

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS
Like Us

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Our Misunderstood ‘Counselor’.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

2. a. God's description of one who tries to "fix" things by his own strength is found in Jeremiah 17:5-6. Rewrite this passage in your own words.

b. Why do you think things turn out this way?

3. As we saw earlier, the "comfort" of the Holy Spirit consists more of fortitude and courage than of solace and sympathy. Write out what the following verses have to say about the different areas in which the Spirit "fortifies" us, and how or why He goes about it.

Verses	Comfort From the Spirit
Psalm 73:21-26	
Romans 15:4	
Romans 8:26-27	
Colossians 4:8	
Hebrews 3:12-13	

4. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, God provides us with a powerful statement about why He wants to comfort us. What is it, and what principle can you draw from this passage about Christians and pain?

LEARNING FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT...

It is certainly true that God is our compassionate and loving Father and that He wills what is best for His children. But it is also true that often His desire is to strengthen us through the Holy Spirit in the midst of our difficulty and pain rather than merely to deliver us from it. Sometimes

our circumstances are the very vehicles of growth and change. He promises us His strength and provides it for us through His Word, His people, and His Holy Spirit.

One of God's reasons for comforting us in our distress is so that we can comfort others in similar circumstances. For the Christian, pain sometimes has a measurably good purpose. Our greatest temptation when we face painful circumstances is to prefer consolation over true comfort, and thereby we often miss the real ministry of the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS...

5. List, in order of your own preference (1 = first), the sources you tend to look to or run to for comfort or guidance when in need. Several examples are given. (You may also want to ask someone close to use this same list and let them give *their* perspective on your inclinations.)

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____
- (7) _____
- (8) _____
- (9) _____

<p>Possible Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a close friend• a spouse• God (in prayer)• counselor/therapist• your child(ren)• Scripture• your pastor• your parents

6. Now, using what you've learned from this lesson, prioritize your list one more time, this time as you believe it *should* be.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____
- (7) _____
- (8) _____
- (9) _____

7. What do you normally expect the Holy Spirit to do for you when you go to God during difficulty?

8. Describe how you have been able to minister genuine *comfort* and *encouragement* to someone else because of a painful experience in your own life.

9. Look back over your answers to questions 5 and 6. Is there any indication of a need for a change in your thinking or behavior during difficulty? If so, what, and what would be a good first step?

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- Our need for encouragement – 2 Peter 1:3
- Our source of encouragement – Romans 15:13