

Bridging the Charismatic Divide Study Guide (Reader Bonus Pack)

Use: Solo (20 min/session) or Small Group (45–60 min/session)

Structure: 6 sessions

Welcome!

“Thank you for using this study guide. My purpose in writing *Bridging the Charismatic Divide* is simple: **unity where there’s division, clarity where there’s confusion, and light where there’s darkness.** The goal of this guide isn’t to win arguments or label people—it’s to help believers slow down, read the Scriptures carefully, and grow in maturity and love. As you lead or participate, I encourage you to keep a humble posture: test everything by the Word of God, avoid caricatures, and remember that the people on the ‘other side’ are still our brothers and sisters in Christ. My prayer is that this study strengthens your daily walk, deepens your understanding, and helps the Church move forward together.”

How to Use This Guide (3 paths)

Solo Reader (20 minutes):

1. Read the session chapters
2. Answer 3 questions
3. Choose 1 next step
4. Optional prayer prompt

Small Group (45–60 minutes):

- 5 min: opening prayer / recap
- 20 min: discuss key points
- 15 min: answer 2–3 group questions
- 10 min: “agree/disagree” + next step
- 5 min: prayer

Leaders/Pastors (prep):

- scan key terms
- pick 2 questions
- keep tone: clarity + unity + charity

Session 1 — Why the Gifts Matter (Ch. 1–2)

Big Idea

The gifts are part of God’s redemptive work and are meant to **equip the saints** to build up the body.

Key Points

- Gifts matter because they serve the mission of redemption, not spectacle.
- They are given to strengthen the church, not divide it.
- Equipping the saints is the goal (not platform-building).

Key Terms

Redemption, Equipping, Body of Christ

Reflection Questions

1. Why do gifts matter according to Scripture—not according to tradition or experience?
2. What happens in churches when gifts become “the point” instead of Christ?
3. What does it look like to be “equipped” in a healthy church?

Agree/Disagree

“Spiritual gifts are primarily for building others up, not personal status or identity.”

Next Step

- Identify one way you can build up someone this week through encouragement, service, or prayer.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help me value what You value: love, maturity, and building up Your people.”

Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 1 (Ch. 1–2): Why the Gifts Matter

Leader Notes (read before group)

Purpose of this session:

Set the tone: gifts exist to **serve redemption** and **equip the saints**, not to create identity tribes.

Watch-outs:

- Avoid “my camp vs your camp.”
- If someone starts telling miracle stories, redirect: “Great—how does that connect to equipping/building up?”

Leader framing line:

“Tonight isn’t about proving sides. It’s about understanding the purpose of gifts in Scripture.”

Extra Questions (pick 2–4)

1. What’s one “good thing” each side (word-centered / spirit-centered) brings to the body?
2. Where have you seen gifts used in ways that *build up* people?
3. Where have you seen gifts used in ways that *divide* people?
4. What does “equipping the saints” look like in a normal week—not just Sunday?
5. If gifts are meant to serve redemption, what should be the fruit in a church?

Application (group)

- “What is one concrete way our group can build someone up this week?”

Closing Prayer Prompt (leader)

“Lord, help us pursue what strengthens Your people—humility, love, truth, and maturity.”

Session 2 — Baptism & Filling of the Spirit (Ch. 3–5)

Big Idea

Many disagreements come from confusing **baptism** and **filling**, and from misunderstanding what “filled” means in different contexts.

Key Points

- Baptism and filling are related but not identical.
- “Filling” can carry different emphases (daily walk vs empowerment).
- Scripture calls believers to be filled—practically, not magically.

Key Terms

Baptism, Filling, Empowerment, Spiritual formation

Reflection Questions

1. Which terms are often used loosely in your tradition (baptism, filling, empowerment)?
2. What’s the difference between living a Spirit-filled daily life and a moment of empowerment?
3. What practices in Chapter 5 help you pursue filling without emotional pressure?

Agree/Disagree

“Being Spirit-filled is primarily a daily posture of obedience and gratitude—not chasing a constant miracle.”

