

Preparing Your Heart for a Personal Revival

I lived in central Florida for more than 24 years. It is a land of flip-flops, swimsuits and water parks that stay open 365 days a year. The average temperature in Orlando in January is 71. In the summer a humid 95 degrees is fine with me.

But I have friends in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Rochester, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who endured the record-breaking polar vortex of 2014. Cold temperatures such as it produced had not been seen in more than two decades. It was -40 degrees in Minnesota in early January. The mercury hit -13 in Milwaukee. It was so cold in Chicago (-16) that the polar bear at the Lincoln Park Zoo was moved indoors!

When this deep freeze hit, I was reading the book of Romans, and verse 11 of chapter 12 jumped off the page. The apostle Paul told his followers that in order to please God they needed to be "fervent in spirit." The Greek word for *fervent* (zeó) means "to boil with heat." The message is clear. As Christians we have a responsibility to stay hot for God no matter how cold our spiritual environment is.

But how do you stay on fire for the Lord? How can you raise your spiritual temperature at a time when many people's faith today has gone from lukewarm to freezing? Do you want God to set your heart on fire? Would you like to have a life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit?

It is possible to have that kind of spiritual revival. But it doesn't just happen. There are some steps you must take to warm your heart, prepare it for a holy visitation and increase your spiritual hunger.

Get Back in the Word

Spiritual zeal is kindled in your heart when you hear God speak through the pages of the Bible. I'm not talking about casually reading daily devotionals with your eyes halfway open or halfheartedly skimming Bible verses on your phone. When you desperately dig into the Scriptures to find truth, you will say, as did the disciples who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus: "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was ... explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32).

The Word will set your heart ablaze. In fact, you cannot expect a life-changing encounter with God unless you open your Bible and seek Him in its pages. God invested a lot time and energy to give us His Word, and many people gave their lives so that you could have a copy of the Bible today. God has watched over His Word for centuries to preserve its message. It is His love letter to you. Please do not ignore it!

Stoke the Furnace of Private Prayer

Fires don't last long if you don't regularly pile wood on the flames. You should guard your quiet time with God as if your life depended on it. You cannot survive spiritually without regular communion with the Lord. Oswald Chambers put it bluntly: "Prayer is the vital breath of the Christian; not the thing that makes him alive, but the evidence that he is alive."

Maybe you have been away from God for some time. Maybe you have been in a spiritual desert because of failure or pain. Maybe you have not had personal communion with God for a while. Wherever you are in your walk with God, you can begin afresh right now by approaching Him and starting over. Just make an appointment with Him and keep it.

Praise God With Abandon

Sometimes the chill of discouragement, fear and anxiety can form icicles in our souls. The only way to melt the ice is to rejoice in the Lord. Are you going through an extended period

of heaviness or disappointment? Psalm 47:1 says: "Clap your hands, all you people! Shout to God with a joyful voice."

When you praise God with exuberance, new strength will arise. Make a decision that this year you will praise God in a more vocal, uninhibited way than ever before. Read through the book of Psalms and note how often this ancient hymnbook commands us to praise God with all our hearts. If you need help praising God, play a recording by one of your favorite Christian artists and sing along. {eo}

*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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