in Colossians 1:18, Jesus “is the head of the body, the church.” As members of his body, how should you respond to Jesus’ call? How can understanding that you need to obey the “head” help when you feel inadequate for the task?
3. According to 2 Chronicles 16:9, God is actually *looking* for people to help: “The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” What kind of people is God looking to strengthen? How does this verse speak particularly to you and your situation?
4. In what ways has the Holy Spirit spoken to you this week as you’ve thought about how God uses ordinary people? How have you been encouraged or challenged? How do you need God to guide, help, and empower you as you seek to step out in faith to serve Jesus?

Pray | End your time in prayer. Ask that God will fill you afresh with his Holy Spirit and equip you with all you need to do your work assignment for his kingdom.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 2

BEFORE GROUP MEETING	Read the Welcome section (page 25)
GROUP MEETING	Discuss the Connect questions Watch the video teaching for session 2 Discuss the questions that follow as a group Do the closing exercise and pray (pages 25–30)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 1	Complete the daily study (pages 32–33)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 2	Complete the daily study (pages 34–36)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 3	Complete the daily study (pages 37–38)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 4	Complete the daily study (pages 39–40)
PERSONAL STUDY – DAY 5 (before week 3 group meeting)	Complete the daily study (pages 41–43)

LEADER'S GUIDE

Thank you for your willingness to lead your group through this study! What you have chosen to do is valuable and will make a great difference in the lives of others. *Carry the Flame* is a five-session Bible study built around video content and small-group interaction. As the group leader, imagine yourself as the host of a party. Your job is to take care of your guests by managing the details so that when your guests arrive, they can focus on one another and on the interaction around the topic for that session.

Your role as the group leader is not to answer all the questions or reteach the content—the video and study guide will do most of that work. Your job is to guide the experience and cultivate your small group into a connected and engaged community. This will make it a place for members to process, question, and reflect—not necessarily receive more instruction. There are several elements in this leader's guide that will help you as you structure your study and reflection time, so be sure to follow along and take advantage of each one.

Before You Begin

Before your first meeting, make sure the group members have a copy of this study guide. Alternately, you can hand out the study guides at your first meeting and give the members some time to look over the material and ask any preliminary questions. Also make sure they are aware that they have access to the streaming videos at any time by following the instructions printed on the inside front cover. During your first meeting, ask the members to provide their name, phone number, and e-mail address so you can keep in touch with them.

Generally, the ideal size for a group is eight to ten people, which will ensure that everyone has enough time to participate in discussions. If you have more people, you might want to break up the main group into smaller subgroups. Encourage those who show up at the first meeting to commit to attending the duration of the study, as this will help the group members get to know one another, create stability for the group, and help you know how best to prepare to lead the participants through the material.

Each session begins with an opening reflection in the Welcome section. The questions that follow in the Connect section serve as an icebreaker to get the group members thinking about the topic. Some people may want to tell a long story in response to one of these questions, but the goal is to keep the answers brief. Ideally, you want everyone in the group to

get a chance to answer, so try to keep the responses to a minute or less. If you have talkative group members, say up front that everyone needs to limit their answer to one minute.

Give the group members a chance to answer, but also tell them to feel free to pass if they wish. With the rest of the study, it's generally not a good idea to have everyone answer every question—a free-flowing discussion is more desirable. But with the opening icebreaker questions, you can go around the circle. Encourage shy people to share, but don't force them.

At your first meeting, let the group members know each session contains a personal study section they can use to continue to engage with the content until the next meeting. While this is optional, it will help them cement the concepts presented during the group study time. Let them know that if they choose to do so, they can watch the video for the next session by accessing the streaming code found on the inside front cover of their studies. Invite them to bring any questions and insights to your next meeting, especially if they had a breakthrough moment or didn't understand something.

Preparation for Each Session

As the leader, there are a few things you should do to best prepare for each meeting:

- **Read through the session.** This will help you become more familiar with the content and know how to structure the discussion times.
- **Decide how the videos will be used.** Determine whether you want the members to watch the videos ahead of time (again, via the streaming access code found on the study's inside front cover) or together as a group.
- **Decide which questions you want to discuss.** Based on the length of your group discussions, you may not be able to get through all the questions. So look over the recommendations for the suggested and additional questions in each session, and mark which ones you definitely want to cover.
- **Be familiar with the questions you want to discuss.** When the group meets, you'll be watching the clock, so make sure you are familiar with the questions you have selected. In this way, you will ensure that you have the material more deeply in your mind than your group members.

- **Pray for your group.** Pray for your group members and ask God to lead them as they study his Word and listen to his Spirit.

In many cases there will be no one “right” answer to the question. Answers will vary, especially when group members are being asked to share their personal experiences.

Structuring the Discussion Time

You will need to determine with your group how long you want to meet so you can plan your time accordingly. Suggested times for each section have been provided in this study guide, and if you adhere to these times, your group will meet for ninety minutes. If you want to meet for two hours, follow the times given in the right-hand column:

Section	90 Minutes	120 Minutes
CONNECT (discuss one or more of the opening questions for the session)	15 minutes	20 minutes
WATCH (watch the teaching material together and take notes)	20 minutes	20 minutes
DISCUSS (discuss the study questions you selected ahead of time)	35 minutes	50 minutes
RESPOND (write down key takeaways)	10 minutes	15 minutes
PRAY (pray together and dismiss)	10 minutes	15 minutes

As the group leader, it is up to you to keep track of the time and to keep things on schedule. You might want to set a timer for each segment so that both you and the group members know when the time is up. Don't be concerned if group members are quiet or slow to share. People are often quiet when they are pulling together their ideas, and this might be a new experience for some of them. Just ask a question and let it hang in the air until someone shares. You can then say, “Thank you. What about others? What came to you when you watched that portion of the teaching?”

