

# Burn Out, Burn Up or Burn On

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The Lord spoke to me one morning while I was pouring out my heart to Him. For several days, I had been immersed in spiritual warfare and was also extremely busy with spiritual activities. As I began to pray, I found myself to be a "basket-case" of emotions and it seemed I was all "plugged up" on the inside. I was weeping before the Lord and getting things off my chest. As I was simply unloading everything over on Him, He whispered to my heart. He said, "I don't want your religious activity, I WANT YOU!" Instantly, I began to experience a release! I began to rejoice as I recited what He said and meditated on this truth. Jesus wasn't crucified to make me active religiously. Jesus was crucified for ME. My life must not revolve around religious activity; it must revolve around Him. Jesus said: "Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take MY yoke upon you, and learn of ME; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls. For MY yoke is easy, and MY burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30).

I don't know about you, but sometimes I get caught up with spiritual activities. Occasionally I find myself "spinning the wheel" and "going through the motions". If I'm not cautious, I can get into a religious rut. The problem, however, with a religious rut, is that it can become a religious grave, only one without ends on it. Sometimes I find myself all wrapped up with the work of God. But the Lord wants me wrapped up with HIM, not His work. Occasionally I catch myself busy and preoccupied with the Body of Christ, that I miss Christ Himself. I guess we all must learn that we must worship the Lord of the Work, not the Work of the Lord. We must focus on the Spirit of the Gifts, not the Gifts of the Spirit. We must adore the Lord of the Harvest, not the Harvest of the Lord. Someone has said, "Look around and be distressed. Look inside yourself and be depressed. Look up and be at rest!"

As members of the Body of Christ we must all remember that we are still "under construction". If we set our eyes upon imperfect people, we're setting ourselves up to get BURNED. But if our gaze is firmly focused on the perfect person of Jesus Christ, we won't get disillusioned. Then and only then will we have the grace to accept one another as imperfect and "under construction". As we "behold the Son" and "behold the Lamb", we are able to behold others through His eyes rather than our own. He is ALWAYS smiling at you. He will ALWAYS listen to you. He is NEVER inconsistent. And He is NOT equivalent to His people OR the work we are called to do for Him.

Often we confuse our Christian service activities with our relationship with Christ. Sometimes we act like we can make God love us more if we do more work for Him. Sometimes we act as if we must earn His free pardon, forgiveness, and righteousness. Somehow in the "hustle and bustle" of daily living we begin to equate "religious activity" with "spirituality". But God is not impressed with our trying to impress Him. God doesn't want us to go about trying to establish our own righteousness. He wants us to surrender and take on His righteousness as our own (Romans 10:1-4). Sometimes we unconsciously try to get things right on the INSIDE of us by struggling to do things right on the OUTSIDE. But the more we get caught up in this frenzy of activity, the more heavy laden, burdened, and hard-yoked Christian living becomes. We have forgotten that God doesn't change us from the OUTSIDE-IN, but from the INSIDE-OUT. We have forgotten that our Righteousness equals Jesus Christ plus nothing, minus nothing. When we catch ourselves in this frame of mind, there is only one thing to do. We must repent and draw away with Jesus. Jesus wants our spiritual activities and works of service to start in our hearts. Jesus wants our ministry to others to be an overflow of His ministry to us as we fellowship with Him. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). "Not by human energy, nor by human origin, but by Holy Spirit energy." "Not by the seat of your pants, nor by your wits, but by the mind of Christ."

When we find ourselves in this "religious" mind-set, we must discern that we are at a crossroads. We have a choice to make. Shall we continue in the same direction and mind-set, only to BURN OUT "for" the Lord? Shall we just throw in the towel, call it quits, and just BURN UP with unfaithfulness? Or shall we renew our "first love" by "waiting on the Lord" through prayer and God's Word, and thus BURN ON with the Lord. The Bible commands us to "be dressed ready for service and KEEP YOUR LAMPS BURNING" (Luke 12:35). BURN ON! FLAME ON! is the command of God. We only have three alternatives: BURN OUT, BURN UP, or BURN ON. It would do us good to meditate on John chapter 15. Jesus spoke to my heart once. He whispered: "This chapter is not about losing one's salvation versus lots of religious activity, as some suppose. Rather it is my teaching on how to avoid BURN OUT and BURN UP." The beginning of verse 15:2 is BURNING UP with unfaithfulness. Verse 15:6 is BURNING OUT. The rest of the chapter is devoted to BURNING ON. The Bible teaches that "THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY; AND THEY SHALL WALK, AND NOT FAINT." The implication here is that if we don't "wait on the Lord", we will fizzle out or BURN OUT. Its that simple: WAIT ON OR WEAR OUT! If we don't spend quality time in His presence, then His work will become a heavy chain around our neck. Trying to do His supernatural work with natural power is FUTILITY GONE TO SEA! Isaiah 40:31 says WE MUST WAIT BEFORE WE WORK!

When Jesus came to visit Mary and Martha in their home, Martha was all caught up trying to "SERVE JESUS". Unlike her sister, however, Mary was all caught up with "JESUS" Himself. Jesus said: "Martha, Martha, thou are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful..." (Luke 10: 38-42). ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDFUL! JUST ONE THING! WE ONLY NEED ON THING... To sit at the feet of Jesus and fellowship with Him by hearing His Word and responding in prayer. Speaking to Him and Him speaking to us through our Bibles. Everything else will naturally come into perspective. Christian service will become easy and enjoyable. We will BURN ON with Holy Spirit fuel instead of experiencing the devastation of BURN OUT or BURN UP. Reader, I encourage you today... sit at the Master's feet, seek His face and seek His grace. Seek His face, not just His favors! Seek His heart, not just His hand! Don't seek a thrill; rather thrill to seek Him! Find your place at His feet and find His pace for your race! FLAME ON! BURN ON!