

## Keep the Fire Burning

By Todd Bentley

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My prayer for you is that you would receive a "holy hunger" for intimacy with God. I believe God is going to pour out this gift according to your measure of hunger, according to your desperation.

Holy hunger goes hand-in-hand with God's desire to help you stir up and awaken your passion for Him. God deserves our love more than anything in this world. He is worthy. Listen, at his very moment, Jesus Christ is preparing a place for use in our Father's house. We're going to be with Him forever (John 14:2,3). Therefore, it's time to make ourselves ready, even as a bride would get ready for her wedding day and her husband-to-be.

The story of the Shulamite bride in the Songs of Solomon is filled with imagery and intimacy. The confidence of the bride and the spouse in each other gives us a valuable insight into how to fan the flames of desire and stir and awaken out love for God.

#### 1. Get started:

"My beloved spoke, and said to me, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come way' " (Song. 2:10). God is the initiator. He speaks to us. Having said that, though, we still need to get started by responding to Him. So in that sense, it starts with you. How hungry are you? Set a time to meet with God. Set a place. Rise up! Purpose this in your heart and say, "God you are my God! Early will I seek You!" Don't wait for the grace to pray. Pray for the grace to pray. Rise up and say, "I will stir myself up to take hold of God." There are times when the presence of God comes and it's like four hours of glorious Holy Ghost! Then there are other times when you need to purpose in your heart to rise up and pray four hours because you're hungry. So sometimes it just starts with you. Be disciplined.

#### 2. Remember God's Love for You:

"We will remember your love" (Song. 1:4). Something happens in our heart when we remember visitation when we remember the promises of God. We are stirred when we think back to those days in which we really were experiencing the "rapture of love." Remembering God's love for us is so important, because in the remembering, our hearts are touched once again with God's faithfulness towards us. This helps us to trust Him, and to stir up and awaken lost love.

#### 3. Be A Steward of His Presence:

We need to allow the presence of God to touch us every day. I call it soaking or marinating. More, Lord! We need to allow ourselves to be touched daily by the glory of God. Sometimes I'll wait every day for a whole hour for His presence to come. I'll just lie on the floor and fill up with the Holy Spirit. Spending time with the Holy Spirit soaking in His Presence is crucial to our love relationship with God.

#### 4. Be Redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ:

"I am dark, but lovely" (Song. 1:5). The Shulamite bride is saying (about herself), that she is dark but lovely. Being dark symbolizes sinful desires. She goes on to say, "Don't look upon me, because I am dark" (v.6). It's as if she is saying, "I am dark. Don't look upon me, don't judge me." There is shame, guilt, and condemnation. But the flip side is that she is lovely. I believe that once Jesus Christ has redeemed us we become lovely (1 Pet. 1:18-23).

#### 5. Pursue God First and Foremost:

Then in her next breath the bride says, "My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept" (Song 1:6b, emphasis mine). The "vineyard" can represent numerous conditions; for instance, ministry work can sometimes rob us from taking care of our own "vineyard." To paraphrase: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards-ministry. They gave me all this responsibility but I'm burned out. They gave me all this work, all this ministry, but my own vineyard I have not kept. Because of that, I am ashamed because I'm not looking after my own spiritual like with God. I feel abandoned because somehow the church has rejected me even though I've been working so hard." There is something wrong with this picture! Pursue God. Don't pursue vineyards. Yes, God will desire your beauty and He will draw you aside with Him so that He can awaken and renew your "first love" for Him (Rev. 2:4).

#### 6. Rest in God and Be Connected to the Body of Christ:

"Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?" (Song. 1:7). Here we see the bride's earnest desire for him. It's as if she was saying, "Tell me O you whom I love.

Even though I am dark and even though I am burning out, I have a hunger for you. Can you please tell me where I can get some revelation? Can you please tell me where you feed your flocks the manna of heaven? Isn't that the cry of the church today? We want to know the place of revelation even like Job had it: the friendly counsel of God waiting at his tent (Job 29:4). We want to hear the voice of God and have visions, dreams, encounters, experiences, and visitations. People have asked me how I receive revelation. They want to know, "What book did you read?"

Hey! I found a place in the spirit where "He feeds His flocks" and I go there.

Here are two keys that reveal where revelation is found. The first is found in Psalm 23:2: "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." The second is in Song of Solomon 1:8:

"If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feel your little goats beside the shepherds' tents."

Follow the footsteps of God's people, His flock. Look for the footprints of the: God chasers--those that have prophetic history and destiny. Find out where they walked. Be inspired by the stories of Abraham, Moses, David, Deborah, Esther, and Ruth. Read about other great saints used by God like Smith Wigglesworth, Kathryn Kuhlman, Aimee Semple McPherson and others. Find the footprints of the flock. You see, God wants to give us a revelation and we need the rest of God (Heb. 4:9-11), as well as being connected into the body of Christ (Heb. 10:25), beside the shepherd's tent. The revelation of God's love for us arouses out love and passion for Him.

#### 7. Follow the Footsteps:

"But imitate those who faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12b). Something happens to us when we follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Let us not forget the heroes of the Faith from days of old and in modern times. As we imitate or try to be like Jesus and the great men and women of God, our love and passion for God is stirred. Let's not miss the forerunners, the men and women of God who spur us on!

#### 8. Catch the Little Foxes!

"Catch is the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes" (Song. 2:15). If we want to awaken love, we need to catch those little foxes-the subtle areas of out like that distract disturb and hinder us from resting in the secret place. Many believers are not caught up in a big sun but rather there are subtle areas that dull their love for God. I call these little foxes "the intimacy robbers." Intimacy robbers are those conditions that try to make out love for God grow cold. The devil knows how vital it is to rob from deep intimacy with God. He knows that in the secret place of intimacy, believers discover the essence of true worship, and how our devotion to God causes is heart to be ravished with love for His creation. If the devil's schemes remain uncontested, he can keep us out of the secret place of God's presence by pushing those little foxes into our circumstances.


#### Set the World Ablaze

As our "love-life" with God matures, He is ever mindful of the multitudes of people who are lost and dying. They need to be reached with the gospel by Christians who hearts are aflame with God's burning love. "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your are; for love is as strong as death. Jealousy as cruel as the grave; it's flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame" (Song 8:6). Love-its flames are flames of fire. A most severe flame!

Friends! God's fiery seal of supernatural love comes upon our hearts to empower us to love a lost world with the very love that Jesus has. It's a mature, fiery, passionate love, full of flames of fire. Do your part.

Kindle, rekindle, stoke, fan, and steward the flame. His fiery, hot, intoxicating love on you today. And to consume you with a holy desperation for one thing only-to know His fullness.

By Todd Bentley

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