

Fiery Hot For God: Part 1

By Todd Bentley

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Deep, raw, hunger for intimacy with God is only satisfied through expression. However, many find it difficult to express this desire or any other things of the heart. The psalmists did this very well, and I believe this is why the psalms are so popular. They not only provide us with models to follow, but they also inspire us to voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations. Psalms express heart cries, wonderings, longings, thanksgiving, and praise, and satisfy the innermost yearnings to do what we were created for, worship the king. They take us from the heights to the depths, and we can feel God Himself cry with us. It's as if the psalms give us a "kick start" because they help out emotions come to the surface as we identify with the cry of the Psalmists. With this in mind, let's examine two particular verses that were composed with great sensitivity by a priestly family, the sons of Korah. The first verse found in Psalm 42: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, the living God" (Ps. 42:1,2). The word pant means more than just breathing rapidly and heavily. It also means to yearn eagerly. 1 Do you yearn eagerly for God? Are you thirsty for the living God? The second verse found in Psalm 84:2 also describes an intense longing for God's presence. "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (emphasis mine).

Listen. It's time to know Him and be known by Him! God is issuing a personal invitation to you (Rev. 3:20). God is looking for a response. He is welcoming you to come into His presence to spend time with Him, alone, so that your love and passion for Him will reach new heights. If you are willing to say, "Yes," He will fan the flames of desire for intimacy with Him.

Pursuing God

The Holy Spirit revealed to me that when we really desire His presence, He will cause awesome things to happen and will release even those things we're not expecting. Isaiah the prophet said: "Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake as Your presence" (Is. 64:1). Yes! "Oh God, tear open the heavens and come down!" Isn't that what we all want?

The heavens opened over my own life in 1998, and God indeed caused great things to happen, things I hadn't expected, as well as things I'd asked for. Today, I carry my open heaven with me; I live and minister under an open heaven, and God continues to surprise me day-to-day. I believe God's favor came upon me because I pursued His presence and nothing more. I desired Him alone, above all else. I sought His presence, not the blessings His presence brought. Today, people often pursue God for increased benefits, and sometimes that's their motivation for their time in the secret place. However, that's not a hunger for God, that's a hunger for the fruit. Yes, there are many blessings in that place, but we'll only see the face of God and receive His kiss of love when we desire Him alone.

Rekindle the Fire

Perhaps God is revealing that your love relationship with Him is alive, spontaneous, and passionate. That's great! You might even be thinking how can I take that fire that I already have in my heart and make it an inferno? Alternatively, God may be revealing that your level of desire and passion for Him is weakening. If so, God wants to arouse and awaken your love for Him. He wants your passion to strengthen.

Understanding God's Love for You

"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine" (Ezek. 16:8, emphasis mine). Although this message from God was spoken to the inhabitants of Jerusalem through Ezekiel (the prophet), it's still a significant "now word" for us today. It reveals so well God's heart of compassion and love toward us.

God wants you to know that He sees your vulnerability and He is covering you with His love and protection. That's the bottom line. You are loved! You are covered! And His love for you is whole-hearted. By that, I mean His love isn't just talk. He doesn't just whisper empty words into our ear! God is good! He backs up His words with actions, confirmations, and evidences of His love that we can see or perceive. He wants the same from us- He doesn't want us to love on Him with just a lot of talk and no action, or no passion and emotion either. God wants us fervent in spirit. He wants us to be fiery hot! The word fervent means it's like an erupting, boiling volcano! Are you an erupting, burning volcano-fiery hot? Boiling over is the word!

Kindle the Flame

The Father has created a holy and intimate place in the spirit that the world cannot penetrate. It's called the secret place of His presence. It's reserved for us, true believers in Jesus Christ, and it's a place of Freedom where our love for Jesus can intensify our intimacy and cause overflowing life-giving joy!

I'm continually in this place of intimacy, and my cry is "God, make me fiery joy! I want to be like John the Baptist. I was to be a burning, shining lamp" (John 5:35) Listen. God not only wants to brand many believers with His fiery touch, He also wants to impact lives deeper than we ever thought possible. He wants to fan the flame in your heart! So it's time to ask God for new passion, new fire, and the gift of holy hunger.

In my life, this holy hunger caused such a passion in my heart for the one thing that is far above anything else, and that is God's precious presence. Like David, my deepest cry to God is: "My God, please take not thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11) I've wept as I've prayed this prayer hundreds of times. "God please, I've received such an outpouring of Your grace; if that were gone, if Your Spirit lifted from my life, it would all be you over. Please take not thy Holy Spirit from me." And He hasn't.

Stoke the Fire

We can choose to stir up our love for God! To stir up our love means to raise up, to excite, to arouse, arouse to action, we become as a musical instrument warmed up to play. Did you know that the love and passion that you have in your heart for Him needs to be warmed up? The question is: How do you warm up your love or arouse you heart for Him even more?"

In Song of Songs, Solomon writes: "do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases" (Song. 3:5b) It's as if he is saying, "Don't let love come alive in your heart until you are ready for it. It's going to cost you. Love will cost you; so don't awaken love until you are ready. If you are not ready to abandon yourself to Him then don't awaken it."

How many of you are ready to be lovers of God? You see, it's our choice whether we're going to love God. It's our choice whether we're going to be passionate and hungry. We must choose whether we're going to let our love be aroused for God or not. Bottom line-we choose.

Steward the Flame

To steward means to responsibly give away or share the blessings of God. With God's Spirit resting upon my life, I've learned how to steward the flame in my heart. By that I mean, I cherish His presence in my life and I want everyone else to experience God's presence, too. This is my prayer for you!

When we choose to have our passion stirred up, there's going to be the expectation that if God imparts a holy hunger into our heart, we're going to have to steward it. The question is this: Do you know how to be a steward of love? Do you know how to be a steward of passion? Do you know how to be a steward of the desire and the hunger that you have in your heart for Him? It's going to take time, passion, sacrifice, and commitment.

God doesn't want dull lovers or insensitive stewards of His blessings. He wants us fiery hot! But so much of the church today is lukewarm (Rev. 3:15, 16). Many know very well that they aren't hungry or desperate enough for God's presence in their lives. Yet, they barely realize that it is only by the grace of God His love can come upon their hearts and supernaturally empower them to love the way that He wants them to. So how do we awaken and stir up love? Listen, we can't love passionately unless we're intoxicated with the influence of His affection.

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