

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK # 1

IGNITE!



Re-Discovering the
Christian

Passionate
Life

*No one's ever seen or heard anything like this,
Never so much as imagined anything quite like it—
What God has arranged for those who love him.
But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has
brought it all out into the open before you.
The Spirit, not content to flit around on the surface, dives into
the depths of God, and brings out what God planned all along.*
1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (MSG)

Routine is an incredible threat to passionate Christian living. The numbness it births will blind us and dull our hearts, our minds, and our souls to the activity of God. Like a callous on the soul, the repetition of our daily schedules hardens us to the presence of God.

Imagine what life would be like if these verses really did infuse our lives with the awareness of the presence of God. The good news is that we don't need to imagine, these verses should move us to the reality of God's never ending activity around us. God planning things that we could never have thought possible, the miraculous, the surprising, and the divine.

Take a few moments and reflect on some of the things that God has done in the last 24 hours in your life. How has God blessed you? How has He challenged you to grow? What are five ways you can see God moving in your life right now?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

*Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.*

Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

In this day and age of information it is becoming increasingly easy to know about a large number of things. In fact we probably know more about things we don't care about or need to know about than at any other time in history. We know about the private lives of people who are known for being known (i.e., celebrities), even though neither they nor their lives make a real difference in our lives. We know about their lives, their children, their spouses, their dating habits, and their addictions. We become so familiar with them that it seems that like we know them. But we don't.

We live in a day when the Bible is the best-selling book of all time, yet it is one of the least read books in the country. The stories and snippets of verses give a false sense of knowledge to many. Many know about God, but don't truly know God.

Our verse instructs us to stop for a while and know God. In the constant activity of our lives, God's still small voice is often drowned out. But God is definitely speaking and that's how we get to know someone, we spend time with one another, share experiences, and learn to trust each other. Are you spending time with God? Are you spending time with God regularly? If our lives are going to increase in passion we need to increase our time together. It will be time well spent.

What can you do to know God better this week?

Are you willing to do it this week?

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:15-17 (NIV)

The Bible is an incredible love story and we have a featured role. God loves us and desires to be known by us. He sent Jesus to earth to be "Immanuel" - "God with us." God has never been satisfied with a long distance relationship. The scriptures paint a portrait of a God who loves us and pursues us with a passion to be with us in a shared relationship of love.

This is why Jesus came to earth, to show us the way to have this relationship with God and provide the only pathway to God, through His death, burial and resurrection. God sent His Son so that we would understand that God loves us as sons as well, if we would only accept His love as our Father.

It is hard to fathom the enormousness of the gift of the Holy Spirit. God Himself living within us to unite us with Himself in a union that strengthens, enlightens, and instructs us. Through Him we can cry out to God, speak out our hurts, fears, joys and struggles and know that God does and will hear us.

What is one thing that haunts your life right now? It could be a fear, a doubt, a sin, a question that holds you back from the life God has planned for you. Take some time to talk to God about it right now. If you hold on to it by yourself, you will never experience the freedom God desires to give you.

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

When I awake, I am still with you. If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139 (NIV)

Some will read this scripture and have the paranoid feeling that God is some kind of divine stalker. Always watching, always listening, never giving us a moment of solitude. The continual presence of God will unnerve some people, but it should bring solace and comfort. The very God who made us and formed us, knows us and still cares about us deeply. He will not leave us and works on our behalf.

How does the attention of God make you feel today? Regret anything?

*I will give them hearts that recognize me as the LORD.
They will be my people, and I will be their God,
for they will return to me wholeheartedly.*

Jeremiah 24:7 (ESV)

Learning a foreign language in your late forties is a difficult task. Though there may be benefits, it is a real challenge. You have to relearn the basics of the grammar you use daily to learn the new grammar you have never used before.

Learning to know God can present some similar challenges. We have to learn to recognize the presence and love of One who has always been there unnoticed. It's in our nature to exchange the truth of God for the lie of our own greatness and desires. But God knows our need for Him and promises to reveal Himself to us. Jeremiah promises that God will give us hearts to recognize Him.

Just as the secret service recognizes counterfeit currency by studying the real thing, so too will God give us the ability to recognize Him. Spending time with God, knowing Him, and assimilating the gifts of God into our lives will reveal a deepening ability to realize the presence of God and embolden us to live like God desires us to live.

Do you recognize what God is doing in your life at this time? What limits your ability to recognize or understand what God is doing?

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:8-11 (NIV)

How much do you want to know God? The passion of Paul is on display in these verses. Knowing God is an incredible treasure, one that is worth and has more value than anything in this world. Everything that Paul could see in his life, the very things that others were boasting about in their accomplishments, he saw as complete trash when compared to the joy of knowing God. But he also recognized that the process of coming to know God was not always comfortable. The realization that if he wanted to experience the joy and victory of the resurrection, he would also have to journey through the pain and humiliation of the death of Jesus. It is impossible to receive the crown of life if we aren't willing to endure the cross.

Is there anything that you value more than the opportunity to know God? A TV show? A hobby? A relationship? Every day we make little decisions that demonstrate the real desires of our heart. Most of the time we never really take the time to examine the priorities that are displayed in those unconscious decisions.

What have you placed at a higher priority than knowing God this week? Today? Why do you think you made those choices?

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7 (NIV)

“Confident, confident, dry and secure, raise your hands, raise your hands...if you're sure.” So went the jingle to an older, popular commercial for a deodorant. If you could be confident about your deodorant, you'd have the courage and confidence to raise your hands and let people see if indeed you really were dry. What does that have to do with this passage of scripture? Weeelll, the last few words of these verses tell us that God has given us the confidence to live by His grace. Grace that truly does have an affect in and on our lives.

Confidence in God is a transforming aspect of our lives that gives us the impetus to step out and do the very things that God has called us to do. Not because we have the ability to or the strength in ourselves, but because we believe God will be and do what He says. We experience this when we encounter the grace of God and we can utilize this history as a reason to step out in faith that God will continue to do what He has promised.

Where does your confidence need to grow in Christ today? What would change if you began to act like you had that confidence? What will you do today to demonstrate that you trust God to do what He promised in your life today?

14700 East Mississippi Ave
Aurora, CO 80012

Phone: 303-755-9975

Fax: 303-337-2785

E-mail: gccpastor@comcast.net