

“This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.”

(2 Timothy 1:6, NLT)

Paul was commanding this young pastor to reach within himself and to begin to rekindle, or kindle anew, the fire in his heart

In other words, Timothy needed to open his heart, look inside to determine the condition of his inward fire

- Then take action to stir up the gift of God on the inside
- It would not happen accidentally
- He would have to be intentional and proactive to keep the fire burning

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6, NKJV)

- “*stir up*” – the original language refers to repeating an earlier action or doing something again
- To be enthusiastic, fervent, passionate, vigorous, wholehearted, or zealous

You and I are called to constantly stir up the embers and fuel the fire so we will remain a blazing inferno for Jesus

- Do you sometimes feel like all that’s left is a few glowing embers?
- Perhaps even those embers are dying out and have become cold

The fact is that when the fuel of any sort is depleted, fire will eventually go out

The Road to Emmaus

“So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.”

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

“And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?””

(Luke 24:15, 27, 32, NKJV)

- “burn” – to ignite set on fire, or be consumed by fire

Fire Purifies, Illuminates and Empowers

Fire is a Purifier

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.” (Psalm 119:9, NKJV)

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3, NKJV)

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1, NKJV)

When the Bible is given entrance into the heart and acted upon, by faith, it takes on the characteristic of fire as it begins to do its purifying work in us

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.””

(Matthew 3:11–12, NKJV)

- We must choose to yield to the fiery effect of God’s word working in us
- It is not always comfortable
- It blazes so strong that it incinerates those things that are displeasing to His Spirit and need to be removed

Fire Illuminates

“Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”

(Psalm 119:105, NKJV)

“The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” **(Psalm 119:130, NKJV)**

When the word of God is heeded, embraced, and believed, it continuously shines its brilliant light unto the dark, murky places of our lives

- It brings understanding and enlightenment
- It irradiates ignorance and dispels spiritual darkness

The Bible provides freedom for the mind, strength, and resolve for the will, healing for the body, vision for a bright future, and light for the path ahead

- The Bible can bring new life to hearts
- Establish an order to confused minds
- Refresh souls that are being rocked by emotion

When the word of God is believed on and decreed from a person's mouth it has a life-changing, yoke-destroying effect, that even the devil cannot deny!

Fire Empowers

Even as fire empowers the mightiest engines to operate, so the Word of God supernaturally energizes and empowers us to rise above ourselves and master whatever challenge we are facing

“Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, ‘‘What are you doing?’’’ (Ecclesiastes 8:4, NKJV)

“My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word.” (Psalm 119:28, NKJV)

- God's Word energizes a person who would otherwise feel physically or emotionally weak
- God's word will impart supernatural strength into our lives

“Ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are merely playing at Bible study; and therefore ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are mere weaklings, when they might be giants.”

R.A. Torey – American evangelist, writer, pastor (1856 – 1928)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

“He was in the beginning with God.”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1, 2, 14, NKJV)

- Jesus is the Word made flesh
- When we allow the word of God to blaze on the inside of us we are literally coming ablaze with Christ Himself
- We should continually assess how we are honoring or dishonoring the Word of God
- What kind of space am I making for the Word (Christ)?
- How well am I obeying what the word says

“If you love Me, (you will) keep My commandments.”

(John 14:15, NKJV)

- It is impossible to separate the word from Jesus
- How you treat the Bible is a reflection of your intimacy with Him

If you neglect the Bible because you don't think you have time for it you are actually saying you don't have time for Jesus Himself

- Jesus is the word!
- He was conceived by the Spirit in the womb of Mary as she received the Word of God into her heart – **Luke 1:38**
- He was the living Word made manifest – **John 1:14**
- He launched His ministry with the Word of God – **Luke 4:16**

Everywhere Jesus went he spoke the word with power and authority

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

(Matthew 4:23, NKJV)

- “teaching” – refers to systematic teaching of scripture
- The Master Teacher seized every opportunity to open the Scriptures and nourish souls and spirits
- His entire public ministry was devoted to flooding men’s souls with the words of His Father
- This was exactly the model followed by the disciples in the book of Acts
- They continued to do what they saw Jesus do
- Therefore, since Jesus focused on the Word of God with miraculous results, the apostles had the same results

“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” **(Mark 16:20, NKJV)**

- Jesus dedicated Himself fully to the Word and to delivering it to others
- The Apostles did the same thing in the Early Church

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

(Acts 2:42, NKJV)

- “steadfastly” – to persevere consistently
- Constant diligence and effort that never gives up

The biblical pattern of the book of Acts also reveals that if we give the Word of God a preeminent position in our lives, we also put ourselves in a position for the miraculous to take place

The Word Produces Wonders

Never forget that the book of Acts is not merely a history book

“Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” (Acts 2:43, NKJV)

Signs and wonders occurred concurrently with the early believers’ intense focus on the anointed proclamation of biblical truth

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:31, NKJV)

- “shaken” – to shake, teeter, wobble, or reel
- The physical building and all those inside it shook, teetered, wobbled, and reeled as the power of God manifested
- This is not just a few people falling under the power of God
- An entire building was affected

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.” (Acts 6:7–8, NKJV)

As the Word of God spread not only was the number of the saints added to, but there were also great signs and wonders among the people

The pattern in the book of Acts shows us that God's miraculous power is unleashed when His Word is declared by the anointing of the Holy Spirit

Satan knows that if he can coax believers to back off the Bible and stop declaring it with power and authority, the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit will diminish

- One always follows the other
- The anointed declaration of Scripture always goes hand in hand with signs and wonders following

