

Stop, Drop and Roll

I learned it in the third grade. At the time I considered it a scary thought, but fun to practice. "If you ever catch on fire," the big fireman wearing the shiny red hat told us, "Stop what you're doing, drop to the floor and roll. OK, let's all try it." That's when the action began. Our gymnasium was instantly transformed into an imaginary burning inferno. The boys screamed and fell over like they were being shot and the girls delicately got on their knees, then to the floor, and we all began to roll. The idea was this: If we ever found ourselves in a position where our clothes caught on fire, our response must be instinctive and immediate. There was no time to think. We must prepare today for a possible trial tomorrow.

Practicing my response was a valuable lesson. Though I didn't completely understand it, *stop, drop and roll* would prove to be an important response to cultivate. I learned it in the third grade; I got the chance to use it 25 years later.

The fire around me was hot. The more I tried to battle the flames, the more intense they seemed to grow. At times I wondered if I would survive the ordeal, but God's word to me was clear. "Think it not strange this fiery trial you are in, as though something strange were happening to you ... but rejoice" (See 1 Peter 4:12, 13).

I was in spiritual combat, a conflict like I had never experienced before and it felt like the fire of affliction was going to consume me. I wasn't physically on fire, but I was in the proverbial "fire of suffering" and it was painful. Everything in me wanted to run from this trial, but jumping out of the furnace into the flames did not sound like a good idea either. How could I be refined if I did not endure the test? On the other hand, how could I rejoice when it hurt so much?

That's when I remembered my childhood lesson, *stop, drop and roll*. Though my fire may have been one only in a spiritual sense, the response necessary to survive was the same. You see, our instinctive reactions to difficulties may not be the ones God wants us to have. They may in fact only increase our chances of being burned. Instead of relying on our carnal tendencies to persevere under trial, our mindsets and attitude toward suffering must be a cultivated and practiced defense.

Let's look more closely at the principles of *stop, drop and roll*.

Stop – The last thing we should do when we're caught on fire is run. Unfortunately, unless otherwise practiced, this is most people's first reaction. Our innate "fight or flight" mechanism is a powerful and natural response. However, running only makes things worse. The fire will spread faster with running because it feeds the flame with oxygen, exactly what the fire needs to exist. As a result, running increases the damage and inflicts greater wounds. Instead, the first thing to do is stop.

The same is true in a spiritual fire. Our natural response may be to run from our problems, to escape the pain by running in the fast lane of busyness and avoidance. But that reaction of fear and denial will work against us. If we keep operating in the flesh, struggling in the strength of our own might, we will only fuel the flames around us, perpetuating the fire and inflicting deeper wounds. On the contrary, we should stop running. Stop striving. Stop trying to control the heat of our circumstances ... and drop.

Drop – Assuming a position on our knees is the next best thing to do. When we find ourselves in the midst of the fiery furnace because of difficult circumstances, it's time to talk *real* to Jesus. Since He already knows what we are thinking and feeling, why not tell Him everything in prayer? We may even hear ourselves saying something that we did not realize was in

the depth of our hearts. Talking to God in prayer is one of the greatest privileges we have as His children. That's where we receive wisdom and courage to go on. It is in the place of prayer that we find peace for our troubled souls and rest for our battered minds.

When we drop to our knees, we are not accepting defeat or surrendering to the flames to be destroyed. Instead we are accepting His love and strength to overcome.

Roll – Finally, once you have spent time with the Lord in prayer, roll that burden off your shoulders and over on to His. Then refuse to take it back. God invites us to give Him our burdens, our cares, our fears and our confusion because He alone knows how to carry it. When we roll it over to Him, we will find out what it means to rejoice. The Lord's joy comes when we find His grace in suffering.

Have you been in the fire? Do you know what it is to feel the flames of affliction licking at your faith? Then maybe it's time to stop running from the refiner's fire and let it purge you. How? By practicing this simple response: *stop, drop and roll*.

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 8/20/12

This week *stop* and *drop* to your knees in prayer as a sign that you are accepting His love and strength to overcome any "fire" you are currently enduring. *Roll* your burdens onto Him and leave them there. Thank Him that as you roll those burdens onto Him you will be able to rejoice and gain strength *for the joy of the Lord is your strength*. As schools open across the country this week, pray for our children, youth and all those working toward their education. Continue to pray for the upcoming elections and ask God to direct you in the voting process. Remember Israel, the persecuted church and all those serving the Lord to expand His kingdom. Psalm 55:22; Neh.8:10

To enrich your prayer life and learn how to strategically pray

with power by using appropriate scriptures, we recommend the following sources by Apostle John Eckhardt: Prayers that Rout Demons, Prayers that Bring Healing, Prayers that Release Heaven on Earth and Prayers that Break Curses. To order any or all of these click here.