Next Step

- Pick one “How to be filled” practice and do it daily for 7 days (give thanks, Scripture, prayer, confession, etc., as the chapter outlines).

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, fill me daily with Your Spirit—shape my character and empower me when You choose.”

SESSION 2 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 2 (Ch. 3–5): Baptism & Filling of the Spirit

Leader Notes

Purpose:

Reduce confusion by defining terms and separating categories: baptism vs filling; daily filling vs empowerment.

Watch-outs:

- Don't let this become a “proof-text battle.”
- If people argue definitions, bring it back to outcomes: “How does this change our daily walk?”

Leader framing line:

“Let's focus on what Scripture teaches and what it produces in real life: maturity and love, not pressure.”

Extra Questions

1. What are common assumptions people make when they hear “baptism of the Spirit”?
2. Why do you think “filling” language triggers strong reactions in some traditions?
3. How does a “daily filling” mindset change how you handle stress, conflict, or temptation?
4. What does it look like to pursue God's empowerment without expecting constant miracles?
5. Which practice from “How to Be Filled” feels most realistic for you right now?

Leader Tool: “Two-lane” summary

- Lane A: **Character / formation** (daily walk)
- Lane B: **Empowerment / mission** (as God wills)

Ask: “Which lane have you overemphasized?”

Closing Prayer Prompt

“Lord, form Christ in us daily—and empower us when You choose, for Your purposes.”

Session 3 — What Are the Gifts? (Ch. 6–7)

Big Idea

The gifts are best understood as **God’s in-the-moment work**, not permanent “powers” we possess.

Key Points

- The nature of gifts is often misunderstood (they are not trophies).
- “In-the-moment” framing helps reduce confusion and misuse.
- The same gift category can look different in different contexts.

Key Terms

Manifestation, In-the-moment, Vessel, Operation of gifts

Reflection Questions

1. What’s the danger of thinking someone “has” a gift like a superpower?
2. How does “in-the-moment” change your view of tongues, healing, or prophecy?
3. What would a humble, non-performative expression of gifts look like?

Agree/Disagree

“Gifts are the Holy Spirit’s actions—people are vessels, not owners.”

Next Step

- Pray for someone this week with humility: “Lord, do what You want.” Then leave results to God.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help me pursue Your work without ego, fear, or pressure.”

SESSION 3 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 3 (Ch. 6–7): Nature of the Gifts & In-the-Moment Gifts

Leader Notes

Purpose:

Introduce the most stabilizing idea in the whole book: gifts as **God’s in-the-moment action**, not personal ownership.

Watch-outs:

- People may name celebrity “gifted” leaders. Redirect gently: “Let’s keep it biblical and local—how do we practice this healthily?”

Leader framing line:

“The goal isn’t to label who ‘has’ gifts. The goal is to recognize how God works through ordinary believers.”

Extra Questions

1. How does “in-the-moment” reduce spiritual pride or performance?
2. What problems happen when people think gifts are permanent superpowers?
3. What would a humble, non-performative “gift culture” look like in a church?
4. How do we avoid both extremes: fear of gifts vs obsession with gifts?
5. What’s a healthy way to respond if something goes wrong in a supposed “gift moment”?

Leader Tool: “Pressure Release Valve”

Say: “We can pursue God without forcing outcomes.”

Closing Prayer Prompt

“Lord, make us available vessels. Give us courage without ego and discernment without cynicism.”

Session 4 — Prophecy & the Scriptures (Ch. 8–9)

Big Idea

Biblical prophecy builds people up and must never compete with or contradict Scripture.

Key Points

- Prophecy is often misunderstood (not primarily fortune-telling).
- Scripture is the final authority; modern prophecy is not canon.
- Healthy prophecy aligns with God’s Word and produces edification.

Key Terms

Edification, Canon, Discernment, Authority of Scripture

Reflection Questions

1. What assumptions do you carry about prophecy from your background?
2. What guardrails help prophecy stay edifying and safe?
3. How can a church practice discernment without becoming cynical?

