

## Becoming a Fire Starter

Learning how to get on fire, stay on fire and spread the fire of the LORD!

## Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank all the people that helped pray for the success of this book. Thanks to Pastor Tim Stege for helping me to edit this book. Finally, thanks and God bless to all those who support Soldiers for God ministry so that this book can be produced.

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the wisdom and knowledge to put in writing what he has shown me through my walk with Him. Thank you Jesus for saving me and setting me on fire with the baptism of Your Holy Spirit.

## Introduction

What is a fire starter? A fire starter is a person that's on fire for God and helps others catch on fire for God as well!

What does it mean to be on fire for God? It means to be totally consumed by God's presence in your life, where it's all about Him and nothing else matters except pleasing God through your words and deeds and helping others do the same.

Are you a person that is hungering after the fire of God in your life? Are you attempting to be a person that is zealous for as well as obedient to His Word? If you are, get ready to be set on fire by the Holy Spirit and stay on fire by reading and applying the information that's in this book. Because there is one thing you don't want to happen in your life and that is getting on fire for God and then letting the fire die down.

A lot of people say that someone is on fire for God only to find out later down the road the person they said was on fire for God fell back into their old ways even more than before. People also say they are on fire for God, but then something happens, whether it be trials or temptations, and they fall back into their old sinful lifestyle as well and now all they have is their memory of the past when they used to be on fire for God. Why is this happening to people in the church today?

This is what this book you are about to read is going to answer; it is also going to show you how to get on fire for God and stay on fire for God—as well as spread the fire you have to other people for the glory of God.

## The Author's Testimony

For fifteen years of my life I attended church off and on. At church I would go through the motions and even sing in the choir; however, outside of church I was a completely different person. I physically abused my wife, I cheated on her, I treated my kids horribly, I had five crooked businesses, and I was filled with pride and anger. I was violent, fighting anyone who even gave me a hint of attitude—once I pushed my own father through a wall. I was a scammer, a liar, a thief, and an adulterous person who used to party several times a week, getting drunk out of my mind. My wife was a fortune teller and I often conspired with her to con her customers.

The worst part of all this is I thought I was a Christian because I used to go to church and put a little money in the offering. I used to look at people in church and say to myself, "man I want what they have"; I didn't understand it—I went to church, I believed in Jesus, but why wasn't I excited like they were, why couldn't I get involved in the worship like they did, why didn't I have the zeal they had, why am I not on fire for God like them?

I really thought I was a Christian so I should have had what they had. One day, in October of 2004, I started to realize why I didn't have what they had. My mother in-law came in town and she said to me "Anthony you can go to church, you can pray, you can fast, and you can sing in the choir but if you are not in the Word of God it is all meaningless."

Then she gave me a Bible book store address and told me to go and buy a bible, so I listened and respected what she said because she was a person that preached Christianity with her mouth shut. What do I mean by saying that? She lived Christianity—not just talked about it. I used to treat her daughter horribly but she never argued with me, she never said anything negative to me, the only thing she did was pray for me. So that day I went and bought my first Bible, a New Living Translation. It was a Bible that can be read through in a year and it was an easy to understand Bible.

That day I started reading. I started in the Gospel of John, and in a few days I realized that I really wasn't a Christian and if I was to die I would have gone to Hell (Galatians 5:19). I also realized God's grace and love for my life and for the world (John 3:16). I also realized why I wasn't like the other people in the church who appeared to be passionately on fire for God; it was because of my sinful lifestyle and my unwillingness to obey His Word.

I started reading the Bible every day and in one year I read the whole Bible cover to cover. In that year God delivered me from pride, anger, bitterness, adultery, lust,

drinking, smoking, slander, gossiping, lying, scamming, witchcraft, and cheating. I gave up all the crooked businesses!

In that year I started hosting Bible studies in the basement of my house. In 2004 it started with about 15 people. We were set on fire; it was like the day of Pentecost with the disciples in the upper room! Since then until now, 2011, it has grown into a full-blown ministry with the Church of God. The Church of God denomination has given us a building; the building they gave us is the church I grew up in. I am now the pastor of the church I grew up in! Only God can do that.

My point of telling you a part of my testimony is this—God can change anyone if they are willing to be changed. Jesus said "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). If God can change my life He can change anyone's; if you allow the Holy Spirit to move in your life through the Word of God that you are going to read in this book you will be set on fire by God and your life will never be the same!

John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

I am going to teach you through the Word of God how to be baptized by FIRE so you can become a FIRE starter in your family, in your friends' lives, and in your ministry!

