



KICKSTARTER

WEEK 1: Revving up Your Life with God

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This series is intended to help jump into a relationship with God by engaging in some 'next level' spiritual disciplines. We hope to give a clear roadmap from which you can begin to live into each discipline.

WHOSE YOU ARE DETERMINES WHO YOU ARE

Revelations 3:14 (NIV) ¹⁴ "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

We are actually going to start 2017 by looking at the very last book of the Bible, containing a letter written to the church of Laodicea in **Revelations 3:14**. Starting at the end brings us back to the beginning. It starts with a reintroduction to Jesus Christ; a reminder of who He is. He is the "Amen" - the punctuation at the end of prayer; the faith part of prayer - Jesus is faithful; the ruler of all creation - like no other; the savior of the world - the Son of God; the one who sparked revolution over the world and who will return to vanquish evil forever and gather His people. Knowing this determines who we are. Take for example, the words the 2016 Olympic Fiji rugby team sang after they won the gold, "We have overcome, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of God, we have overcome". They just won gold; praising God makes sense. But when we take into account that they praised God at every game, win or lose, and that they either found a church or found a way to worship wherever they went regardless of convenience, the song communicates a much deeper identity than being a gold medalist. The heart of the meaning is that they *are* victorious. It is much more than having victory, though we have this too through the blood of Christ. Victorious is what they are through Jesus and this can not be taken away.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Discuss the merits and differences between being something and having something. Find some examples and discuss.

Is remembering and acknowledging God part of your lifestyle? Why would you want this to be a lifestyle, especially in times of disappointment and hardship?

Read **Matthew 16:13-18**. What question did Jesus ask Peter? What did Peter say? When did Peter receive his true identity and his new name? What “weight” would Peter have put on his identity if he didn’t know who Jesus was?

THE REBUKE

Revelations 3:15-17 (NIV) 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Ouch! No sugar coating here. The MSG translation uses the phrase “You make me want to vomit.” Jesus used the water analogy because in Laodicea the water was imported from six miles away through aqueducts; by the time the water reached Laodicea, it was polluted and tasted terrible. Everyone knew this in Laodicea and understood what Jesus meant - that they were like the water! Their anemic attitude turned a once vibrant church into something that pursued power, prosperity, and popularity - much like the world around them did. They could not see it; they had become blind to God’s perspective. Their hearts had gone cold; their minds had gone stale (read **Romans 1:21-22**). They allowed themselves to be deceived into thinking that confidence and hope was in the material world and that this was the end game, “I do not need a thing”.

The world became bigger; Jesus became smaller and became a part of their world, not the Master of it. From this perspective, it’s not surprising that their trust in the world was greater than their trust in Jesus. When we see Jesus as a part of our world that depends on us, we demonstrate our blindness to the greatness of God.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Read **John 15:15**. Who is Jesus to you?

Read **Proverbs 27:5-6**. What is Jesus doing for the Laodicean’s? What is He doing for you?

What are some ways or things that can cause a close relationship to grow tepid? Why does the world seem to pull you away from God? What seems to happen/or not happen when you drift?

Is there a specific situation where there is role reversal? Where you think/act as if God is a part of something you create rather than you being a part of something He creates?

GRACE

Revelations 3:18-20 (NIV) ⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

God never leaves you where He finds you. When we are faithless, He is always faithful. He tells us to get everything from Him and then we will have everything we need. He invites us to open ourselves to Him and to spend quality time with Him; this is the solution! In Biblical times, sharing a meal was a

meaningful and honored event. Not rushed, but enjoyed as the participants used the time to get to know each other and bond. This is what Jesus is saying: *Get to know me, get to know me all over again. Let me pour out my life into yours.* More than all the really good sermons, more than all the books and small groups, more than the counselors and advisors, spending time in the Presence of God will change everything. Doing and leveraging all these things will only be accelerated when you do them with God. You will find your focus shift off yourself and onto God. The world will look very different when you are with God. Problems, burdens, priorities, even bondage to sin are shifted, lifted off your shoulders as you are empowered by the one who overcame the world (read **John 16:33**).

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

At the core of sin is self-centeredness and the antidote is time with God. Is there a specific self-centeredness that you want to take to God? What is keeping you from investing time with God, going to His *tent of meeting*?

Read **Psalm 22:3**. God inhabits the praises of His people. Is this a practice or a lifestyle of yours? What does this do? If it's a practice; how does your life change when you don't practice? If you started the practice, what do you think the changes would be?

ACTIVATION

Our kick-starter this week is to spend time with God. For many, this may seem impossible. Good thing God is in the business of impossible. Start somewhere, anywhere, and ask God for more, trust that when you give God what you have, He will multiply it. Partner with someone else to help each other carve out some time. Start your time with praises for His Goodness. He always shows up.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Fight the inclination to sink into guilt and shame. **Revelations 3:19** reminds us that God loves us and that is why He disciplines us. Instead, celebrate as the people in **Nehemiah 8:11-12** because you have understood and are back on the right path.

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

Has God been prompting you to lean out over your skies a bit? Have you had a desire to write, but not sure how to start to scratch that kind of itch? This may be your chance. We are currently looking to expand our team of writers. If you have experience, or no experience, writing studies or devotionals... it's not a big deal – Let God guide your fingers. If you would like to investigate this a bit more please contact me at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

REFERENCES