



Understanding FIRE



Fire is often spoken of in the context of caution because of its capacity to burn and destroy. However, fire does many other things for us in the natural that aren't destructive. It's a source of illumination in darkness, warmth in the cold, a necessity for preparing cooked food and sterilizing items for health purposes and so much more.

Likewise in the spiritual realm, fire isn't only about destruction and punishment. It purges, purifies, cleanses, reveals our works, equips and keeps us connected to the Lord and so much more.

This series we're exploring different types of spiritual fire and we pray that the Holy Spirit will give us revelation and understanding about the type of fire we need to have or are currently experiencing in our lives.



Day 1 Purification

'The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' Psalms 12:6

When precious metals are mined, they don't look anything like the beautiful, finished product we purchase in stores. Rather they come out of the ground dirty and mixed with other substances and ores and have to go through a process called cupellation. During this process the metals are treated under very high temperatures and have controlled operations to separate noble metals, like gold and silver, from base metals, like lead etc. Two things we should note about this process: first is that gold/silver must go through this process for the unwanted aspects to come out; second is that the refiner controls the temperature as the goal isn't to destroy the metal but to bring out its true value.

'...For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver...'
Malachi 3:2-3

During this process, the refiner is looking to remove what doesn't belong in the precious metal. Likewise when we go through a purification process, the fire isn't meant to damage us but to separate us from the things in our hearts that need to go. We are precious to God, but there are things in our lives that aren't allowing our full value emerge and these things have to be taken away. Unlike metal we aren't subjected to physical fires or heat, rather there's spiritual 'heat' applied on parts of our lives.

Just as the lower value metals were mixed with the more precious metals, we also have things in our lives that keep us functioning beneath the level we should be as children of God. So God sits as a refiner removing these things a bit at a time using controlled heat. Which means we will not be destroyed by the process but come out of it better. This is why we may go through a period that feels quite intense, however as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide us, we come out better. This doesn't mean purification feels good, far from it. But the version of us that emerges will often look very little like who we were before we allowed it to work in us.

Prayer: Lord help me recognise when you're purifying me and help me cooperate with the process so I come out better.



Day 2

Test our Works

Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 1 Corinthians 3:13

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

Yesterday we looked at how God purifies us so the best in us can come out. Today we're looking at the impact of fire on our works, meaning whatever we do for the Lord. We're not saved by works, but we are rewarded for whatever we do to participate in the expansion of God's kingdom in whatever sphere we are in.

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:23-24

“Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.” Philippians 2:3-5 NLT

Anything we set out to do should be with the mindset of serving Jesus. This mindset shifts our perspective from focusing only on ourselves and what we can get from the people we interact with to what Jesus would have us do - regardless of how it makes us look or feel. This takes grace, maturity and a willingness to put the Lord's agenda ahead of our personal agendas. While people may see what we do, the Lord sees the heart with which we did it. Did we grumble, gossip and complain? Were we resentful? Was our focus only on ourselves? His fire tests these and so much more and He rewards us accordingly.

God is just and fair and so His rewards will always be commensurate to the quality of the works. This understanding should give us reason to pause and reflect on how we're building our lives, families, careers, businesses, etc. Is it based on guidance from the Holy Spirit or are we just doing our own thing? Will what we've been building stand the fire test?

Prayer: Lord, please teach me how to build in a way that will please you in all ways.



Day 3 Transformation

“And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it... A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.” Leviticus 6:12-13

The two greatest things that can happen to a believer are having passion for God and an active prayer life and both need the fire on our altar. There’s a direct correlation between the fire on our altar and our desire for the things that matter to God. This fire acts as fuel to keep us pursuing our relationship with God, engaging in spiritual exercises and continuous transformation as we get closer to Him.

“Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” Psalms 104:4

'I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!' Revelation 3:15-16

Nothing fire touches ever remains the same. Fire can't be ignored as it has the power to ignite things around it. As we are on fire for God, we also ignite the things and people around us. But it's critical we understand that the first place for transformation is in our own lives. It's who we become that we project on to others and our environment. Where there's no fire and nothing changes in us, nothing will change around us.

As we engage in society, we are meant to act as flames of fire, bringing both illumination and transformation as God's ministers because wherever a believer shows up, the kingdom of God has shown up. Imagine walking onto a field with lots of dry wood in different sections and you light up your own section. The fire may not heat up the entire field, but those who get close to you will get warm. Now imagine a person getting close to your fire takes a burning piece of your wood and uses it to ignite another section and that keeps happening. It's just a matter of time before the entire field is ablaze.

