



Stewarding GOD's

HOLLY FLAMES OF REVIVAL

How will you guard **GOD'S FIRE** and never let it go out?

BY DR. MICHAEL BROWN

Shortly before the great revivalist Leonard Ravenhill fell into a life-ending coma in September 1994, he said to Evangelist Steve Hill, “The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity.” When God moves in true revival, we need to give ourselves to that sacred movement with all our heart and soul, knowing that this may be something that happens only once in a generation—or even a lifetime. The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity!

Hill lived by this quote during the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola (1995-2000), canceling all his preaching engagements around the world in order to give himself to this historic outpouring. And it was from the revival in Pensacola that Ravenhill's quote went around the world. When the Lord moves, you must seize the moment, whether that moment is short or long.

When God Moves with Divine Fire

When God breaks out in your midst in a special way—in a prayer meeting, in a Sunday

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morning service, in a youth rally—go with God. Spread your sails high and wide, and let the wind of the Spirit carry you. And sail on, as long as the wind keeps blowing. It may not gust up again! And even if, in the early days of a fresh move, that unusual stirring “interrupts” your service for a matter of a few minutes, let the Spirit know that He is welcome, and put other things aside while He is stirring the waters. If we prove faithful in little, we will be entrusted with much.

My new book, *Seize the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival*, lays out 25 biblically based, proven principles to help us steward a move of God. There are things we must do and things we must not do if we want to move from visitation to habitation and to see fruit that will last for generations. And today, as we are in the early stages of a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, it is absolutely essential that we learn how to seize this sacred moment.

One key principle is the importance of guarding the divine flame once it has been ignited. We learn this principle from Leviticus 6. Notice this key commandment that is repeated three times: “Give Aaron and his sons this command: ‘These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. *The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out.* Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and

burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. *The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.*” (Lev. 6:9-13, emphasis added).

Now, when God says anything once, we know it’s important. When He says it twice, it really gets our attention. But when He speaks it three times—especially in the same chapter of the Bible—we had better take heed. We dare not ignore the message! “. . . *the fire must be kept burning on the altar The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. . . . The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.*”

Why was this so important? On the one hand, it was a matter of divine service, part of Israel’s sacrificial worship. God was saying to Israel, “Don’t be neg-

ligent here. The flame on My altar must keep burning 24 hours a day.”

But there’s something else about this commandment that we should not overlook, something we learn from Leviticus 9, the end of the consecration ceremony for Aaron and his sons: “Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the

fellowship offering, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown,” (Lev. 9:22–24).

Did you catch that? The very first fire that burned on the altar was ignited by God Himself. It was divine fire! That’s why the priests were commanded to never let the fire go out. It was because the Lord lit that fire Himself. How sacred that flame must have been to them! From then on, if the fire ever went out and the priests had to rekindle the flame, it would have been a man-made fire, a human substitute, something from below rather than from above.

Stoke Revival’s Blaze

It is the same thing with revival. When it comes, you must guard the sacred flame, feeding it with prayer, with worship, with sacrificed lives, with obedience, with holiness, with loving care. You do not want to let it go out. And

just as consistent, fervent prayer will birth revival, it is consistent, fervent prayer that will sustain revival.

The great missionary Amy Carmichael once prayed, “Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.” Jim Elliot, best known as a missionary martyr, added his own words to this prayer, saying, “God makes His ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God, deliver me from the dread asbestos

of ‘other things.’ Saturate me with the oil of Thy Spirit that I may be a flame. Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God.”

In that same spirit, we must avoid those “other things” that put out the Spirit’s fire, things like complacency, pride, carnality and prayerlessness. We must be careful not to merchandise the revival or turn it into a spiritual carnival or put our personal (or ministry) names on it as if we owned it. We must never trivialize what God is doing in revival or sensationalize it or try to use it for our own purposes. It does not take much to chase the holy Dove away.

Contrast this divinely ignited fire with all our carnal attempts to produce divine fires, fires which may have some of the outward appearance of revival but are as far from real revival as the flesh is from the Spirit. As I stated in my 1993 book, *It’s Time to Rock the Boat*, “Much of our ministry today is a concerted, sometimes frantic attempt to make up for the absence of the Spirit. We are trying instead of tarrying, working instead of waiting, doing instead of dying, sweating instead of seeking. Our ‘spiritual’ ministry reeks of the flesh. What the Lord does is holy, holy, holy; what we do is hollow, hollow, hollow.”

5 Ways to Guard God’s Divine Revival Fire

When it comes to the divine flame of revival, we must remember that a fire can be put out and a fire can go out. We must guard against either of these deadly possibilities.

First, we must recognize the sacred, supernatural origin of the fire, remembering the many years that we prayed or fasted or cried out for a season of holy visitation. When that sacred season comes, we must guard it with the utmost care.

Second, we must never forget that we can put out the fire with pride, traditional religion, carnal control or willful sin.

Third, we can let the fire go out with lack of vision, lack of burden, lack of direction, lack of prayer, lack of sensitivity to the Spirit or lack of outreach.

Fourth, we must give the fire something to burn. We must feed the fire! We can feed it with our daily devotions,

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with a heart of worship, with creating an atmosphere where the Spirit is free to move, with giving ourselves to spread the fire to others.

Fifth, we must remember whatever we throw into a fire becomes fire. As new souls get saved, they become firebrands themselves. As backsliders get right with

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God, they become holy torches. As cold believers get freshly ignited, they burn bright for the world to see.

At the end of my first week in Brownsville, the Lord spoke four words to me, all beginning with the letter E: Entrench (meaning, the revival needed to go even deeper); Equip (we needed

to train laborers for the harvest); Expand (we needed more buildings and more workers); Export (we needed to send the fire to the world through these laborers). Thankfully, other leaders already understood the principle that “stagnating saints soon stink,” and with

an evangelist front and center in the revival, that meant there would always be an emphasis on reaching the lost, on giving away the blessing that we had received. This helped keep the fire burning.

Are You Ready to Build a Fire Legacy?

All of us also had strong holiness upbringings in the Lord, making

us recognize how deadly (and fire-quenching) our own sin could be. And we recognized that the Lord would not stay where He was not welcome. That meant that giving room to the Spirit was more important than appearing to be “respectable” to others. What we wanted was God’s approval, not man’s. And we knew that as we ourselves lived in the fire, we could help ignite others and spread those holy flames.

Did we do all this perfectly? Far from it, and the Lord was very merciful. But our reverence for the holy flame of revival was so great that we made every effort to never let the fire go out. By God’s grace, it burned brightly for the better part of five straight years, and in many ways, almost 30 years from when the revival began, those holy fires continue to burn in many hearts.

Do not fail to guard the flame! ◀

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