

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 1 – Our Need for Fire

I believe every true Christian desires to be “on fire” for God. The challenge is how do we measure being “on fire”. Often we base being “on fire” by some external action: church attendance, exuberance in worship, acts of Christian service, etc. Those activities might be *evidences* of a person who is “on fire” but they aren’t the causes.

For someone to be “on fire” they must have a heart that is burning. The inside always determines the outside, not the other way around. Our journey over the next seven days is going to deal with the inside. We’re going to address what’s impacting your heart so that you can burn from the inside out. So, let me ask you this simple question: Is your heart burning in passion for Jesus right now?

Don’t just blow by the question. Stop and take a moment to actually answer: What is the state of your heart?

If you’re like most Christians you can remember a time when your heart was burning in passion for Jesus. You had a vibrant personal life. You read the Word, prayed, worshipped freely, and shared your faith. And then life happened. You got busy. You got distracted. Responsibility and commitments increased: school, family, children, job, church, small groups, sports, etc. and you looked up and realize you have spent a lot of time living as a Christian without spending a lot of time with Jesus. This isn’t condemnation. And I realize that the above scenario doesn’t apply to everyone. But if this in anyway describes your journey, this devotional is for you.

I’m inviting you to realize there is so much more for you than simply going through the motions. Jesus wants you to be absolutely on fire for Him. Realizing things aren’t where they used to be or where they should be is the first step in changing your reality. Don’t be condemned at this realization. There is abundant grace for you to experience the wildness of God’s fire and love. Throw away any cynicism you have right now and realize you were made to live filled with passion for the One who Himself is a consuming fire. Humble yourself before the Lord today, agree that you need Him to set you on fire, and allow Him to impart the grace to call you into His love.

Over the next week I’m going to share with you things that have helped me to stay burning for the Lord over the last twenty-five years. Let’s do this together!

Tomorrow we’ll address barriers to having a heart that is burning for the Lord.

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 2 – Removing Every Barrier

Now that we've agreed that we need our hearts to be revived with passion, we need to turn our attention to the Holy Spirit. He is the one who imparts the flame of God's love and manifests God's presence in us. Part of His role in our lives is to lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Today I want you to take some time alone without any distractions and simply ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any areas of compromise in your life. He will never condemn you, but He will show you areas of your life that are competing with God's desires for you. The Holy Spirit will always direct you back to Jesus. By revealing areas that are negatively impacting your relationship with the Lord, He will help you to remove any roadblocks to having a burning heart.

Once He makes clear to you any areas that need to change, you will have the grace to repent of those things. Repentance is when we turn away from sin and return to the Lord. It's not simply asking forgiveness. It's a life change. Repentance is a critical component to having a burning heart. Repentance calls us back into fellowship with God. Repentance is a beautiful gift that connects us to God's forgiveness and then refreshes and restores our relationship with Him.

I'm so grateful that we can repent and return to the Lord. I have made many mistakes in my life – some in disobedience, some in ignorance. But every time the Holy Spirit has been present to make me aware of my errors and invite me back into fellowship with the Lord. I repent regularly and each time His sweet winds of refreshing renew my heart.

Alright, before the day is over, set yourself aside and simply ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of your life that are in the way of your relationship with the Lord. Once He does, repent of these areas and make the necessary life changes to no longer continue in those sins. It may require you to forgive someone or to make amends with someone you've wronged. Whatever the case, immediately obey the Holy Spirit and you'll experience His waves of refreshing begin to wash over your soul.

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 3 – Encountering God’s Affections

The number one way to develop a burning heart is by connecting to God’s burning heart for you. The Bible states, “God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” (Deu 4:24) For many years I misunderstood this passage. I thought this was speaking of God’s desires for judgment. I thought it meant that He was basically angry and ready to release wrath at any time. I couldn’t have been more wrong.

God is definitely a consuming fire, but the fire that this passage is talking about is the fire of His love. He is burning with jealous love for His people. Song of Solomon 8:6 states, “...love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol (the grave); its flashes are flashes of fire, *the very flame of the LORD.*” I remember reading this passage for the very first time. The realization hit me like a hammer: The fire of God *is* the love of God and the love of God *is* the fire of God. God’s fire and God’s love are the same thing! God is all love. God is all fire!

The light bulb went on for me, “If I want to be ‘on fire’ for God, I have to be filled with the love of God!” This revelation sent me on a journey that I am still on today. Everyday I live my life fueled by and in pursuit of a greater revelation of His love. And as He continues to fill me with His love, I grow in passion for Him. His love is the only thing that can cause my heart to burn. And the same is true for you. We were made for love.

