

“Tending the Fire”

1/23/20 - Dustin Pennington

“Examination is Important”

Why: Man seeks a spotlight while God desires to get us under His searchlight

Luke 11:35-36 Make sure that the light you think you have is not really darkness. 36If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight is shining on you.”

This is a shot across the bow directed by Jesus: the strange dynamic of how faith gets hijacked by evil. We have to actively evaluate ourselves so we do not become an unwitting pawn for evil

~Passover / removing the Leaven

Leviticus 6:8-13 8The LORD said to Moses: 9“Give Aaron and his sons this command: ‘These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. 10The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. 11Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. 12The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. 13The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

~How many of you have or had wood stoves?

~They may cut back on your fuel bill, but they require lots of time and attention.

~Our modern world has put us out of touch with the basics

~In the Tabernacle it was the responsibility of the priests to tend the fire on the altar. (Important: Repeated 3 Times in scripture)a Priest

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3 Principles of Tending the Fire

1: Keep the fire Burning (9,12,13)

- The demand for perpetual fire upon the altar shows that God wants us to worship Him with consistent devotion and not sporadic enthusiasm.
- If we worship only when we "feel" like it, it really isn't worship... (Careful with music...)
- If Romans 12 is our model of worship, feelings will not produce "living sacrifices"

Illustration: Being “in love”

- No feeling can be relied upon to last in its full intensity or to last at all.
- Knowledge can last, habits can last, principles can last, feelings come and go
- Ceasing to be "in Love" does not mean ceasing to Love

"It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by the grace which both partners ask and receive from God." C.S. Lewis

"Being in Love first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being 'in love' was the explosion that started it all."

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but KEEP your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

“fervor” ζέω = zeo (To Boil Water)

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Example: Fire Fighting out West - Light a Bigger Fire
Principle: Areas of our life can burn wild... **Love is the GREAT conqueror of Lust.**

2: Keep the Fire Clean (10,11)

- Ashes keep a fire from burning cleanly.
- Ashes come from what will not burn completely in a fire.
- Ashes from a fire will not ascend upward / fall back down
- Ashes were to be taken outside the camp to be discarded. (11)
*The ashes in our fires come from sin, selfishness, etc...
- A fire will burn brightest and hottest when it is kept free from ashes.

Hebrews 12:28-29 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Example of the “ites” :

Deuteronomy 9:3 “Know therefore today that it is the LORD your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the LORD has spoken to you.

~Example of Achan (Joshua 7)

Example: In the Promised Land “ownership” of the land was eternal, “possession” was conditional.

3: Keep the Fire Fresh (12)

- The fire was to be tended daily because the sacrifices were to be offered daily in the morning and evening. (see Exodus 29:38-43)

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Leviticus 6:12 The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it.

- The wood was to be supplied for the fire every morning (12).

Psalm 59:16 "But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble."

- We need to keep our spiritual fervor fresh by fueling it every day with "wood" Word. Prayer. Worship. Service. Fellowship.

Jude 20–21 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

- Emphasis on the Holy Spirit
- He brings relationship and resources
- It can be wild

Conclusion:

The fire on the altar, the eternal flame on which sacrifices were offered to God, was to be tended with care.

- Other duties could be postponed.
- Other tasks could be deferred.

But the fire on the altar was to be kept burning because it was the visible symbol of God's presence among his people.

- This sacred fire, where God's people offered their gifts and rededicated their lives, was not to go out.
 - How's the fire of God on your altar today?
 - Is it burning? Is it clean? Is it fresh?

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A Dangerous Prayer:

Isaiah 64:1-21 Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down! How the mountains would quake in your presence! 2As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil, your coming would make the nations tremble. Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame!