

The Holy Spirit's Fire Is Refining You

A curious thing happened after Moses constructed the ancient tabernacle in the Sinai desert. First, Aaron made sacrifices for the sins of the people; then fire fell from heaven and consumed the offering. Then, Leviticus 9:24b (NASB 1995) says, "when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces." And God told Moses that the priests were to keep this supernatural fire burning perpetually.

A similar thing happened when Solomon built a permanent temple in Jerusalem. After the construction was finished, Solomon prayed and dedicated the building to the Lord. Suddenly fire came from heaven and consumed the offerings. Second Chronicles 7:1 says "the glory of the Lord filled the house"—so much so that the priests fell on their faces and worshipped.

I hope you realize that when you became a believer in Christ, a similar miracle happened in your life. It may not have seemed as dramatic as what Moses or Solomon witnessed, but the coming of this glorious fire had the same impact on you. God sent a fire from heaven into your life when the Holy Spirit filled you. The Spirit, who is burning presence of God's holiness, came to dwell in you and to change you from the inside out.

When Moses saw God's glory, he had to put a veil over his face because he lived in the Old Covenant time, before Jesus sacrificed His life for our sin. Now, in this New Covenant age of grace, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says we can behold the glory of the Lord "with unveiled face"—and as a result we are "transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

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The Holy Spirit is working 24/7 to make you like Jesus. I hope you appreciate the different ways He is transforming you:

– **He is rebuilding you.** Just as Nehemiah rebuilt the ruined city of Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit reconstructs your life. Nehemiah actually means “Comforter,” a name Jesus used to describe the Spirit. You are under construction, and He has strategically placed orange cones and roadblocks in areas of your life. Let Him rebuild all your broken places!

– **He is teaching you.** The Holy Spirit, who is called “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13), knows how to bring us to maturity. He shines His supernatural light on the Bible and opens our minds to understand His truth. He allows us to hear His still, small voice inwardly. He reveals His mysteries so we can know Him intimately.

– **He is refining you.** The Holy Spirit is a fire, and He wants to burn up anything that does not resemble Christ. Like a smelter of gold, He melts us, skims off the toxic alloys and melts us again to remove all impurities. Don’t be afraid when the Spirit turns up the heat. Let Him remove the dross of pride, anger, lust, addiction, bitterness and anxiety.

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– **He is testing you.** One man builds with gold, silver and precious gems; another builds with wood, hay and stubble (see 1 Cor. 3:12-13). Both might look good on the outside, but the testing of the Lord proves what a man is made of. The Spirit’s relentless fire will test what you are building for God (and He will test your motives) so that only He will get the glory.

– **He is renewing you.** Titus 3:5 mentions the “renewing of the Holy Spirit,” and we can be thankful that He offers such a blessing. He does not anoint us once and then leave us to live on one jar of oil. The Spirit sends fresh anointing when we

are tired, poured out or discouraged. He opens up bottles of new wine and fills us with new joy. He pours the fresh oil of heaven on those who are desperate for more of His presence.

– **He is subduing your flesh.** We don't have to grit our teeth or trust our own willpower to overcome sin in our lives. We have the indwelling power of the Spirit to help us live holy lives. Romans 8:13 says we can put to death the deeds of the body "by the Spirit." He is like a warrior who plunders the enemy in our lives. We may feel weak in the face of temptation, but He has defeated the power of sin once and for all.

– **He is revealing His glory in and through you.** The apostle Paul reminded us that because we have the Spirit inside us, we are now beholding the glory of the Lord "as in a mirror." And the result: We "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Don't focus on your flaws. Fix your eyes on Jesus. When you focus on yourself, you will be disappointed; when you focus on Him, you will be transformed.

Embrace the Spirit's work inside you, and tend the fire carefully. Never quench the flame, and never let the coals grow cold from neglect.

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