If we lack passion, it’s because we are living distant from the revelation of God’s passions for us. 1 John 4:19 says, “We love Him because He first loved us.”

For us to believe the love God has for us we must meditate on the truth of His love regularly. The Scripture is filled with verses that declare the riches of God’s love for us. Today I want you to take some time alone and meditate on the following verses. Stay with it until you begin to feel God’s affections fill your soul. And then make this a habit. Meditate regularly on the verses that declare God’s love for you. It will change your heart and fill you with passion.

**John 15:9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

**Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Tomorrow we will turn our meditations into intercessions for a burning heart.

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 4- Interceding for Breakthrough

Now that we've spent some time meditating on God's affections, it's time to use those truths as fuel for intercession. When we realize God's desire for us, prayer becomes much easier.

I want you to learn this simple principle of the Kingdom: God responds to spiritual hunger. I like to say, "Spiritual hunger is the currency of the kingdom." One of the easiest ways to put our hunger on display is to cry out to the Lord in intercession. The volume of our voice isn't as important as the depth of our hunger.

Are you hungry to have a burning heart?

Then ask Him today to increase His presence on your life. Ask Him to set His fiery seal of love on your heart (Song 8:6). Ask Him to give you a greater revelation of the knowledge of Jesus (Eph 1:17). Ask Him to strengthen your heart with might through a greater revelation of love (Eph 3:16-17)! Ask and you will receive!

Asking God regularly to give you a greater depth of revelation and a greater experience of His love will cause your heart to grow in passion for Him. I have made these prayers a habit over the last twenty years and I can confidently say that these intercessions have changed me as much as anything.

Make these prayers a habit. Pray Ephesians 1:17-23 and Ephesians 3:14-21 regularly until they become part of your normal language of prayer. Biblical prayers are extremely powerful because they are the word of God. There is nothing more prophetic than praying the word of God back to God. The answer to these prayers is guaranteed, because are His perfect will.

I'll give you an example prayer that you can pray, but don't stop with this example, go into other bible verses and pray them to God. You will see your prayer life radically shift as you pray biblical prayers to our loving Father who is more than willing to answer you.

Pray this with me:

*Father, I ask you to give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Open the eyes of my understanding and release light and revelation. I need to know your Son. Let me see Him as He is. I pray you would wash away all thoughts I have about Jesus that aren't worthy of Him. Let me know your Son as He is. Let me understand the hope of His calling – what it is that He's called to do, and let me find myself in His story. Let me experience the riches of the glory of being His inheritance. I want to know this glory – what does it mean that I am promised to the Son of God. Let me experience the greatness of your power toward me today. I'm asking for all that you want to give me, release it to me today, Thank you Father, in Jesus' Name.*

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 5 – Digging Deeper

Over the last several days we've removed hindrances in our lives, engaged the Father's affections and begun to cry out for a burning heart. By now I believe you should be sensing a shift in your heart towards the Lord. Now we must form a habit that follows the biblical prescription to keep our hearts passionate for the Lord.

**Psalms 119:9-11** How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

According to Psalm 119, cleansing of our hearts in repentance is then followed by seeking God with all of our hearts and finally hiding His word in our hearts to keep our way pure.

Continually reading the Scripture is an absolute must to keep our hearts burning for the Lord. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1, 14). The Bible is Jesus written unto us. When we spend time combing over the Word we are allowing Jesus to speak right to our hearts. Hiding the word in our hearts means we treasure the Scriptures until they begin to take root inside us. When the Word begins to root in our soul, our mindset begins to change. This is called having our mind renewed by the Word (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23).

For over 25 years I have pastored people through different crises in their lives. When someone comes to me struggling with their walk with the Lord, I can nearly count it 100% of the time they have stopped reading the Bible. That may sound overly simple, but it's absolutely true. The word of God is life to us. Faith comes through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). If we cut off the flow of the Word to us our faith will wither.

There are many Bible reading plans available that can be a great tool to help you systematically read through the Scriptures. The plan isn't as important as the consistency that you employ. I want to encourage you to set a time daily to read the Word. Do it daily. For some a systematic reading plan is the most helpful. For others picking a book of the Bible and reading through it several times in a month is most helpful. Whatever the case... just get in the Word!

Hide the word in your heart and your heart will continue to burn with passion!

