



Life Principles Notes™

When Your Fire Goes Out

Summary:

Have you ever felt as if you were growing cold toward the things of God? Perhaps you are not as committed to studying the Bible or praying as you once were. Maybe you are not consistently going to church anymore either. Your relationship with the Lord may feel distant.

When this happens, your attention often returns to the sensual, secular, and materialistic things that controlled your life before Christ. Your interest in spiritual growth becomes almost non-existent.

How does a person get to that point? People often do not know why they've lost their passion for Jesus Christ. We may make excuses, but the truth is, we've allowed the fire within our souls to die out.

The good news is that God's Word tells us how to reignite our fire for the Lord.

Key Passage: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Supporting Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:2-7; 4:12-16; 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:6

Scriptural Principles:

1 What is the historical context of Paul's letter?

When the apostle wrote to Timothy from his Roman dungeon, Paul knew that the young pastor needed encouragement. The year was circa 67 A.D.—more than 30 years after Jesus had risen from the grave and had ascended to the Father. Persecution was rampant, as were the false teachings that were infiltrating the church. Certain people in Timothy's congregation had been causing division by disagreeing with him over the core doctrines of the faith.

Paul understood that he did not have much time left to live (2 Tim. 4:6), and he wanted to encourage Timothy while he still could. He was well aware that pressures, disappointments, and losses could severely weaken the younger leader's passion for the Lord, and so at this crucial time the apostle took the opportunity to challenge Timothy to stay strong. "Kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Tim. 1:6-8). Paul did not coddle Timothy; rather, he admonished him to continue honoring God with every gift He had given him.

2 Spiritually, are you fired up or cooling down?

Disappointments can discourage believers and dampen the passion you and I have for the Lord. Therefore, it's important for us to examine whether we are still growing in our relationship with Him. Ask yourself if you are more excited about knowing Jesus Christ than you've ever been before. If you are seeking and obeying God earnestly every day, there is no reason for your zeal for Him to die down or for you to doubt His love. So honestly evaluate if the Lord is your highest priority.

3 How can you tell when your fire for the Lord is waning?

There are several questions to ask to determine whether your relationship with Jesus has cooled.

- a) *Have you begun to neglect God's Word?* The Bible is as important to your Christian walk as wood is to a fire. You cannot live an effective, faithful life without it. It is best to read the Scripture every day to keep your passion for the Lord burning brightly.
- b) *How is your prayer life?* Perhaps you talk to the Lord, but you no longer feel as if He is listening. Or maybe you just don't go before the Father very often anymore. However, it is imperative that you continue seeking God in prayer—communicating and deepening your intimacy with Him.
- c) *Have you become inconsistent in your church attendance?* Growing believers enjoy the fellowship of other Christians and worshipping God. If you find yourself constantly finding reasons to skip church, your devotion to Jesus Christ is beginning to wane.
- d) *Are you still trusting God with your finances?* Perhaps you feel as if you cannot afford to give to the Lord's work. But those with a passion for Christ support the spread of the gospel and the advancement of God's kingdom—at home and around the world.
- e) *Have you begun to compromise?* Believers who have lost their fire often deny their convictions in order to fit in or get along with others. When talking with committed Christians, those whose fire is waning may become defensive about their lifestyle.
- f) *Have you lost your joy?* When our passion decreases, serving the Lord becomes a duty instead of a delight. Worry and fear replace our peace.
- g) *Are you no longer sensitive to the Holy Spirit?* When we begin to ignore the Spirit's prompting to read the Word, pray, or give to those in need, our relationship with Christ suffers.

4 How can you and I fan the flame of our love for God?

Paul wrote, “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you. . . . Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. . . . Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:14–16). As a believer, you must devote yourself completely to the things of God. To rekindle your love for the Lord:

- a) *Recognize your spiritual condition.* Making excuses for your coldness towards God is unproductive. Instead, acknowledge that you are experiencing difficulty.
- b) *Recall your life when you were passionate about God.* You probably studied His Word, shared the gospel, sang songs of praise to Him, and enjoyed being around other believers. Remember what that was like so you can return to that level of devotion and exceed it.
- c) *Repent.* Losing our excitement about the Lord is usually a direct result of sin. Confess your wrongdoing and turn from it.
- d) *Refocus your attention.* Your passion for God cooled because your priorities changed—something or someone became more important to you than the Lord. He must again become the center of your life. Commit yourself to Bible study, constant communication with God, and meeting the needs of others. You must once again surrender to the moment-by-moment guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

When our top priority is not the Lord, we forfeit the love, power, wisdom, hope, and joy God wants for His children.

Friend, do not allow that to happen to you. Rather, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard . . . in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13–14).

If your passion for the Lord has waned, stir it up anew. Cling to the grace God has given you and obediently exercise the gifts He has bestowed upon you. Then your life will be a shining light for the Lord. Not only will you enjoy all the blessings of a close relationship with the Father, but your life will be a powerful influence on the world. ✨

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