## Chapter 1: When God Answers with Fire

When you look at the story of Cain and Abel you will discover the first offering unto the Lord. There were actually two offerings, but only one was acceptable to God.

### Genesis 4:3-8

After some time Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD. Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it."

Then Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out in the fields." When they were out

in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.

### The Difference Between Cain and Abel

If you notice in the story, Cain brought some of his harvest while Abel brought the best he had. One was a farmer, one was a Shepherd; they each brought what they had from their labors, but one gave the best while the other merely gave some. Why didn't God accept it? The answer might be that God cursed the ground because Adam had disobeyed God's Word.

### Genesis 3:17

And he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you."

This is just like us today. We try to give God some of our lives but not all and not the best. Incomplete obedience is total disobedience! Then we, like Cain, get upset at God and other people in the church because we are not receiving our blessings and we are not being used and we say things like, "I don't understand why God is doing this to me," or, "why is that person getting blessed and I'm not?".

Could it be that you are not giving your all to the Lord? See, Cain gave God something that was from the ground that was previously cursed and God didn't accept it. You cannot live a life of disobedience like I was living prior to my born again experience and expect God to answer your prayers, bless you and set you on fire. The Bible says when you live in disobedience you fall in to the curse of the world. (Deuteronomy 28:15-20). You might say Jesus took all the curses of the world and the curse of sin; He did (see Galatians 3:13), but if you are not abiding in Jesus, living for Him, and obeying Him, you disqualify yourself from this (John 15) and you, like Cain, open the door to Satan (Genesis 4:7) and allow him to destroy you. You end up living a cursed, miserable, angry life because of disobedience to God.

Look what God says through the apostle Paul to the church:

### Romans 12:1-2

So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God---what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.

## The Meaning of Living Sacrifice

If you were to bring a sacrifice back then to the temple the priest would take the animal and usually cut the neck, meaning the animal is not coming back. So to present yourself as a living sacrifice means to constantly die to self on an every day level—it means to constantly crucify the flesh and not give in to the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life (1 John 2:16-17).

When you want to live a life like that then you will know the will of God and then you will be pleasing to Him and then God will accept your offering which is your reasonable act of service!

What does the story have to do with fire? Well, when you would bring a sacrifice to the priests they would put it on the altar and burn it. Before the tabernacle or the temple was built and established God would accept people's offerings by sending fire from heaven to consume it. Some theologians and scholars believe the reason Cain knew God didn't accept His offering is because God didn't send fire from heaven to consume it. They believe God sent fire from heaven to consume Abel's offering and that is how Cain knew God did not accept his offering.

## Biblical Examples of God's Fire

### Gideon, the Mighty Man of Valor

His story is in the book of Judges. God called Gideon to go against the enemies of Israel. The problem was he was scared and in doubt but he soon realized God was with Him and He presented the Lord an offering:

Judges 6:19-22

So Gideon went into his house and cooked a young goat and used a bushel of flour to make bread without any yeast. He put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, brought them to the LORD's angel under the oak tree, and gave them to him.

The angel told him, "Put the meat and the bread on this rock, and pour the broth over them." Gideon did so.

Then the LORD's angel reached out and touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick he was holding. Fire came out of the rock and burned up the meat and the bread. Then the angel disappeared.

Gideon then realized that it was the LORD's angel he had seen, and he said in terror, "Sovereign LORD! I have seen your angel face-to-face!"

God accepted his offering with FIRE!

Elijah, the Powerful Man of God

In the story we are going to look at, Israel was living in idolatry, worshipping the false god called Baal. This god was worshipped because they believed he was a god of increase and plenty. Sometimes we get like the Israelites—we think we have to do our own thing to be provided for, so we scam, steal, and connive to get what we want, which is idolatry. We worship money, and Jesus said we have a choice—either serve God or money, you cannot serve both! The Israelites should have remembered that one of the names of God is Jehovah-jireh, the Lord our Provider (Genesis 22:14).

Next time remember that name before you fall for idolatry and serve money!

In the story, you have Elijah challenging the wicked Queen Jezebel's 450 false prophets of Baal in an old western-style showdown to see who is the true God:

1 Kings 18:21-24

Elijah went up to the people and said, "How much longer will it take you to make up your minds? If the LORD is God, worship him; but if Baal is God, worship him!" But the people didn't say a word.