P.S. Don't substitute reading the Word yourself for listening to preaching. Many believers only listen to podcasts or online preaching, but don't actually dig into the Scriptures themselves. This is insufficient if you want to have a burning heart. I encourage you to listen to preaching, but do it in addition to your daily reading of the Scriptures.

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 6 – Develop A Worship Life

I used to own a t-shirt that said, “All Word and you dry up. All Spirit and you blow up. The right amount of both and you grow up.” As cheesy as that may sound, it’s actually true. We need to encounter the Lord through the Word as well as encounter Him through the presence of the Holy Spirit. The easiest way that I have found to encounter the Lord by the presence of the Holy Spirit is to worship.

We can worship in a variety of ways, but I am specifically talking about speaking and singing to the Lord. It doesn’t matter if you’re not a singer. What does matter is offering your mouth to the Lord in blessing. When we open our mouths to speak and sing to the Lord of His greatness it connects our hearts to Him in love. And not only that, the Bible actually tells us to do so:

**Hebrews 13:15** Through Him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

I’ll tell you what I like to do as a means to help get you started connecting to the Lord in worship. First I remove every distraction and close my eyes. Then I begin to set my focus on Jesus. I do this by literally picturing His face as explained in Revelation 1, His face shines “like the sun in its strength” and “His eyes *were* like a flame of fire”. Once I’m focused on Him, I begin to speak directly to Him what the Scripture says about Him. “You are the fairest of ten thousand” (Song 5:10). “You are glorious and radiant” (Psalm 76:4). “You are worthy” (Revelation 5:12). “You are Holy” (Revelation 4:8). “You are merciful and just” (Exodus 34:6-7). I just let my heart go into adoration of His attributes.

Then I begin to express from my mouth gratitude toward the Lord, “Thank you for all that You are and all that You do...” Often my gratitude turns into offering my love to Him, “Lord, I love you, I worship you. You are wonderful. Thank you for loving me.” At times I will sing these words to Him. It becomes very intimate and very powerful. Often I find worship songs that speak directly to His heart and sing them to Him. I flow back and forth from singing to speaking. It becomes a wonderful experience with Him in His presence.

I want to encourage you today to offer Him the fruit of your lips - speak directly to Him and give Him your affection. Make this a habit in your life. Make time to worship Him daily. Singing and speaking to Him in the car if you have a commute can be a precious time with the Lord. I couldn’t live without His presence. We aren’t only to worship Him in corporate worship settings; we are to worship Him every day of our lives. Lean in and worship Him, and experience His presence today!

## 7-Day Devotional for a Burning Heart

### DAY 7 – Invite Others Into the Journey

By now you have noticed that I'm encouraging you to make the things I've shared regular practices of your life. There isn't a quick fix for a burning heart, but a heart that is continually turning toward the Lord, reaching out in prayer, digging into the Word and spending time in worship will find itself enflamed with holy passion.

The last step is to invite others into this pursuit with you. From sharing the gospel with someone who doesn't know the Lord, to sharing how God is moving in your life with some of your close friends, there is a power in sharing with others what God is doing in you.

I regularly pray and ask God to show me people to share with. At times He highlights someone who doesn't know Him. Other times He encourages me to reach out to people who are believers with specific encouragements. The key is to be obedient to those leadings and share what the Lord puts on your heart.

Today, ask the Lord who He would like you to share with. Start by sharing what God has been doing in your heart over the last week. Share some of the ways He has ministered to you or something He has shown you through the Word. Not only will this be an encouragement to the other person, it will help strengthen the reality of what God has done in you.

I have often experienced this firsthand. Many times the Lord will speak something to me that He wants me to preach from a pulpit or simply share with a few friends. When I share the things the Lord has done in me, it solidifies that truth in my soul. At the same time sharing it calls me to accountability because if I tell others about what God is doing in me it helps keep me accountable to those truths.

I pray this devotional has helped your heart grow in passion for Jesus. I pray that the way the Lord has touched you this week will continue and increase in you in the days ahead. I also want to encourage you to stick with the truths I have offered you. Over time, if you continue to walk these things out, you will notice that your heart has continued to grow in fire for the Lord.

*Lord I ask that you move in power for my friends. Let them experience the richness of your presence and the truth of your Word in a way they never have before. Cause the things that they have touched in You this week to grow and multiply in the days ahead. I pray their hearts would be enflamed with passion and fire for You, in Jesus' Name!*