Agree/Disagree

“If a ‘prophetic word’ contradicts Scripture, it’s not from God.”

Next Step

- Encourage someone this week with Scripture (a verse + a sincere, specific word of comfort).

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, teach me to speak Your truth with love, humility, and discernment.”

SESSION 4 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 4 (Ch. 8–9): Prophecy & the Scriptures

Leader Notes

Purpose:

Demystify prophecy and protect Scripture authority.

Emphasize: **edification/encouragement/comfort**.

Watch-outs:

- This session can trigger “bad prophecy stories.” Allow briefly, then move to guardrails.
- Don’t get stuck in extreme claims. Keep it: “What is safe, biblical practice?”

Leader framing line:

“Prophecy should strengthen people, never replace Scripture, and never manipulate.”

Extra Questions

1. What’s the most confusing thing you’ve heard about prophecy?
2. What are healthy guardrails that protect people from manipulation?
3. How do we “test everything” without becoming cynical or mocking?
4. What does edification look like in real words someone can say today?
5. How should a church respond when a “word” is wrong?

Leader Tool: “3 Guardrails”

- Must align with Scripture
- Must build up (edify/encourage/comfort)
- Must be humble + testable (“I could be wrong” posture)

Closing Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help us speak Your truth with love and humility—and keep us anchored in Your Word.”

Session 5 — The Problem with Healing (Ch. 10–11)

Big Idea

Many controversies about healing come from misunderstanding what the “gift of healing” actually is.

Key Points

- Healing is not a guaranteed on-demand ability.
- Misconceptions create false tests (“clear the hospitals”).
- A healthier healing paradigm avoids hype and despair.

Key Terms

Misconceptions, Healing paradigm, Faith, Sovereignty of God

Reflection Questions

1. What expectations about healing have shaped your thinking (positive or negative)?
2. What does it mean to pray faithfully without assuming outcomes?
3. How can churches pursue healing while protecting people from shame and manipulation?

Agree/Disagree

“Faithful prayer is not the same as guaranteed outcomes.”

Next Step

- Pray for one person who is suffering—ask God for mercy, healing, and comfort without pressure.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help us pray boldly and lovingly, without hype or condemnation.”

SESSION 5 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 5 (Ch. 10–11): Healing Misconceptions & a Healing Paradigm

Leader Notes

Purpose:

Remove false expectations (“heal everyone”) while preserving faith and compassion.

Watch-outs:

- Avoid blaming sick people (“you lacked faith”).
- Avoid shutting down prayer due to disappointment.

Leader framing line:

“We pray boldly and love people deeply, without pressuring outcomes.”

Extra Questions

1. What have you seen that made you skeptical about healing ministry?
2. What have you seen that made you hopeful?
3. How do we pray for healing without implying shame if someone isn’t healed?
4. What is a healthy expectation of God’s sovereignty and goodness in suffering?
5. How can churches provide care when healing doesn’t happen?

Leader Tool: “Pastoral prayer language”

- “Lord, we ask for healing.”
- “We trust You with the outcome.”
- “Strengthen and comfort them no matter what.”

Closing Prayer Prompt

“Lord, teach us compassion. Give us faith without hype and hope without denial.”

Session 6 — Tongues, Apostles, & Kingdoms in Conflict (Ch. 12–14)

Big Idea

Tongues and apostolic questions become clearer when we read passages carefully and recognize the spiritual dynamics that inflame division.

Key Points

- Tongues in Scripture requires careful interpretation (Acts 2 vs 1 Cor 14 issues).
- “Apostles” language can confuse—focus on function and Scripture.
- Conflict often escalates when people weaponize words instead of pursuing understanding.

Key Terms

Tongues, Interpretation, Apostolic function, Spiritual conflict

Reflection Questions

1. What’s the biggest confusion people have about tongues in your experience?
2. What guardrails produce order, clarity, and love in public worship?
3. What would unity look like without either side abandoning convictions?

Agree/Disagree

“Unity grows when we replace caricatures with careful reading and humility.”

