

The Temperature of Your Heart Determines Your Outcome

Just before the prophet Elisha died, he put Israel's king to a test. Elisha told Joash to take a bow and arrows. Then he put his hands on Joash's hands and asked him to shoot an arrow out the window as a prophetic sign of God's coming victory. "You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you have destroyed them," Elisha promised (see 2 Kings 13:17b, NASB 1995).

But then Elisha further tested Joash. He told him to take some of the arrows and strike the ground. Following those orders, Joash half-heartedly tapped the ground three times and stopped. But Elisha got angry. "You should have struck it five or six times. Then you would have stricken Aram until you had finished them," Elisha said in verse 19 (MEV). "Now you will strike Aram just three times."

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Elisha got angry with King Joash because he was apathetic, lacking in passion for the fight. He went through the religious motions that Elisha required, true, but he had no real fire in his heart. Because Joash was lukewarm, he lost the chance to see a complete victory on the battlefield.

The moral of this chapter is simple: Half-heartedness will keep you from success. The temperature of your heart will determine your outcome.

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This story convicts me to the core every time I read it because I know the Lord measures the temperature of my heart. He seeks the blazing fire of the Spirit, but there are times when I allow fear, compromise, discouragement or even weariness to quench my passion. What about you?

Paul told the Romans that Christians should be “fervent in spirit” (Rom. 12:11a). The word for “fervent” in the Greek, *zeo*, can mean “to be white hot, or to boil.” Scripture uses the same word to describe Elijah’s “fervent” prayer life in James 5:17. God doesn’t want us to be lukewarm or spiritually passive. He wants us to be so enthusiastic and excited about His kingdom that we set spiritual fires wherever we go.

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