Intro: Good morning and welcome to restoration life church. You are here at an exciting time as we are kicking off a new series called “Igniting a Heart Ablaze.

I will start by letting you know that a lot of what we’ll learn in this series has been gleaned from a number of resources Like John Bevier’s book “Heart Ablaze” And a study from Pastor rick warren on Passion.

Rick warren writes: The creative force behind all great art, all great drama, all great music, all great architecture, all great writing is passion.

Nothing great is ever accomplished in life without passion.

I. Nothing great is ever sustained in life without passion.

a. Passion is what energizes life. Passion makes the impossible possible.

- Passion gives you a reason to get up in the morning and go, "I’m going to do something with my life today."
- Without passion life becomes boring. It becomes monotonous. It becomes routine. It becomes dull.

b. God created you and I with the emotions to have passion in your life and He wants us to live a passionate life.

- Passion is what mobilizes armies into action.
- Passion is what causes explorers to boldly go where no man’s gone before.
- Passion is what causes scientists to spend late night hours trying to find the cure to a dreaded disease.
- Passion is what takes a good athlete and turns him or her into a great athlete where they’re breaking records.
- God created us with this drive. But what drives me may not drive you.
c. I believe we all have it, but it is either dead, dormant, focused on or invested in different places for all of us.

- Some may be very passionate for hobbies or sports. Have you ever seen a real soccer fan? They can become a very emotionally unstable person really fast.
- Others are passionate about relationships or education.

d. One day a man walks up to Jesus and he says, "Lord, what’s the most important command?"

Jesus said, (paraphrasing) "I want you to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. Nothing matters more than that. That’s the number one thing in life. I want you to love Me passionately."

**This brings us to our dilemma:** So many of us have lost this passion for God.

II. Nothing else matters in life if you don’t love God passionately.

a. **My Point:** We need to IGNITE that passion for God once again.

- **That word Ignite means** to light, to burn to arouse emotion, to explode, to catch fire or to burst into flames
- **Have you ever heard the term “On fire for God”?**
- **So what does it mean?**

b. People always thought it simply meant, “to be excited about God”.

- That’s definitely true, there’s no doubt that a person who is “on fire” for the Lord is excited, but is it simply that simple?

**John the Baptist made this declaration:**

**Matthew 3:11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.
• In other words, God was about to do something that goes beyond a change of direction in life through repentance,

• He was about to pour himself out in such a way that it would be tangible and transforming.

• Something that would cause anyone who receives this “Fire Baptism” At the risk of torture and death, proclaim the Gospel Of Jesus Christ.

• These Christians would courageously defy paganism and sin at any level shaking the very culture and government by this presence that has now consumed their life!

Acts 4:29-31  NIV
29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

c. God doesn’t want you to love Him half-heartedly.

• He wants you to love Him with all your heart and all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength.

Mark 12:30, from The Message "Jesus said, 'Love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy." Circle the word "passion".

That word, in Greek, is the word "heart."

• God is saying I want you to put some muscle into it, put some energy, put some emotion into your relationship with Me.

• Don’t be a wimp about your relationship with Me. Don’t be afraid of letting others know That Ii am yours and you are mine. Don’t be half-hearted.

d. Give it all you’ve got.
• Jesus is saying, "If you’re going to follow Me, you’ve got to go it with passion.

• You’ve got to give it some oomph, some enthusiasm, some zest. I want you to live passionately."

e. In fact, this truth is all through the Bible.

• The Bible tells us that we’re to seek God passionately.

• We’re to love God passionately.

• The Bible says that we’re to serve and obey God passionately. We’re to trust God passionately.

Then as if you didn’t get the message, in Colossians 3:23 He says "Whatever you do, do it with all of your heart as unto the Lord and not unto men."

**Application:** He says I want you to do everything passionately when it comes to loving Me, serving Me, living for Me.

(Illustration): Here’s the Crazy thing.
In America it’s ok to be passionate about anything except God.

d. But it is not politically correct -- to be passionate about God.

• I can be passionate about movies.
• I can be passionate about sports.
• I can be passionate about politics.
• I can be passionate about fashions and clothes.
• I can be passionate about sea life and trees and the environment.
• I can be passionate about boats, dirt bikes, fishing, needle point, flowers, gardens, hot rods, body building, health and even music.

• **But God forbid, if I am passionate about my faith and love for Jesus Christ, the church and our mission to win souls build disciples and release them.**

**Here in lie’s the problem:** In our culture it’s ok to be passionate about anything except your faith, except your relationship with God.
• I can go to a rock concert, or a political rally or a baseball game and I can shout my head off.

• I can get excited. Paint my body and face the color of the team.

• When my team loses I could cry. Nobody thinks that’s a big deal. When my team wins I can jump up and dance around and wave my hands in the air.

• If I do that at a game people go, "He’s a real fan!"

But If I do that in church...people say,

"He’s a fanatic! He’s a nut case." He’s a holy roller, legalistic judgmental, or even the leader of a cult.
Even some Christians will say things like...
"You don’t want to get too emotional about your faith”

I’m sorry but when you come to a place of complete understanding that you should be dead or burning in hell for your sins and God loved me you and soooooo much that he gave up and sacrificed his son Jesus Christ so that I may be forgiven and given eternal life in Heaven with him.

When you come to grips with that I can help but get a little emotional and passionate about my faith in my worship at the altar and how I labor to advance God Kingdom through our church!

I understand that there’s a healthy balance, but I believe that we are not as balanced or as passionate about our faith and calling as we should be.

III. We need to IGNITE this passion once again in our hearts.

Romans 12:1 "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor."

a. Keep the fires going in your life. Circle the word "keep."

• Notice, it’s not automatic. It’s a choice. It’s a discipline. It’s something you and I must maintain.

• We are not by nature passionate about God. It’s something that you must choose to do.
b. You get distracted and everything in life conspires to keep you from being passionate about God.

- So He says keep your passion going. Keep the fires going. It’s a discipline. It’s not just automatic.

- This kind of thing -- being passionate about God has nothing to do with either your personality or your age.

- Our church is filled with lots of senior believers who have walked with God a long, long time and are still passionate.

**In Closing:**

I want to spend some quality time at this altar call.

I know that Everything in life conspires to keep you from being passionate.

And it dissipates your energy.

Over the next 7 or 8 weeks we are going to look at passion killers and how to combat them.

I want you to use it as a checklist. Because Jesus said, "I want you to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. Nothing matters more than that. That’s the number one thing in life. I want you to love Me passionately with all your heart."

As a church we are going to take some radical steps to re-IGNITE this passion.

But it starts here and now. What are you willing to do to once again or for the very first time experience the power and presence of God.

What are you willing to do to hear God once again. What are you willing to do to see the plan of God unfold before your eyes and for your family. **It starts here and It starts now.**

It starts by humbly coming before Him, prioritizing Him once again above anything and anyone. Repenting, asking for forgiveness and bathing in his presence through prayer & worship.