

**STUDY GUIDE:**

**I'm in <3 | Dating the Holy Spirit**

September 21-27, 2013

This fall we are going through a seven week sermon series based on Pastor Bruce's new book, "I'm In <3," in which he challenges us "to know the deep intimate love of God through the person of the Holy Spirit."

**INTRODUCTION**

The Holy Spirit intends to romance us... to have us live in the mystery and excitement of God's love and plans for us. We are wired by God to use our minds and think through our beliefs, doctrines, and faith. But we are more than that. God also wired us to connect with the Trinity through our hearts. This week we look at what the Holy Spirit is calling us to; a life of adventure, mystery, and even unpredictability.

**CHAT** (5 minutes... the meat is later!)

Think of meeting with God - God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - What would you wear? Seriously, how would you prepare yourself if God whispered to you, "let's meet at 8am tomorrow morning"? What do you think the Spirit wants to do with you? And really, how would you dress? What first comes to mind?

Is our time with God (whatever that looks like for you), created more by our presuppositions of what we think that time should look like (ie. isolation, and surrounded by leather-bound bibles with the smell of rich mahogany), or more by listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us? Do you think we box in the Spirit of God?

**READ, LOOK & DISCUSS**

Before you read this passage... try to let go your understanding of "born again". You have been blessed by this phrase and/or beaten with it. Try to hear it fresh. Clearly Nicodemus wasn't getting Jesus here, this way of talking about the Spirit of God was brand new to this religious ruler... think fresh about Jesus' words:

Read John 3:1-8

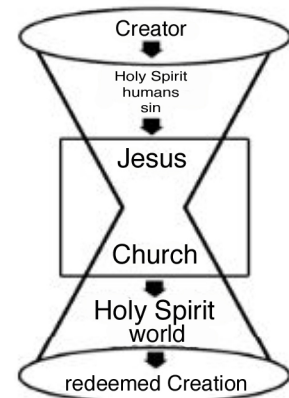
- how would you explain born again here? What synonymous language could you use?
- Jesus uses wind as a metaphor of the Spirit... what characteristics does he point out?
- Does religion look like those characteristics of wind? Does the church? Do Christians?

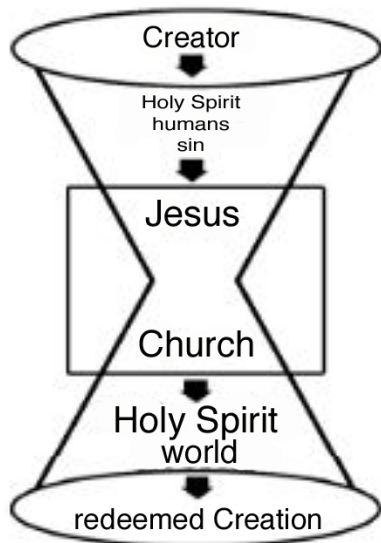
**HOURLASS THEOLOGY**

Chapter 3 of I AM IN <3 follows the whole narrative of the Bible by using this hourglass image to the right.

Read and discuss:

"The box framing the narrow place in the hourglass represents institutional religion, modern Christianity in the West. For many Christians this exclusive part of the story is the entire gospel. What happens inside the institutional religion box is all that matters. Jesus comes to earth and redeems for God a people. Yes. However, the people of God were never intended to simply stay inside the church building, afraid of the world, holding desperately onto each other for security..."





”To define the salvation story as simply the story of Jesus, is to miss how his life, death, and resurrection fit together with the Holy Spirit who has been shaping and fashioning this planet [and us people] throughout the ages for God’s glory.”

- What do you think of this?
- When Jesus challenged Nicodemus to be born again and join the movement of the Holy Spirit, do you think that Nicodemus may have been stuck in the box?

Read and discuss:

“The role of God’s people was not only to experience their own redemption and cleansing, but join the Holy Spirit back out in the world... Jesus joyfully hands his redeemed people back to the Holy Spirit and instructs his people to collaborate with the Spirit in her artistry... he invited us all to become a part of restoring the Spirit of God’s art project - earth”

- What do you think it looks like to be led by the Holy Spirit to restore art project earth?
- Where do you see a need for restoration?

### APPLY

“Jesus explains to his people, “the Spirit is a song like the wind blowing through the trees. God’s Spirit is like water flowing. You can’t hold God’s Spirit inside your church building.” Then Jesus gently chides his people, “God’s Spirit was always bigger than your institution. The Spirit is in love with your neighbors, your colleagues at work, with your sporting friends and especially with those overlooked by others.”

So one morning you hear the Spirit whisper, “Want to go on a date with me this week? Trust me, it will be fun!” You get dressed for a worship service. The Spirit laughs and says, “not that kind of a date. Dress casual... you may even want to wear work clothes for this date.”

This week. Ask for a date, and adventure, a fresh experience with the Holy Spirit. However, it will result in nothing if you don’t respond to the Spirit’s whisper, nudge, or guidance. Take the risk to listen to God, then to follow, and *do* something.

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

1 Corinthians 2 would be good reading this week about the Holy Spirit in you. Read up through Chapter 4 of I AM IN < 3.

**core** @rbcmc  
groups