

THE SHACK

Small Group discussion guide

Week # 5 January 31 & February 1 "The Garden"
Pastor Joe Farrell

John 16:7-15 ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Notes and Thoughts ...

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Facilitator Guide

Please read this guide before your group meets!

For those of you who chose to download this Discussion Guide from the website, we thank you! The requests for Week #4 hard copies went down by 20% - *great* teamwork! Keep it up ...

We are now in “The Garden” with *The Shack* study series and this could be a perfect time to introduce some creativity in your group time.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Move your meeting outdoors: sit outside on your patio, or the RBCPC courtyard, if you are in an on-campus discussion group, and take in the natural beauty of your natural surroundings as you discuss “The Garden.”
2. Take a silent walk together and see if you can observe some of the God’s patterns in nature.
3. Consider taking a Spiritual Gifts Assessment together. It takes about 20 minutes to answer the questions, then you could share and discuss your results with each other. It can be fun, interesting and enlightening. Contact Rochelle (858) 487-0811, ext. 213, rcastillo@rbpc.org, to get the assessment forms.

As we learn about, observe, listen to, study, and interact with the Holy Spirit this week, be sure to include prayer as an integral part of your time together. *Invite* the Holy Spirit to your meeting, both personally as you pray before the group meets, and corporately as you begin your time together. If you are not comfortable praying in a group setting, ask someone else to lead the group in prayer.

Please remember that we - the pastors, staff, and ministry teams – are praying for you and your group every week. You are making an incredible impact on the people that you touch through this *Shack* series.

Thank you for the love you share through your willingness to lead and disciple others in their walk with Jesus!

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START IT:

- [New groups] What was the biggest mess you ever had to clean up?
- Share your "creative" assignment from last week.
- Share a time you were unable to complete a task without the help/expertise of someone else.

STUDY IT:

- Read the passage from John aloud. What does this tell you about the purpose of the Holy Spirit?

I have often thought that the disciples had it so good. They got to walk on the shores of Galilee and learn from the Master. Certainly, living with Jesus had to be the best time for any follower and disciple of his to be alive. But no, Jesus said, "(John 16:7) ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." Jesus tells us *we are better off now, with the Holy Spirit active and present, than we would be if Jesus was still here in the flesh.* Pastor Joe Farrell, Jan. 31/Feb. 1, "The Garden"

- Why are we better off without Jesus here in flesh and blood?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, reflect on the goodness of spiritual gifts. How does this show God's love? What is the Holy Spirit's role in these gifts?
- How does the description of a fractal (*The Shack*, page 129) relate to one of the "messes" in your life? How can you see God's hand at work in creating a perfect pattern out of this mess?

LIVE IT:

- Consider your interaction with the Holy Spirit. What are you afraid of, or excited about, the Holy Spirit working in your life?
- In your life today, is there a mess, or a storm, where you have been hesitant, or even *unwilling*, to allow the Holy Spirit in to help you straighten it out? Can you figure out why?
- Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? How did you discover them? How do you know you are using your spiritual gifts?
- Review Mack's interaction with Sarayu (*The Shack*, ch. 9), then go out to your garden and do a little clean-up/pruning. What kind of feelings does this stir in you after this discussion? Report back to your group next week.

PRAY IT: (this part will be done by our Prayer Ministry team for this series)