Group Dynamics

Leading a group through *Carry the Flame* will prove to be highly rewarding both to you and your group members. But you still may encounter challenges along the way! Discussions can get off track. Group members may not be sensitive to the needs and ideas of others. Some might worry that they will be expected to talk about matters that make them feel awkward. Others may express comments that result in disagreements. To help ease this strain on you and the group, consider the following ground rules:

- When someone raises a question or comment that is off the main topic, suggest that you deal with it another time, or, if you feel led to go in that direction, let the group know that you will be spending some time discussing it.
- If someone asks a question that you don't know how to answer, admit it, and move on. At your discretion, feel free to invite group members to comment on questions that call for personal experience.
- If you find that one or two people are dominating the discussion time, direct a few questions to others in the group. Outside the main group time, ask the more dominating members to help you draw out the quieter ones. Work to make them part of the solution instead of considering them part of the problem.
- When a disagreement occurs, encourage the group members to process the matter in love. Encourage those on opposite sides to restate what they heard the other side say about the matter, and then invite each side to evaluate if that perception is accurate. Lead the group in examining other scriptures related to the topic, and look for common ground.

When any of these issues arise, encourage your group members to follow these words from Scripture: “Love one another” (John 13:34); “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18); and, “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). This will make your group time more rewarding and beneficial for everyone who attends.

Thank you again for taking the time to lead your group. You are making a difference in your group members' lives and having an impact on their journey toward understanding what it means to carry the flame of the gospel into a world that needs God's love.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



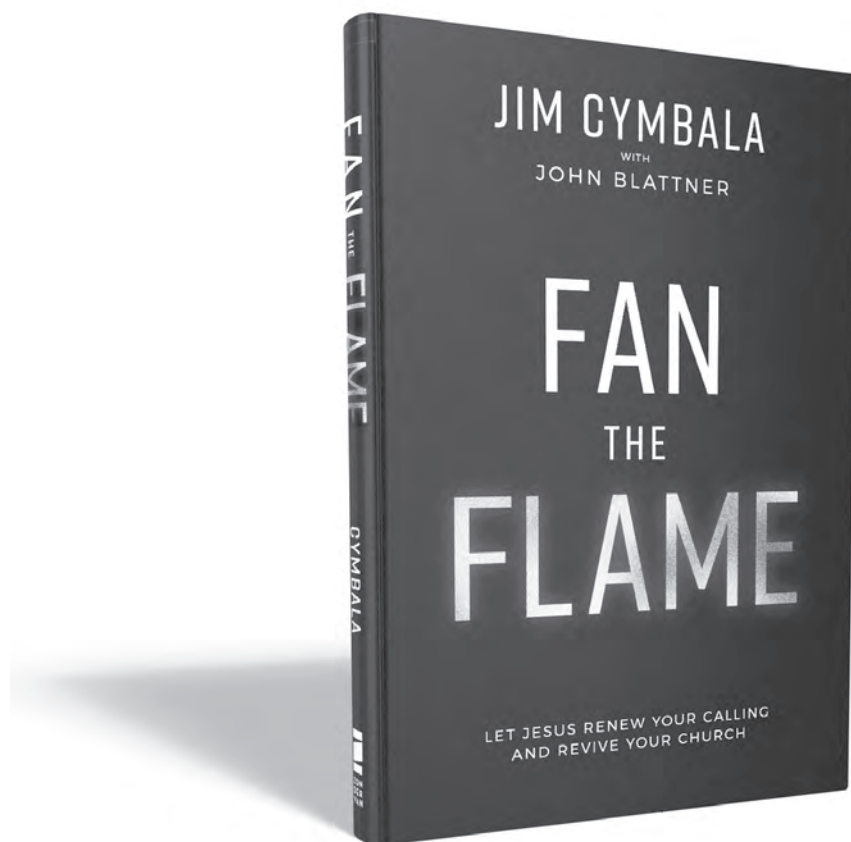
Jim Cymbala was born in Brooklyn, New York, where he enjoyed a successful career playing basketball in high school and then college. Upon graduation from the University of Rhode Island, he entered the business world and married his childhood sweetheart, Carol. Although unforeseen by them, it wasn't long before God called them into ministry.

Arriving at The Brooklyn Tabernacle, Pastor Cymbala and Carol found a congregation of less than twenty people meeting in a rundown building located in an impoverished part of downtown Brooklyn. Over the years, God has shown his faithfulness to them and their congregation in many miraculous ways. Their present campus includes a large, renovated theater in downtown Brooklyn, where thousands of people come each week to hear the good news of Jesus.

Pastor Cymbala is the author of several books, including the bestselling *Fresh Wind*, *Fresh Fire*, which was named Christian Book of the Year. He has also done a number of video series on prayer and other important topics for the Christian church, including *When God's Spirit Moves*, *Life-Changing Prayer*, and *Spiritual Warfare Is Real*. His wife, Carol, directs the six-time Grammy Award Winning Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, whose music has blessed people around the world.

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