

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 8: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REVIVAL

LIFE GROUP LEADERS: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING...

Life Group Leaders!!!

Thank you for your dedication over the past 8 weeks!! Thank you for walking with your Life Group members as they learned more about the Holy Spirit. We hope this series was impactful for you as well.

In true Shepherd form, we're not slowing down! Shepherd Church's Revival is coming up NEXT WEEK, October 17–21. Please encourage your Life Group to attend and even sit together at least one night.

Then, our next Life Group series, People of the 2nd Chance, begins the next weekend on October 24 and runs through December 3. We'll study 6 people in the Bible who made major mistakes but discovered that God didn't write them off. It's a series about grace, hope, and the God who gives second chances to people who feel down, disqualified, or discouraged.

Again, we appreciate you more than you know!

With much love,
The Life Groups Team

WELCOME

Answer one of the following:

- What image comes to mind when you hear or read the word "revival" and why?
- What are you most excited about as we head into Revival next week?

Because Revival is next week, these questions are designed to get everyone in your Life Group talking and thinking about the concept of revival before you dive into the lesson. As usual, please don't skip this section of the lesson (especially because of the emphasis we're placing on Revival next week).

WORSHIP

Read **Psalm 85:4–7** and silently pray, “Holy Spirit, what needs to be revived in me?” After a few minutes of silence, share with your Life Group what you believe needs to be revived in your life. Finally, have someone close in prayer.

Psalm 85 is a prayer asking God to restore and revive His people after a difficult season. The psalm looks back at how God has shown mercy in the past and then asks Him to do it again (which makes verses 4–7 important as we think about revival). After the verses are read, give your Life Group a few minutes of silence for prayer, and don’t rush this time. When it’s time to share, make sure no one feels pressured to reveal something they want to keep private. As people share, listen and resist the urge to fix or give advice (maybe encourage your Life Group to do the same).

WORD

Read **Ezekiel 37:1–14**.

1. In **Ezekiel 37:1–3**, what might God have been trying to teach Ezekiel through his walk among the dry bones (vs 1–2) and His question (vs 3)?

Guide the Conversation

Ezekiel 37 begins with a situation that looks completely hopeless. Ezekiel was a prophet and priest ministering to God’s people during the Babylonian exile, and God gave him a vision of a valley filled with bones that were “very dry.” Make sure your Life Group notices that God doesn’t let Ezekiel observe the devastation from a distance. God has him walk through it and then asks, “Can these bones live?” God wants Ezekiel to face how impossible the situation looks while learning not to confuse “I can’t see how this could change” with “God can’t change this.” It would be helpful for your Life Group to talk about why Ezekiel’s response, “Sovereign LORD, you alone know,” demonstrates both humility and faith. The larger point is important for understanding revival: we cannot manufacture spiritual life and fix everything ourselves, but what looks dead to us is not beyond God’s power to restore.

Deeper Dive

Ezekiel was a prophet and priest whom God called to minister during one of the darkest periods in Israel’s history. Like Daniel, he was taken into exile in Babylon after King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah.

- Ezekiel’s name in Hebrew, Yehezqel (יְחֶזְקֵאל), means something like “God strengthens,” which fits his ministry well because God called him to speak truth and hope to a devastated people.

The Book of Ezekiel has some dramatic visions and symbolic actions that share a consistent message: Even though Israel had rebelled against God and needed to repent, God hadn't left His people. God promised to cleanse them, give them a new heart and a new spirit, restore them, and make His presence known among them (Ezekiel 36:25–27). All of this is crucial to understand as we reach Ezekiel 37 because the valley of dry bones is more than just a strange vision... It's God showing His people (who were displaced and discouraged) that whatever or whoever is dead was not beyond His power to bring back to life.

