

# How to protect the fire of God in our lives

Both Ps Phil Pringle and Jakub Kaminsky have spoken to us about altars and the fire of God. I want to continue along the lines of what they shared and speak about 'protecting the fire of God in our lives'.

I want to start by taking you to a passage where a man named Gideon had an encounter with the fire of God.

## Opening passage: Judges 6:1-16; 21

Israel experienced 40 years of peace but instead of acknowledging God, they forgot about Him and backslid. When Gideon comes on the scene, Israel is spiritually bankrupt and being sacked, destroyed and plundered by the Medianites.

Gideon had an encounter with an angel of God and asked 'why?'

Gideon's questions were answered by fire. The angel touched the altar that Gideon had prepared and fire descended.

**God is still the God who answers by fire: Moses, David, Solomon and Elijah all saw the fire of God. The disciples on the day of Pentecost were baptised with the Holy spirit and fire.**

After that experience God uses Gideon to overcome the enemies of Israel. Gideon also destroys every idol in the land and the people came back to God. They went from survival to revival!

Let us now read **Judges 8:22-28 (also Jeremiah 2:17)**

The subject of this message today is how do you sustain revival? How do you stay ablaze with the fire of God? How not to fall back into the pattern of the people of Israel that every 40 years they would backslide and hit rock bottom before turning back again to the Lord? How to protect the fire of God in our lives?

I believe that we need to identify the three enemies of fervency, three dangers to watch out for:

### 1. The danger of worshipping memories

Gideon made a fabulous ephod - a sleeveless garment worn by the priests. In this instance, scholars believe that it refers to an image. That ephod was a symbol or a monument to the move of God in Israel.

However, it is clear that it became an idol.

**Verse 27:** - *"Then Gideon made it into an ephod, and he set it up in his city"*

The same Gideon who fought idolatry, introduced a new kind of idolatry.

They worshiped the move of God more than the God of the move!  
That is what happened with many historical denominations which were born in the furnace of revival, in the midst of great visitations of God but all that is left of those visitations today are monuments and traditions. We can't worship memories.

Thank God for what God did in the past but He wants to move now.

I said it before that the anointing is not an embalming fluid for believers. The church is not a museum and we are not stuffed exhibits of a previous move of God. No. We can stay on fire and flowing with the purposes of God now.

## **2. The danger of complacency and apathy**

This is the second enemy of passion, zeal and fervour.

After all his adventures and victories, it seemed that Gideon decided to retire. There is no record of any other achievement. He did not accept the invitation to rule over Israel and it looks like he did not do anything else for the next 40 years.

What happened to the might man of valour? What happened to the great warrior?

Maybe Gideon thought that he had arrived or maybe that he had done enough. When that happens, people tend to stagnate, the flame stops burning, apathy, indifference and complacency settle in.

There are greater adventures in God and greater levels of passion and romance with Jesus. None of us has arrived – there is so much more of God for us!

God feels strongly about complacency:

**Zephaniah 1:12** - *“And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are **settled in complacency**, who say in their heart, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil.'”*

**Isaiah 32:9** - *Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you **complacent daughters**, give ear to my speech.*

Press into God – into all that He has for you. Go deeper in Him.

**Philippians 3:13-14** - *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and **reaching forward to those things which are ahead**,<sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

## **3. The dangers of quietness**

**Verse 28b:** *“and the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon”*

The problem was not that they had peace with their enemies. The problem was that they became quiet about God and what He had done for them.

**Verse 33:** *So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.*

A quiet generation gave birth to a rebellious, anti-God, devil serving generation. That is exactly what happened what happened in the 40 years of quietness before Gideon and now it happened again – under Gideon’s watch.

**We cannot be quiet about the reality of our God, about His promises, about His miracles, about His deliverance. We need to keep telling the stories of our God, His testimonies. We need to go public with our God! This is not the time to be silent but to shout from the rooftops!**

**2 Kings 7:9a - 9** *Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain **silent**...*

Even the lepers in this story of 2 Kings 7 acknowledged that it is not good to be silent about the blessings of God.

### **Conclusion**

We have identified the power of the fire of God in our lives and how we need to watch out for anything that could potentially put it out.

There is a lot at stake: firstly, your own spiritual life and also the next generation.

Do whatever it takes to stay on fire, to protect the fire of God in your life, to steward the stories of what He has done for you. Watch out for any signs of indifference in your life, any symptoms of apathy or complacency!

**2 Timothy 1:6a Amplified Bible (AMPC):** *That is why I would remind you to stir up (rekindle the embers of, fan the flame of, and keep burning) the [gracious] gift of God, [the inner fire] that is in you ...*

Stir yourself up! Rekindle the embers of the fire.

Years ago, I felt the Lord speak to me very clearly from **Isaiah 64:7a:** *And there is no one who calls on Your name, who **stirs himself up** to take hold of You.*

Stir yourself up! Fan the flame and keep burning the inner fire of the Holy Spirit in you.