Our decision to follow Jesus as His disciple was not a one-time decision with daily implications. It is a commitment maintained over our life-time.

Obedience to the will of God means we are faithful in following even when progress is slow and recognition is absent. Hebrews 10:36 tells us the result of doing God's will is receiving what God has promised. This is the kind of obedience that shapes our character and sustains the fire.

What are some of the promises of God that help to sustain you in times of impatience or frustration?

Fire fades when it is neglected. As we continue in our journey of faith, we want to guard and feed the flame God has placed in us. We do that when we remember our first love, when we align ourselves through submission to His will and purposes, as we dwell continually in His presence and as we surrender our life to Him daily on the altar of faith where His holy fire burns.

WRAP-UP

Keeping the fire of God burning in our lives requires more than emotional passion; it calls for daily devotion, obedience, and complete surrender to Jesus. By recognizing Him as Lord, and releasing anything that competes with Him, our faith grows stronger, as His presence continues to transform our lives. By returning to our first love, aligning our lives with God's will, and dwelling continually in His presence, His fire is kindled within us. But we must tend the flame with intentional discipleship and by following Jesus daily.

MEMORY VERSE

23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. – Luke 9:23 NLT

Challenge –

Begin your day tomorrow by consciously offering yourself to God. Say aloud, "I choose obedience today." Return to that prayer whenever resistance arises.

Burn
Formed by His Presence– Week 4

INTRODUCTION

During our current sermon series we have returned to our first love, aligned ourselves once again with God's purposes and begun to dwell more fully in the presence of God. Now it is time to carry these practices forward in our everyday lives. God's fire rests on yielded lives. Burning isn't about emotional intensity; it is a steady obedience fueled by devotion. Burning is about belonging to God without reserve. Let's consider what it takes to keep the fire of God burning in our lives.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever been tasked with keeping a bonfire or campfire burning for an evening? If so, what was required and what were the challenges?

Key Passage

23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 25 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God." – Luke 9:23-27 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who do you say that I am?

> *18 One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" 19 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead." 20 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah sent from God!" – Luke 9:18-20 NLT*

Jesus' question to His disciples in Luke 9 is perhaps the most important question we will ever be asked. Who do we say Jesus is? Many who

respond to this question seek to put Jesus in a comfortable category. They may be willing to call Him a good man, a teacher or even a prophet.

> *39 If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. – Romans 10:9 NLT*
>
> *1 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name. – John 20:31 NLT*

*According to Romans 10:9 and John 20:31 what do we receive when we declare Jesus as Lord and believe He is Messiah? The word Lord (*kyrios) *means owner or master. Are you comfortable in saying, "Lord I belong to you. You have authority in all areas of my life."? If not, what areas are you finding difficult to release?*

Before we attempt to pick up our cross and follow Jesus daily, we must settle this question for ourselves. The only way for us to live a life fully surrendered to God is for us to believe that He is not like anyone else and he doesn't fit any other category. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He holds authority in all of creation. No one else will ever be able to make that claim. He suffered, died and rose from the dead so that those who make Him their Lord will have eternal life. Recognizing Jesus as Lord is the essential first step to being His disciple.

2. Give up your way of living

> *23 Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. – Luke 9:23 NLT*
>
> *28 Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!" – Mark 10:28 NIV*

When Jesus invited the disciples to follow Him, it meant more than sitting in on His sermons. It was a commitment to be formed, conformed, and transformed into the shape and pattern of the master's thinking and living. That meant they must set aside anything in their lives that competed with following Jesus.

God's flame burns in the lives of those surrendered to Him. His fire is found in the sacrifices we offer. It can be frightening to think of surrendering everything you value. But doing so is the only way to identify anything that rivals Jesus in your life.

> *24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. – Luke 9:24 NIV*

What are the things in your life you value most highly? What would be involved in surrendering those things to God. What does Luke 9:24 tell us will result from surrendering our lives to Jesus?

It takes a thorough examination of what we believe about God to be willing to surrender what we hold most dear. Do we believe: He is good, He is loving, He cares about those I care about, and He can be trusted?

The more intimately we know God the more we will be willing to surrender everything to Him. It may be a slow release, step by step loosening our grip as we find Him faithful with what we entrust to His care. But as we release more of our lives to Him, we will find peace and confidence that by surrendering all, we are safe in God's hands.

Pause for a moment of prayer with open hands offering God any area of your life that you've been reluctant to release.

> *4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. – Romans 6:4 NIV*

One way we both declare Jesus as Lord and die to our old lives is through baptism. In the book of Romans, Paul says the act of baptism is a demonstration of death to our old way of living and being raised up to a new life in Jesus.

If you haven't been baptized but you want to take that step in surrendering your life to God, we will be holding baptisms on Sunday Nov 15th. There is a baptism meeting between services next Sunday Nov 1st to answer your questions and explain the process of baptism at New Life. You can sign up at https://www.newlifepismo.com/baptism.

3. Pick up your cross daily

> *36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. – Hebrews 10:36 NIV*