God takes Ezekiel, “by the Spirit of the LORD,” into a valley filled with bones and leads him “back and forth among them” (Ezekiel 37:1–2). Instead of glancing at the “graveyard” from a distance, God makes Ezekiel walk through it to see how bad it was. Ezekiel says the bones were “very dry” (aka, these people had been dead for a long time). In vs 3, God asks, “Son of man, can these bones live?” which compels Ezekiel to wrestle with the difference between what's possible for people vs. what's possible for God. Ezekiel answers, “Sovereign LORD, you alone know.” In other words, Ezekiel said, “From where I'm standing, this looks impossible, but You're God, so I'm leaving the answer with You.”

Before Ezekiel can understand revival, he must grasp the depth of the problem and how much God's power is needed. Sometimes, God lets us see how bad the situation is so we stop believing we can fix everything ourselves. That doesn't mean hopeless situations don't matter or that we should pretend they aren't painful. Ezekiel literally walks through the devastation and learns not to confuse “I can't see how this could change” with “God can't change this.” That's a huge lesson for revival!!! Revival begins when we own the fact that we can't manufacture spiritual life, but we can surrender what looks dead to the God who creates and gives life.

2. Count how many times “I will,” “breath,” and “life” are used in **Ezekiel 37:5–10**. What could God be trying to teach us through these repetitions?

Guide the Conversation

In Ezekiel 37:5–10, Ezekiel repeats certain words to emphasize that revival is only something God can do. Encourage your Life Group to actually count the repetitions: God says “I will” 3 times in verses 5–6, forms of “breath” appear 5 times in verses 5–10, and “live” appears twice. Israel believed their hope was gone, but God keeps their attention from what they can't do to what He can do. If you want, you can also point out two important Hebrew words: *ruach* (רוּחַ) can mean “breath, wind, or spirit,” while *chayah* (חַיָּה) means “to live, come to life, or revive.” Help the people in your Life Group see how these ideas work together: Ezekiel can obey, bones can come together, bodies can even be formed, but nobody except God can give them life. In fact, Ezekiel 37:14 brings the whole idea together when God says, “I will put my Spirit (*ruach*) in you, and you will live (*chayah*).” As you lead the discussion, keep bringing everyone back to this simple truth: God gives the Spirit, and the Spirit gives life.

Deeper Dive

Building on the difference between “I can’t see how this could change” and “God can’t change this,” the repetition in Ezekiel 37:5–10 puts the spotlight on what God can do that Israel could never do for itself.

- God uses the phrase “I will” 3 times in verses 5–6.
- Forms of the word “breath” appear 5 times in verses 5–10.
- The word “live” appears 2 times, both describing what happens when God’s breath enters the dead.

The repetition matters because Israel was in exile and assumed, as verse 11 explains, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is gone.” They couldn’t restore themselves politically, spiritually, or nationally. God’s repeated “I will” shifts their attention away from what they were capable of doing to what He was promising to do.

Everyone has limits:

- Ezekiel’s obedience has limits...
- Prophets can prophesy as God commands...
- The bones can come together and look like bodies...

However, neither Ezekiel nor anyone else can create life. God alone can do that. In other words, this passage is all about God doing for His people what they could never do for themselves. Only God can give “breath”

- The key Hebrew word is *ruach* (רוּחַ), which can mean “breath, wind, or spirit,” and Ezekiel intentionally plays with those meanings throughout the vision.
- The Hebrew word translated as “live” in Ezekiel 37:5–10 is *chayah* (חַיָּה), meaning “to live, to be alive, to come to life, or to revive.”

What’s especially significant is how *chayah* (to live) works alongside *ruach* (breath or spirit): bodies can be reconstructed, but they do not *chayah*, come alive, until the *ruach* enters them. This reinforces one of Ezekiel 37’s central theological ideas: God’s Spirit is the source of life.

3. Read **Ezekiel 37:11–14** and **Acts 2:1–4, 17–18, 38–39**. What connections do you notice between the Spirit, Pentecost, and new life in Christ?