But our capacity to transform externally is limited to the amount of internal transformation we have gone through. If our fire is weak, we barely have enough spiritual energy to keep ourselves going and not only will our impact be limited, more dangerously we run a very high risk of becoming lukewarm.

Prayer: Lord help me to stay on fire for You. Let my life continuously be transformed by You.

Day 4 Illumination

'Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.' Psalms 119:105

Fire brings illumination to dark places. The stronger the fire, the more light shows up in the place. God's word isn't just text, there's a fire in it that lights up our spirits and minds and this light gives us direction. It's the light of the word that lets us know who God is, how to know Him, who we are, how to relate with others and how to walk in victory.

Interesting that the lamp is at the feet and not in the hand. This means that as we walk in light, our path gets clearer with each step we take. Imagine walking in total darkness and not knowing where to go or what to do? There will certainly be a lot of confusion.

'The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like total darkness. They have no idea what they are stumbling over.' Proverbs 4:18-19

For our paths to keep shining brighter, it means the light shining along the way keeps getting stronger. No one receives illumination by God's word casually or by accident. It's often the result of time consciously spent in the word. Its during this time that the Holy Spirit is able to bring the truth of that word into our hearts and minds and show us the practical application of the word. As we receive this light our perspectives are altered to see things from God's point of view. Our decision-making process changes and we start taking actions that will draw us closer to God's light and then we see even clearer.

There are things we will face in life that may cause us to stumble if we don't have the illumination from God's perspective. Opportunities and challenges alike both have the capacity to derail us if we don't subject them to the light of God's word. So as we go through the days, especially in times like this where the world is full of confusion and instability at all levels, let's be intentional about letting God shine His light on our path by stoking the fire in our lamps through His word.

Prayer: Lord, let Your word be my guide, light my path through Your word and help me to handle the issues of life from Your perspective.

Day 5 Character Revealer

'...As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand.' Acts 28:3

The context of this verse is that Paul and his shipmates were shipwrecked on the island of Malta on a cold, rainy day and the natives built a fire to help the shipwrecked men them warm. To keep the fire going Paul (and I'm sure other men also) added sticks they'd gathered to stoke the fire. Unknown to Paul, there was a poisonous snake in the bunch of sticks he carried which was driven out by the heat of the fire.

This tells us that things cannot stay hidden where there's fire because like the snake, the heat of the fire drives them out. If this is what happens with external fire, consider what happens when as believers are the carrier of fire (Ps 104:4). As that fire burns within us, we start seeing that some things show up that we probably may not have known were in or around us because the heat of the fire won't allow them to remain hidden.

'Then Simon himself believed and was baptized... began following Philip wherever he went ... '(Peter said) Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.' Acts 8:13,22-23

There may be people around us – and maybe even things within us – that aren't what they appear to be and it'll take fire for the true nature to come out. Simon was a well-known sorcerer who after being baptized by Philip followed him everywhere, however he hadn't received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When Peter showed up to baptize people in the Holy Spirit, he quickly discerned what was really going on in Simon's heart. Peter saw what others hadn't because the fire he carried within revealed the truth of Simon's character to him. We need this fire in our lives as we live in a world where things are rarely what they appear to be, so we need to be able to see clearly what's really going on behind the scenes.

Prayer: Lord let Your fire reveal to me the true character of those I surround myself with.

Day 6 Fire of the Holy Spirit

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 2:2-4

When the disciples received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they received empowerment to become like Jesus and do the mighty works Jesus said we would do. Likewise when we receive this baptism, the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in us removing impurities, clearing out demons from around us and equipping us to transform our environment. But most importantly this fire keeps us hungry for more of God.

“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” Revelation 4:5

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

Isaiah 11:2

If we go through the book of Acts, we see that the disciples were constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit, which tells us that in addition to the initial baptism, that fire must be kept burning constantly. As our hearts are set on fire to keep burning for the Lord, we're drawn to His presence and empowered with spiritual fuel for the journey ahead and all it entails.

We need this fire to keep burning when the environment we're in looks nothing like what we're declaring at this time. We need the fire when we face obstacles that threaten to overwhelm and overcome us. We need the fire when we partner with the Lord to draw people to His kingdom as empty words alone cannot achieve this. We need this fire as we develop in the things of God and our spirits mature and responsibility increases so we don't burn out. We need this fire to help us shine as light in a dark, confused world. We cannot succeed in this journey without the fire of the Holy Spirit burning within us.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, fill me afresh with Your fire daily. Keep me burning for the Lord all my days.



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