

Rekindling the Flame: A Call to Passionate Faith

Group Study Guide

Main Scripture Passages: Psalm 69:9, John 21:1-25

Opening Discussion (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: What's something you're naturally passionate about? (Sports, hobbies, family, etc.) What does that passion look like in your daily life?

Transition Question: Have you ever experienced seasons where your spiritual passion felt dim or distant? What was that like for you?

Study Section 1: Understanding True Zeal (15 minutes)

Read Together: Psalm 69:9 and Deuteronomy 6:5

"Zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me." - Psalm 69:9

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." - Deuteronomy 6:5

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the difference between emotional intensity and the kind of "consuming" love David describes?
2. How might wholehearted devotion to God look different from person to person?
3. Why do you think we sometimes expect our spiritual passion to feel the same as other kinds of enthusiasm?

Personal Reflection: Think of a time when you loved someone or something deeply, even when it was difficult or costly. How might that help you understand biblical zeal?

Study Section 2: When the Flame Grows Dim (20 minutes)

Read Together: John 21:15-17 and Isaiah 42:3

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" - John 21:15-17

"A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out." - Isaiah 42:3

Background: Peter had been zealous once, but after his denials, he went back to fishing - back to what was familiar and safe.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever felt like Peter - going back to "normal routine" after feeling you've failed God, only to have that not go well either? What was that experience like?
2. Sometimes we think our difficulties are because "we're getting what we deserved" for not being zealous enough or disciplined enough. How does Jesus' gentle approach to Peter challenge that thinking?
3. Notice Jesus doesn't ask Peter "Are you zealous enough for me?" but simply "Do you love me?" What's the difference between these two questions?
4. What does it mean that "God doesn't wait for us to rekindle our own flame" but "meets us in our dimness and gently fans the embers that are still there"?

Personal Reflection: The sermon asked: "What if the reason your flame feels weak isn't because God is disappointed in you - but because He's inviting you to rest in Him again?" How does this perspective change how you view your spiritual struggles?

Study Section 3: Zeal That Builds Up (15 minutes)

Study Section 4: The Flame That Never Dies (15 minutes)

Read Together: Hebrews 12:28-29 and Revelation 3:20

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" - Hebrews 12:28-29

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." - Revelation 3:20

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon emphasized that biblical zeal "is not dependent on us keeping it burning. It's fueled by God's never-ending, steadfast love, sustained by His faithful presence, and renewed by His grace." How does this truth encourage you?
2. When you feel spiritually cold or tired, how does it help to remember that "God's love for you burns as bright today as it ever has"?
3. The sermon mentioned that "Jesus went to the cross with zeal for your redemption." How does understanding Christ's passion for you affect your passion for Him?
4. What does it mean that we've already "received a kingdom that cannot be shaken"? How does this security free us from trying to manufacture spiritual passion?

Personal Reflection: Jesus says "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock." What would it look like for you to "take one small step toward the God who is already running toward you with arms wide open"?

Study Section 3: Practical Steps Forward (20 minutes)

Read Together: Psalm 51:10, Psalm 103:2, Luke 16:10, and Hebrews 10:24-25

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." - Psalm 51:10

"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits." - Psalm 103:2

"Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much." - Luke 16:10

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." - Hebrews 10:24-25

Discussion Questions:

1. **Remember What God Has Done:** How can starting with gratitude rather than guilt change our approach to spiritual growth?
2. **Take Small, Faithful Steps:** The sermon said "Don't wait for feelings to lead; let obedience kindle affection" and "Feelings cannot be trusted to lead. They can confuse and even lie to us." Share a time when you did something faithful even when you didn't feel like it. What happened?
3. **Surround Yourself with Reminders:** How can church community help us when our spiritual fire feels dim? What role do we play in encouraging others?
4. **Ask God to Renew Your Heart:** The sermon mentioned that "Our wants and desires in life may need reorienting." What distractions might God need to remove, or what areas might need His restoration in your life?

Personal Application: Which of these four steps feels most relevant to where you are right now? What's one specific way you could implement it this week?

Personal Application (10 minutes)

Quiet Reflection Questions: (Give people 3-4 minutes to think silently)

- What is one thing God has done in your life that you can praise Him for today?
- What is one small, faithful step you sense God inviting you to take this week?
- How might the truth that "God is already running toward you with arms wide open" change how you approach Him?

Optional Sharing: Anyone who would like to share one insight from their reflection time.

Closing Prayer Time (10 minutes)

Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God for His patience and gentleness with us
- Ask Him to rekindle passion where it has grown dim
- Pray for unity and encouragement within our group
- Ask for grace to take faithful small steps

Group Prayer Option: Go around the circle and let each person pray one sentence, or simply say "Thank you, Jesus" if they prefer.

Take-Home Reflection

This Week's Challenge: Each day, identify one thing you can thank God for and one small way you can respond to His love.

Memory Verse: Choose one of these verses to meditate on this week:

- Psalm 69:9: *"Zeal for your house consumes me"*
- Isaiah 42:3: *"A smoldering wick he will not snuff out"*
- John 21:15: *"Do you love me?"*
- Hebrews 12:29: *"Our God is a consuming fire"*

Next Week Preview: Consider sharing briefly how God met you in small ways throughout the week.

"The call isn't to manufacture passion you don't feel. It's to take one small step toward the God who is already running toward you with arms wide open."