Then Elijah said, "I am the only prophet of the LORD still left, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. Bring two bulls; let the prophets of Baal take one, kill it, cut it in pieces, and put it on the wood---but don't light the fire. I will do the same with the other bull. Then let the prophets of Baal pray to their god, and I will pray to the LORD, and the one who answers by sending fire---he is God." The people shouted their approval.

I would really strongly suggest you read the whole chapter of 1 Kings 18, it is a really good story; but to get to the main point Elijah tells them "you built an altar I'll build an altar and whoever the true God is will send down fire to consume the offering." Elijah waits for them to get their offering and put it on the altar, then he starts taunting them, suggesting that their god is not home or is asleep. The people tried everything—they prayed to the false god, they danced, they cut themselves, they shouted—nothing happened. Then Elijah called to the people:

1 Kings 18:30-39

Then Elijah said to the people, "Come closer to me," and they all gathered around him. He set about repairing the altar of the LORD which had been torn down. He

took twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes named for the sons of Jacob, the man to whom the LORD had given the name Israel.

With these stones he rebuilt the altar for the worship of the LORD. He dug a trench around it, large enough to hold about four gallons of water.

Then he placed the wood on the altar, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the offering and the wood." They did so, and he said, "Do it again"---and they did. "Do it once more," he said---and they did. The water ran down around the altar and filled the trench.

At the hour of the afternoon sacrifice the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done all this at your command. Answer me, LORD, answer me, so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and that you are bringing them back to yourself."

The LORD sent fire down, and it burned up the sacrifice, the wood, and the stones, scorched the earth and dried up the water in the trench.

When the people saw this, they threw themselves on the ground and exclaimed, "The LORD is God; the LORD alone is God!"

You may notice in the story that Elijah rebuilt the altar of the LORD. It is time for us to realize it is not only about praying, dancing, and shouting– it is about rebuilding in your life what God wanted from the beginning, a person that will lay down their life and sacrifice all for Him! When you do that people will notice God's fire in your life and they will return to the LORD as the people in the story did. They also caught the false prophets and killed every one of them. It is time for us to stand out like Elijah did; God has not called us to blend in, He has called us to stand out!

When you do this God will answer with FIRE!

King Solomon

In this story King Solomon just finished building the temple of the LORD and he is dedicating it to God; this is where the offerings were to be brought. He prays in chapter six that God will live in the temple, that God will help His people, He will hear their prayers, and when the people mess up if they will repent He will forgive them and restore them.

Look what happens when you get to chapter seven:

2 Chronicles 7:1-5

When King Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices that had been offered, and the dazzling light of the LORD's presence filled the Temple. Because the Temple was full of the dazzling light, the priests could not enter it.

When the people of Israel saw the fire fall from heaven and the light fill the Temple, they fell face downward on the pavement, worshiping God and praising him for his goodness and his eternal love. Then Solomon and all the people offered sacrifices to the LORD. He sacrificed 22,000 head of cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings. And so he and all the people dedicated the Temple.

If you keep reading you will see that the altar was not big enough to hold all the sacrifices that King Solomon gave to God, so they had to use the temple courts! This is what we need to realize: Solomon's temple no longer stands, but remember the Bible says we are the temple of God! Read the following passages:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory.

There is no longer a Levitical priesthood to take our offerings of sacrifice, but the Bible says we are a royal Priesthood!

1 Peter 2:9-10

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

We Are the Complete Worship System

There is no more bringing your sacrifice to the temple because Jesus Christ was the supreme offering unto God! As Christ was a sacrifice we should also live a life of sacrifice because the Bible says we are the sacrifice, as the Apostle Paul writes: "So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer" (Romans 12:1).

So we are the temple, the priest, and the sacrifice!



We are the whole worship system! So where is the fire?

Because there is no worship, if there isn't any fire!

Like Solomon we should see fire and God's presence fill our temples. When Solomon presented his offering, God answered and accepted it with FIRE!

### Conclusion

If you look at the stories of Abel, Gideon, Elijah, and King Solomon, you will notice their lives were pleasing unto God and God answered their prayers and accepted their offerings and He answered with FIRE! When your life is not pleasing to God you will not see the fire and praise in your life.

So the question you need to ask yourself is are you pleasing unto God?

If you say no, well praise God! You're reading the right book! If you apply what you read you will become set on fire by God's presence and you too will become a fire starter. If you don't apply it you will live a life like Cain, unaccepted, destroyed by the enemy, angry and jealous of people who are on fire for God and you will live in regret! It is time for you to start living the life God called you to live—accepted, redeemed, set free and blessed!

To a true Christian it shouldn't be a choice. Read the next chapter and I'll explain...