Guide the Conversation

This question/prompt helps your Life Group connect Ezekiel’s vision of new life with what happens centuries later at Pentecost. In Ezekiel 37:11–14, God promises His people in exile, “I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live,” using the Hebrew word *ruach*, which, as stated in the notes on the previous question/prompt, can mean “spirit, breath, or wind.” Then in Acts 2, a sound like a violent wind comes with the arrival of the Holy Spirit (The Greek word *pneuma* carries a similar idea of “spirit, breath, or wind”). As you lead the discussion, help your Life Group members to trace

this theme rather than jumping too quickly to application: dry bones receive God's ruach and live, God pours out His pneuma at Pentecost, and Peter promises that those who repent and turn to Jesus will receive the Holy Spirit as God's dōrea (gift), something freely given rather than earned. The God who breathes life into what is dead gives His Spirit to those who belong to Jesus.

Deeper Dive

Ezekiel 37 and Acts 2 are separated by centuries, but the imagery connects in a powerful way.

- The Israelites in exile felt as if their story was over: "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone" (Ezekiel 37:11). God answers their hopelessness by promising, "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live" (v. 14). Again, the Hebrew word ruach (רוח) can mean "spirit, breath, or wind," so Ezekiel's vision intentionally connects God's Spirit with God's life-giving breath.
- Then Acts 2 opens with the sound of a "violent wind" as the Holy Spirit fills Jesus' followers at Pentecost. Luke uses the Greek word pneuma (πνεῦμα) for "Spirit," a word that can also mean "breath, wind, or spirit."

The connection is hard to miss: God's Spirit brings life to people who cannot produce spiritual life for themselves. At Pentecost, God isn't simply creating an exciting spiritual experience. He is pouring out His Spirit as promised, which Peter explains by quoting Joel: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17). What Ezekiel pictured as God putting His Spirit within His restored people becomes part of the larger new-covenant reality experienced through Jesus.

Acts 2:38–39 takes that connection and makes it personal. After Peter announces that the crucified and risen Jesus is Lord and Messiah, the crowd asks what they should do. Peter tells them to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

- The Greek word for "gift," dōrea (δωρεά), emphasizes something freely given by God, not something we earn or manufacture.

Peter then says, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call" (vs 39). So, the movement across these passages is beautiful:

- Dry bones receive God's ruach and live.
- At Pentecost, God pours out His pneuma, and through Jesus, repentant believers receive the Holy Spirit as God's gift.

Ezekiel's immediate promise concerned God restoring His displaced people, so we shouldn't pretend Ezekiel 37 is only a prediction of Pentecost. But Acts 2 shows the same biblical pattern reaching an incredible new covenant fulfillment: the God who breathes life into what is dead gives His Spirit to those who belong to Jesus.

4. What does **Ezekiel 37:1–14** teach about the relationship between surrender and revival, especially in light of Adrianna's statement, "Revival begins in us before it proceeds from us"?

Guide the Conversation

Revival is strongly connected to a posture of surrender and dependence on God. In Ezekiel 37, the dry bones cannot restore themselves, Ezekiel cannot create life, and Israel cannot rescue itself. Only God can give the ruach (breath or Spirit) that brings the dead to life. As your Life Group talks about this question/prompt, be sure to point out that surrender doesn't cause revival or force God to act. Instead, surrender recognizes who God is and that we aren't God. We can pray, prepare, obey, and act, but only the Holy Spirit can produce genuine spiritual life. This is where Adrianna's statement, "Revival begins in us before it proceeds from us," becomes personal. Take your Life Group beyond talking about revival as something God needs to do in other people, our church, or our culture. Challenge them to ask questions like, "Where am I spiritually dry? What am I still trying to control? What do I need to surrender to God?"

