

HOME PLATE

*If you were to ask enough "whys,"
where would you end up
in regard to the game of life?*

IGNITE **PURPOSE**

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Introduction

It's important to embrace this commitment over the next 9-week study:

1. 4-day-a-week Bible exploration (30-minutes a day)
2. Preparation for weekly group meeting (30-minutes)
3. Once-a-week group study (60-minutes)
4. Stay connected to your group during the week

Ignite Purpose Groups

Accountability groups usually focus on guilt and peer pressure to modify behavior and for the most part, there is very little about an accountability group that is overtly “Christian.” I want to encourage the groups NOT to judge, *but to LOVE each other towards stronger relationships.* Choosing “accountability” encourages us to surveil each other and creates an environment that almost encourages us to judge our goodness competitively. The unspoken implication of these relationships is that God doesn't love us fully and completely, He loves the parts of us that He approves of, and He's incredibly unhappy about our deficiencies and needs to provide us personal monitors to make sure we're toeing the line. As long as we define our relationships by what we *shouldn't be doing*, we're encouraging people to hide from each other and God, as they worry about not being accepted. This forces people to divulge just enough to give the appearance of openness, but they hold back the complete truth. On the other hand, the goal of our *Ignite Purpose Groups* is to develop “*spiritual friendships!*” As this study focuses on God's love for each of us individually, *real Christian transformation* happens when we come to that true understanding of how much we're loved and accepted. When we begin to grasp Jesus' radical acceptance, we're equipped to pursue Him in a way that makes us engaged. *Yes, this is the element that will IGNITE PASSION and PURPOSE! A loving, trusting, and true spiritual friendship contains elements of accountability, it's just not defined by it.*

Ignite Purpose Group Goals

Goal #1: Focus on our beliefs, not only our behavior

Even though conversations often start on the surface, it must move down to the core of who we are—to the idols of our hearts. *Ignite Purpose Group* conversations shouldn't stop at mere behaviors but probe deeper to motivations.

Goal #2: Focusing only on hopes, not only habits

The great danger of a typical group is to focus only on how we fall short, not on the *great hope* we have for change. As Christians, *because the Holy Spirit lives inside of us*, we have a profoundly new identity in Christ. When Christ rose from the dead, He died to this realm of sin ([Romans 6:6](#)).

Goal #3: Focus Christ's obedience, not only on ours

We need not be afraid of honesty, because when we focus less on *our performance* and focus more on *Christ's performance* on our behalf, confession becomes less about our own performance. We need not judge the quality of our spiritual lives in comparison to other people. *The Ignite Purpose Group* goal is to encourage everyone to trust *the work of Christ in YOU.*

Goal #4: Stay connected to the VINE...God's Word

Ignite Purpose Groups should evoke spiritual friendships that help everyone recognize God's movement and promptings. They encourage everyone to stay connected to the **VINE (God's Word)** so that they may produce fruit. And while there may be times these kinds of friends need to say tough things to each other, it's always with a sense of humility and love.

I pray these friendship grow beyond the need to “*give account*” to others, because, ultimately, giving a report on bad behavior is not friendship or community.

Ignite Purpose FIRE Starter Method

The Bible journaling method called FIRE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.

FIRE stands for Focus, Investigate, Respond and Engage.

F= Focus

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, **focus** on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. *Writing helps you remember the verses.*

I = Investigate

Next, you **investigate** the context around the Scripture reading. *To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text?* Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: **Bible Study Tools**, or **Easy English Bible**.

R = Respond

The next step is **responding** to the text to make it applicable for your own life. *What does the text mean **today**? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?* Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

E = Engage

The final step in the journaling process is **engaging** God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. *Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?*

The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.

Session #1: God's Home Plate (*PRAY FIRST GATHERING*)

- **Teaching:** *15 minutes*

Why? If you've spent time with kids of just about any age you'll discover this question seems quite natural from the time a child learns to talk. It's not until later in life this question seems to fade away. Let's not lose sight.

In baseball, if you were to ask enough "whys" you would end up with an answer like this: "to get the most amount of players across home plate because that is how you win." That is the deepest *why* in the game of baseball. *Why catch a ball, why hit the ball, why get the other team out, why get a single, why get a double, why get a triple, why swing for the fences?*

If you were to ask enough "whys", where would you end up in regard to the game of life? *Why? Why do I wake up in the morning? Why do I do what I do? Why do I have the passions I have? Why am I here?*

In small group today, we will be digging down into the question "why"? This question of "why" is pursuing something of great value: purpose. As it relates to your relationship with God, spend time in prayer asking "why?" *Why are you a Christian? Why does God do what God does? Why do you go to church?* Spend time in prayer contemplating these questions.

- **Small Group Discussion:** *45 minutes*

Why are you a Christian?

Why does God do what God does?

Why do you go to church?

- ***Discuss as a group.***

To best understand your *why*, let's take a look at the deepest *why*:

Read [Ezekiel 20](#) and [Ezekiel 20:9](#)

- *Take a moment to look at the why found in this verse and discuss as a group.*

Read [Ezekiel 20:14](#), [Ezekiel 20:22](#), [Ezekiel 20:39](#)

- *Discuss as a group... Why did God act?*

Perhaps the greatest example of why God does what He does can be seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

God's Home Plate Includes Knowing God!

Jesus is on every page of the Bible!

Read [Romans 3:25-26](#)

"For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair... God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus."
(New Living Translation)

Why does God do what He does?

God's Home Plate Includes Knowing God!

Jesus is on every page of the Bible!

Read [John 12:27-28](#)

This is where the most clear of all statements can be found.

Why?

For what purpose did Jesus come?

Take one last look at [John 17:1](#)

Session #1 Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read John 12:27-36

Why did Jesus choose to take on Himself your sin? What does this idea of “glory” or “glorify” mean?

F= Focus in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today’s Scripture reading. *To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text?* Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

R = Respond to the text to make it applicable for your own life. *What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?*

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. *Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?*

Session #1 Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read John 17:1-5

Why would God act for His own glory, and not the glory of another?

F= Focus in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. *To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text?* Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

R = Respond to the text to make it applicable for your own life. *What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?*

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. *Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?*

Session #1 Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Romans 9:6-29

God was wanting to get the credit/glory from an opponent. How much more so does God want to work through the ones that He loves?

F= Focus in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. *To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).*

R = Respond to the text to make it applicable for your own life. *What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?*

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. *Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?*

Session #1 Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read 2 Thessalonians 1

What does [2 Thessalonians 1:10](#) reveal about your own “why”? Circling back to the opening thoughts and prayers; what is your purpose? Why do you do what you do? Why are you here? What does this look like on a daily basis or from task to task?

F= Focus in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today’s Scripture reading. *To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text?* Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

R = Respond to the text to make it applicable for your own life. *What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?*

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. *Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?*
