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BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *PEACE*

SAMPLE

# God So Close

*interactive guidebook*

A REFLECTIVE JOURNEY  
WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

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WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

BECKY THOMPSON



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## TO YOU, BEFORE WE BEGIN

**Y**ay! *You are here!* That's the phrase printed in black ink across the brown welcome mat on my front porch where I live in Oklahoma. If you were to walk up to my door and ring the bell, before I even had a chance to greet you, my welcome mat would let you know that I'm genuinely glad you've come to my home.

Whenever someone opens a book I have written, it feels to me as if they have shown up at my house and we are about to spend some time together. So I'll begin this quick letter to you at the beginning of our journey with the same enthusiastic greeting you'd find if you popped onto my front porch.

*Yay! You are here!*

I realize that we probably have never met. Maybe the only thing you know about me is that my name is printed on the cover of this resource. (If you have read my other works, Hello again! I'm glad you're back! We are going to have fun!) But if you have been invited on this journey by a friend or you stumbled onto these words on your own, I suppose it would be a good idea to introduce myself.

I'm Becky, and I live in Northwest Oklahoma with my

## TO YOU, BEFORE WE BEGIN

husband, Jared, and our three kids. Jared and I were both raised in Oklahoma, but we spent three and half years in California and Tennessee following God on an adventure of faith. We learned a lot, experienced so much, and made wonderful new friends during those years. We were also deeply grateful that the next steps of His plan for us led us home to our family.

I write books like *God So Close* and others on hope and healing. You'll find me behind my laptop or the wheel of my van most days doing the same things you do. Sure, my schedule and my story might be different from yours, but I promise my days are full of the same stuff you experience—trial and triumph, faith and fear, hope and heartache, and the desire to know God and be known by Him. I have a feeling it wouldn't take us long to find where our stories overlap and all the places where we could nod in agreement and say, "You too? That's how I feel about that as well."

All of this said, I know you're not here to learn about me. Sure, it's a good idea to give you a proper welcome and let you know who is speaking to you, but let's be honest and talk about why you're really here. You're here to discover more about the Holy Spirit. I have a feeling you want more than ordinary.

I can imagine that this guidebook came to be in your possession in one of a number of ways. Perhaps you ordered it online, or you found it in a bookstore. Maybe a group of women you know invited you to go through this material together. Or maybe you're just curious. You saw the title, someone shared something on social media, or you're standing in a bookstore now and haven't even purchased a copy of *God So Close*, but you can't help but wonder, *What is a reflective journey with the Holy Spirit? What is really being offered here?*

## TO YOU, BEFORE WE BEGIN

Oh, my friend, I believe this journey is what your heart has needed and perhaps you didn't even know it. Sure, you might need joy or peace or a good break from everything that's heavy in your life. I understand. It has been hard, hasn't it? There are so many things you carry and so much you might wish you could put down. What I'm offering you here is the reminder that the only one who can carry it all, take care of what's heavy, and sort through all the details you're trying to untangle on your own is right there in the room with you this moment. He isn't distant or distracted. He's God So Close.

My prayer is that as you read through the book and engage with this material, you'll find opportunities to encounter the Holy Spirit again and again. I don't just mean encounter truths about Him. I mean you will expect to meet with Him as He helps you discover who He is personally, recognize His voice more clearly, and trust that He is leading you so you can follow Him confidently.

### *Your Invitation to an Interactive Journey with the Holy Spirit*

So, what is the process? How is this guidebook best used?

This guidebook has fourteen sections, one for each chapter of *God So Close*. It's my hope that you will read a chapter of the book and then turn to the corresponding pages here in this resource. In each section, you'll find that the theme of each chapter is addressed in a conversational style. You'll be invited to pause and ponder, and then you'll pray and press into His presence.



## TO YOU, BEFORE WE BEGIN

**Let's Pause and Ponder:** We will pause and intentionally set aside time to reflect on the text and listen for the Holy Spirit's voice. Then we will look at the questions asked throughout the chapter and explore new points of reflection.

**Let's Pray and Press In:** We will speak with the Father and thank Him for the revelation of His Holy Spirit. Then we will position our hearts to listen and lean into the presence of the God who comes close and speaks with us.

One thing I want to make sure to mention is that we are all on different parts of our journey with the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the conversations we will have in the pages ahead will serve as a reminder of what you already know and need to remember. On the other hand, the content of this guidebook is possibly brand-new to you, and I want to be clear: that's okay too. The purpose of this process is to bring clarity to the person, work, and power of the Holy Spirit by examining what the Word says is true about Him. So whether you're learning for the first time or your heart is being realigned with what you already knew to be true, this journey is for you.

The Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, is drawing us, as daughters of God, back into an understanding of Him in His fullness. He's removing doubt and confusion. And even now, He's preparing our hearts for what will come next. Before we begin, let's pray.