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV)

- God's word is a two-edged sword
- It will both comfort and confront you
- God upholds all things by the Word of His power
– **Hebrews 1:3**
- Do you regularly fuel yourself on words of healing, wisdom, and prosperity from God's word?
- God's answers belong to anyone who will open his or her Bible and just read it
- You won't get this from listening to preacher after preacher or reading book after book

Not only was the early church addicted to the Word of the Lord, but they were also steadfast in prayer – **Acts 2:42**

- It was a priority to them
- They were intensely focused on and completely committed to prayer

They understood that when they called out to God He would hear them and show them mighty answers beyond their natural understanding

Likewise, if we are going to see God move mightily among us today, it is essential that we call out to Him in fervent, faith filled prayer

“No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here [in prayer], we fail everywhere.”
– Leonard Ravenhill, Prophetic Minister, Evangelist, Author

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (**Jeremiah 33:3, NKJV**)

- To call unto God is a reference to passionate prayer
- If we do our part in prayer, God will show us great and mighty things
- The task of calling out to God is the glorious assignment given to every believer and the Church as a whole

Early Christians depended on the power of God, and they regularly called on Him to move among them

As a result, they experienced the power of God on such a miraculous level that the forces of darkness were driven back

When we study the book of Acts, we find that the Early Church had no machinery or equipment on which to rely

- Realizing their total dependency of God
- They pressed into prayer
- The result was the power of God enabling them to take the Gospel to the ends of the known world in that day

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” (Acts 1:14, NKJV)

For ten consecutive and concentrated days, those followers of Jesus prayed and waited for the Promise of the Father to be poured out on them

- When the Day of Pentecost came they were filled with power and the baptism of the Holy Spirit

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” (Acts 3:1, NKJV)

- As they approached the temple the healing power of God manifest through them
- A lame man was healed
- When we are devoted to consistent, passionate prayer the healing power of God manifests in our lives

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

(Acts 4:31, NKJV)

- Prayer is a place
- A place where the saints gather together
- Prayer will give us boldness in speaking the Word of God

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” *(Acts 8:14–17, NKJV)*

- They called unto God and He responded by showing them great and mighty things!

“a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.” *(Acts 10:2, NKJV)*

As he was praying the Lord sent an angel that directed him to send for the Apostle Peter, who would bring him and his family the message of the Gospel

- He obeyed
- He and his family received salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- God gloriously moved among them!

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.” (Acts 12:5, NKJV)

- They prayed without ceasing
- They called to God, and He answered
- He sends an angel to Peter’s prison cell
- He miraculously unlocks Peter’s chains and opens the prison doors, setting him free

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”” (Acts 13:2, NKJV)

- Here we find the elders of the church committed to intense prayer
- The gift of prophecy is released
- Barnabas and Saul are released to take the Gospel to distant lands

From the beginning to the end of the Book of Acts, we see example after example of believers calling out to God, and God clearly and powerfully answers their prayers

- Whenever fervent prayers are offered from the heart, the results are always mighty

If we want New Testament results we must do what the early believers did as they continued steadfastly in prayer

The apostles learned to pray from the example they saw in Jesus

“We are not told that Jesus ever taught His disciples to preach; but He taught them to pray.” – Evangelist, D.L. Moody

Jesus often withdrew from the company of others to spend time with the Father in prayer at any time of the day or night

- It was the centerpiece of His ministry
- The disciples replicated what they saw Jesus do
- They made prayer a daily discipline in their own lives
- They passed this prayerful emphasis on to the Early church

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

(Acts 2:42, NKJV)

- *“Prayers”* – used 127 times in the New Testament
- Most common word translated as prayer
- Also used in **Ephesians 6:18** *“praying always with all prayer”*
- The word depicts something that is upfront, close, or face to face
- It pictures intimate contact
- Also describes a wish, desire, prayer, or vow

Originally used to depict a person who made some kind of vow to God because of a need or desire in their life

- They would vow to give something of great value to God in exchange for a favorable answer to prayer

We see a perfect example of this in **1 Samuel 1** in the story of Hannah, the mother of Samuel

- She deeply desired a child but was unable to become pregnant
- Out of desperation and anguish she prayed a solemn vow to God

“Then she made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.””

“Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him from the LORD.””

(1 Samuel 1:11, 19–20, NKJV)

In exchange for receiving the precious gift of her son, Hannah vowed that her young boy would be devoted to the work of the ministry

- This was frequent in the Old Testament
- It was a way to offer a gift of thanksgiving in advance
- This was their way of releasing faith in the goodness of God

Quite often, before verbalizing his prayer a person would set up a commemorative altar and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving upon the altar

- Such offerings of thanksgiving were called “*votive offerings*”
- This was similar to a pledge

It was a person’s promise to return to the altar and give an additional offering of thanksgiving, once the prayer was answered

The idea of sacrifice is also associated with this word for “*prayer*”

Portraying an individual who was willing to surrender everything he owned in exchange for the answer to his prayer

- A place of sacrifice and consecration built in the place of prayer
- A place in which a person entirely yields their life to the Lord

Although the Holy Spirit may convict us of things we need to surrender to His sanctifying power, He will never forcibly take things from us

- It is clearly a place of decision and consecration
- An altar where we freely commit our lives to God in exchange for the fullness of His life
- This shows us that God desires to more than just bless us
- He wants to change us
- This is so much more than offering a simple prayer request
- It is also an act of surrender, consecration, and thanksgiving

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NKJV)

“For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3, NLT)