Deeper Dive

Ezekiel 37:1–14 shows us that revival begins when we recognize what we cannot do and surrender ourselves to the God who can do what seems impossible. In the valley of the dry bones vision, Ezekiel doesn't pretend the situation looks better than it does, but he also refuses to put human limitations on God. Life comes from God's Spirit, not human effort. When the ruach (breath or Spirit) enters the lifeless bodies, they come alive. As such, revival isn't something we create by trying harder, getting more emotional, or putting together the right spiritual environment. We can prepare, pray, obey, and act, but God is always the One who revives and gives life.

All of this helps us understand Adrianna's statement, "Revival begins in us before it proceeds from us." We often want God to revive our family, our church, our city, or our culture while we cling to areas of our own lives that we don't want Him to touch. However, surrender opens our hands and says, "God, this belongs to You too."

Ezekiel 37 doesn't specifically use the Hebrew word for "surrender," so we shouldn't force that idea into the passage. Instead, we see the posture of surrender in Ezekiel's dependence and obedience. God ultimately promises, "I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live" (v. 14). Surrender doesn't cause revival or somehow force God to act. Surrender acknowledges that only God is God and we are not. Surrender doesn't try to manufacture what only the Holy Spirit can produce. So, before praying, "God, revive everyone around me," Ezekiel 37 compels us to pray something more personal: "God, where am I spiritually dry, what am I still trying to control, and what do I need to surrender so Your Spirit can work in me?"

- **Faithfulness:** Follow through on a promise, show up consistently for someone who needs you, finish a responsibility you have been putting off, etc.
- **Gentleness:** Listen before responding, correct someone privately (without embarrassing them), notice how your words might affect someone, etc.
- **Self-control:** Wait before sending an angry text or email, limit something that easily consumes too much of your time, pause before making an impulsive purchase, resist saying or doing something you'll regret, etc.

If you need to, remind everyone this is not about creating a spiritual checklist or trying harder to change themselves, but about asking the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Jesus in them. Before moving on to the Witness section of the lesson, consider having your Life Group members pray for one another, and ask everyone to pray Cole's question each day. Encourage them to look at the "Personal Reflection & Deeper Study for This Week" section, as the third question/prompt gives some ideas for keeping track of their focus on the specific fruit they chose.

******Shepherd Church's 2026 Revival coming up soon: October 17–21, 2026! Try your best to attend each night and try to sit together as a Life Group for at least one night of the Revival!**

Because each night of the Revival gets very busy, make plans to attend each night. Talk about schedules and try to find at least one night that week to attend together as a Life Group.

5. In the first and in this final lesson, Adrianna said, "The Holy Spirit isn't Someone to keep at a distance. He's Someone you are invited to know." Reflecting on the Holy Spirit series with your Life Group, what did the Holy Spirit do in you and through you during this series? How did God bring you closer to the Holy Spirit through this series?

Throughout these 8 weeks, you've explored who the Holy Spirit is, receiving the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, being sealed and filled by the Spirit, the Fruit of the Spirit, and revival. Challenge everyone in your Life Group to move beyond simply asking, "What did I learn?" and instead ask, "How have I changed?" Give people time to remember specific moments when they sensed the Holy Spirit teaching, convicting, encouraging, guiding, changing, or using them. Some Life Group members may have a personal story to share and big changes that have occurred, while others may only see smaller changes... but ALL are worth celebrating! If needed, rephrase the questions in the prompt or ask follow-up questions like, "What's different now than when we started?" or "What do you want to continue practicing after this series ends?" Remind your Life Group that the end of this series isn't the end of their journey with the Holy Spirit.

******Shepherd Church's 2026 Revival is NEXT WEEK! Try your best to attend each night and try to sit together as a Life Group for at least one night of the Revival!**

Because each night of the Revival gets very busy, make plans to attend each night. Talk about schedules and try to find at least one night next week to attend together as a Life Group.

WITNESS

Who can you invite to the Revival next week? Share a name of someone who needs to show up (even if you assume it's a long shot for them to attend). Then spend time in prayer for the names that were shared!

Budget about 5–10 minutes for this section of the lesson. End in prayer, and thank them for participating in the Holy Spirit series!