*Father,*

*We want to know You, to be led by You, and to understand what it means to be full of Your presence. We ask You to remove all confusion in our hearts and minds. Awaken our hearts to Your Spirit. Lead us in love. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*



## CHAPTER 1

# THE INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*God Wants You to Know Him*

I have been starstruck exactly one time in my life. It would make sense for this encounter to have taken place while we were living in Los Angeles and bumping into countless people you'd recognize from your favorite TV shows and movies . . . but no. This event actually took place about ten years prior in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Ironical, right?

The weekend of this event, I was speaking at a youth convention on behalf of the Christian university where I worked as the admissions director. I presented information about the programs the university offered to an audience of a few thousand high schoolers. Let's just say I wasn't the person they were eager to hear from that weekend.

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At the same convention, popular Christian music artists had been invited to lead worship. These guys were the reason people bought tickets, and they made the weekend worthwhile. I didn't anticipate running into any of them backstage, but when I was given the opportunity to sit down and have a short conversation with one well-known artist, I temporarily lost my ability to make coherent sentences. I did an embarrassing amount of nervous giggling, and to this day, I cringe when I replay those few moments of my life.

Now, I was younger then, which could have something to do with how I responded to meeting this person, but I think my reaction was driven by an emotional connection I had with their songs. The lyrics had encouraged me, uplifted me, and reminded me of important truths about who God is. It was an honor to meet the person who had made a real impact on my life through their work.

I think you and I could come up with a list of people who have made an impact on our lives without having ever met them in person. Maybe it was an author or a person you follow on social media, or maybe it was a musician who penned lyrics that revealed feelings you hadn't been able to articulate. There are people who are a part of our stories, even though we don't know them face-to-face.

I wonder, however, does God ever feel like a person you know much about but perhaps haven't met face-to-face? We believe He is real and good and that the stories about Him are true. We know He works in our lives, and maybe we've even heard His voice and been prompted by Him to take a specific action. Yet, I wonder if you could point to a moment when you were overwhelmed by the reality that the Holy Spirit was in the

## THE INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

room and you were meeting this person who made such a big impact on your life. How would you behave if you knew God Himself was in the room?

From the beginning of this journey, it is important for us to remember that our hearts desire a relationship with the Spirit of God, not just an encounter with the idea of God. It's the difference between hearing the songs of the artist and meeting the person who wrote the lyrics face-to-face.

### *Let's Pause and Ponder*

How well do you know the Holy Spirit? I'm not talking about how much you know about Him. I'm asking, how well do you know the Holy Spirit as your friend? Take a moment to be honest about your relationship with Him. (Remember, there is no wrong answer. This is just an opportunity to document here at the beginning how you feel about your relationship.)

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Can you point to a moment when you were certain that God was with you and His presence made you awestruck? Perhaps it was an encounter similar to the one I shared in chapter 1, or maybe it

## GOD SO CLOSE INTERACTIVE GUIDEBOOK

was very different. Whether you were by yourself or in a group, in worship or alone driving in your car, take some time to write out your story.

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How clearly do you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit? Do you ever feel as though it is difficult to discern His voice? Why or why not? (We will focus on this subject in depth in chapter 9.)

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Do you feel as though the Holy Spirit prompts you to take certain actions or make specific choices daily? Monthly? Ever? Take a moment to write out a time you felt led by Him.

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## THE INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### God So Close Chapter Questions

As we begin our journey into a deeper understanding of who the Holy Spirit is, let's take a moment to write down who we know Him to be today. When you complete this guidebook, we'll revisit these same questions.

I've always thought of the Holy Spirit as...

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When I think of the power God has given me, the first thing that comes to mind is...

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Circle these True/False statements with your understanding today:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| True or False | The Holy Spirit is a person.  |
| True or False | The Holy Spirit speaks directly to Believers in Jesus today.                    |
| True or False | The Holy Spirit fills Believers today, supplying supernatural power and wisdom. |
| True or False | The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to Believers today.                       |

## GOD SO CLOSE INTERACTIVE GUIDEBOOK

### *Let's Pray and Press In*

**I don't know what your relationship with the Holy Spirit has been like in the past. I don't know what you've been taught or who you have known Him to be leading up to this moment. But He wants to meet you as He met me and millions of others. He doesn't want you to be enraptured by just one encounter. He wants to fill you and for you to be aware of His presence continually, every day of your life—each one a reminder of God's purposeful pursuit of your heart.**

*—God So Close*

Let's pray and press into the presence of God, who is in the room right now. Let's ask Him to meet with us in this moment. Take a deep breath, and quiet your thoughts.

*Father God,*

*We love You. Thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit for us. We ask now that You'd help us take what we thought we knew about You and clarify it. God, we ask that You'd make us aware of Your presence even now. Help us perceive You in a way we haven't before. We want to meet with You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Take a minute to listen with your heart. Is the Holy Spirit speaking and revealing the Father's heart to you? Is He revealing God's love for you in a new way? What are you sensing? Close your eyes and

## THE INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

spend some time with the Holy Spirit before writing down what you are sensing in your spirit.

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Remember, the Holy Spirit will be with you wherever you go. At any moment, you can pause, pray, and press into what He is saying and doing. Be intentional in the days to come about taking time to interact with Him.