

Staying on Fire During Your Dry Season

You cannot begin a journey until you take the first step, yet many Christians are afraid to begin living the Spirit-filled life. But after you do start, how do you actually live this out, especially when the initial excitement has passed, the goose bumps have gone, and you have to face the reality that life is not always easy?

Many Christians make the mistake of basing their walk with God on feelings. I am not against feelings—I have wept in God’s presence, felt His overflowing joy, and danced in the aisles of the church when I was excited. But no matter how high I jump, how loud I shout or how much rapture I experience in my soul during a worship service, those feelings will not carry me through the rough seasons of life. At some point we all have to wash dishes, do laundry, take care of sick children and work long hours to feed our families. And at some time we have to battle sickness, resolve family conflicts, struggle through personal disappointments and face the death of friends and loved ones. Life is not always fun. And feelings never last as long as we’d like them to.

Thankfully the Holy Spirit is with us on the not-so-exciting days too. He walks with us through the mundane times; He is there on the bad days; He’s with us even on the days we’d rather forget. He is with us always. And the Holy Spirit does not abide with you figuratively, symbolically or remotely. He is not with you in an ethereal or intangible sense. His “presence” is not in quotation marks like it is in this sentence!

He is actually with you, just as your closest friend would be if he were sitting beside you, talking to you and hugging you. *He is there*—and He is more real than any human being in your

life because He is God. And you can know His presence—not just in the sense of feeling something, but in resting in faith and trust. This is one of the great blessings of the indwelling Spirit. He is the giver of true peace that cannot be explained yet is more real than the warm blanket you snuggle in on cold nights.

Jesus often used the word “abide” to describe the unique reality of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence. In Greek *menó* means to remain continually; to endure and never perish; to continue to be present. Jesus was making it clear: The Holy Spirit is coming to live in you, and He is going to be with you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He is moving in with you, and He is never leaving!

This should be one of the most comforting truths to us; but many times we doubt God’s promise. I know many Christians who struggle to believe God is really there. Because they have experienced abandonment by parents, spouses or friends, they expect the Holy Spirit to desert them as well. But the Word of God tells us He will never leave us. And He does not just lie dormant. He does not sleep. He is not preoccupied with more important matters. The Spirit lives in us and actively works in us, even in the dry and difficult times when we don’t sense He is doing anything.

Never doubt the Spirit’s presence in your life; rather, seek to grow close in intimacy with Him. And when life’s challenges upset you, or when you are led into a valley of discouragement, monotony, or grief, press into the Holy Spirit’s presence so you know His nearness. Even in the driest wilderness the Spirit will open up a gushing well of peace, joy, hope, and assurance. {eoa}

*The preceding is an excerpt from **J. Lee Grady’s** book, Set My Heart on Fire (Charisma House, 2016). Copyright © 2016 by J. Lee Grady. All rights reserved.*

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