Next Step

- Choose one relationship or conversation where you can pursue clarity with kindness instead of labels.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, give Your Church humility, clarity, and unity—without compromise.”

SESSION 6 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Section 6 (Ch. 12–14): Tongues, Apostles, Kingdoms in Conflict

Leader Notes

Purpose:

Handle the most “charged” topics calmly. Keep it structured:

- tongues clarity
- apostles: function vs labels
- conflict: why debate becomes tribal

Watch-outs:

- This session can easily become debate-y.
- Do not argue about labels (“apostles today!”). Keep focus: function and Scripture.

Leader framing line:

“Tonight we are practicing clarity with kindness. No mockery, no pressure.”

Extra Questions

1. What is the single biggest confusion about tongues in your tradition?
2. Why does interpretation matter in 1 Corinthians 14?
3. What guardrails create order and peace in public worship settings?
4. What does “apostolic function” mean without triggering labels?
5. Why do these debates become emotionally intense and tribal? What helps?

Leader Tool: “Unity Practice”

Ask each person:

- “What is one thing you respect about the other side?”
- “What is one thing you think your own side needs to correct?”

Closing Prayer Prompt

“Lord, bring unity where there’s division. Give us clarity where there’s confusion and humility in every conversation.”

Leader Appendix — How to Facilitate This Study Well

1) Group Agreements (read in Session 1)

Use these 5 agreements to set tone:

1. **Scripture-first:** We're here to understand what the Bible teaches, not to win arguments.
2. **Charity:** No mocking, caricatures, or “that side is crazy” language.
3. **Humility:** We can be confident without being harsh. Everyone is learning.
4. **No pressure:** No one is required to share personal experiences.
5. **Build up the body:** If a comment doesn't build up, we reframe it.

Leader line:

“Unity doesn't require uniformity, but it does require humility.”

2) How to Redirect Common Derailments (scripts you can say)

If it turns into a debate:

“Let's pause. Our goal tonight is clarity and growth—not winning a side. What does the text actually say?”

If someone attacks another tradition:

“Let's avoid labels and caricatures. Can we rephrase that as a question or an observation from Scripture?”

If someone shares a dramatic story that pulls focus:

“Thank you for sharing. Let's connect it back to today's chapter: what principle does this illustrate?”

If someone becomes cynical or dismissive:

“I get the concern. Let's name the concern clearly, then ask: what are the biblical guardrails?”

If someone becomes overly emotional / pressured:

“Let’s slow down. No one needs to prove anything here. We’re here to learn and reflect.”

3) How to Handle “I Disagree” Moments (healthy model)

Use the **3-step model**:

1. **Clarify:** “What exactly do you mean by that?”
2. **Locate:** “Where do you see that in Scripture?”
3. **Compare:** “How does that fit with other passages?”

Leader line:

“Disagreement is okay. Disrespect is not.”

4) How to Keep It Pastoral (not academic)

If conversation gets too technical, ask:

- “How would this change your prayer life this week?”
 - “How would this affect how you treat people in church?”
 - “What would maturity look like here?”
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5) When to Pause a Conversation

Pause if:

- people start repeating themselves
- voices rise or sarcasm appears
- someone feels shamed
- it becomes political/culture-war adjacent

Leader line:

“Let’s take a breath. We’re here to build up, not tear down.”

6) Recommended Session Flow (simple)

1. Opening prayer (1–2 min)
2. Key idea recap (2 min)
3. Discuss 2–3 questions (20–30 min)
4. Agree/Disagree prompt + Next Step (10 min)
5. Closing prayer (3–5 min)

Closing Note

Thank you for taking the time to work through this study guide. My prayer is that it brought **clarity where there's confusion, unity where there's division, and light where there's darkness**, and that it helped you grow in maturity, humility, and love. Keep testing everything by Scripture, and keep pursuing Christ above all.

— Paul Myrant

Author, *Bridging the Charismatic Divide*

“What Next?”

- Audiobook coming soon (join list to be notified)
- Join the seminar waitlist

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