

Lesson 8

Chapter 5 - Revival Fire

Read Chapter 5 and then apply it to your life as you work through these questions.

1. How many properties of fire can you list, good and bad, as you consider its existence and use in our lives today and throughout the history of man? Ponder the parallels and contrasts in spiritual applications as they pertain to the Holy Spirit, to God's Holy Word and to Revival in our time.

It will be interesting to discuss both the physical and spiritual applications associated with your class' answers. These are my suggestions.

Fire is a source of light in darkness.

Fire is a source of warmth in the cold.

Fire is widely used to purify metals.

Fire is used to cook food in order to make it edible and/or more palatable.

A bond Fire is comforting, beautiful and peaceful on cold, dark nights.

Fire burns only if there is fuel.

Fire spreads rapidly if there is fuel available and it is not confined.

Fire does not occur without a cause. It must be ignited - a match, lightning, friction, internal combustion, or as in Old Testament days - divine intervention.

Fire has many benefits, but it can cause extreme damage, injury or even death if it is not controlled.

2. In reviewing Scripture's reference to "holy" fire referred to on pages 70-72, do you see a relationship between the fire of the Holy Spirit's working in your life, and the fire that is ignited via Scripture memorization? Explain your perceptions in your own words?

Acts 2 describes the awesome experience of early believers who gathered on the day of Pentecost. We read that . . . *what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. (Acts 2:3 - emphasis added)*

A Chinese sister says that even today tongues of fire have been seen in a similar way on those gathering in the darkened house churches of China.

Note the similar references to *fire* as God speaks of His Word in the book of Jeremiah:

"Is not My Word like fire," declares the Lord.... (Jeremiah 23:29 - emphasis added)

His Word burns in my heart, like fire. It's like a fire in my bones. (Jeremiah 20:9 - emphasis added)

As fire must be ignited, it seems that a conclusion may be drawn that the fire of God's Word may be used by the Holy Spirit to amplify His work in our life and to ignite the fire of revival, hence, His forthright command to *take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*. Compared with: *His Word burns in my heart, like fire. It's like a fire in my bones. (Jeremiah 20:9 - emphasis added)*

. . . the reference in Ephesians . . . binds the performance of the Holy Spirit in our lives with the Word of God. We're told that the Spirit's Sword, the weapon He has given us for spiritual warfare, is the **Word of God. The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit.** And each Christian is **commanded** to "**take**" it. This is an emphatic command.

Considering the apparent bond between God's Holy Spirit and His holy Word, there must be a firm link between this command to take the Sword of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit's ability to function effectively in our lives. (Page 72, Para 6-7)

3. In the left column below list the conditions for revival as stated in II Chronicles 7:14. Across from each condition write how the memorization of Scripture in context could serve to fulfill this condition. (See pages 78 - 79)

Savonarola not only prayed incessantly for revival, the fire of God's Word burned brightly in His life as he ardently memorized large portions of Scripture and walked in their light—in life and in death.

*Many of us have experienced intimate, personal revival as we have committed to memorizing Scripture in context. God's Word burns in our hearts and minds as all four factors mentioned in this verse are **amplified** and **intensified** in a way that was not otherwise realized.*

(Page 79, Par 2)

If my people, who are called by my name will:

When we memorize God's Word in its full context

humble themselves

We are *humbled* as He graciously draws us to Himself, while *revealing our sin* and weaknesses, gently guiding us in His way through the power of His Word.

and turn from their wicked way

When we *read* our Bible, the Holy Spirit may vie for our attention as we pass lightly over a point of conviction. But when we **memorize** it, the Scripture is etched on our mind and soul. As we review and meditate on it, *we become increasingly aware of our sin*. And (as in Psalm 1:2 and 40:8) the word etched on our hearts and minds leads to its fulfillment in our lives.

and pray

Our *prayer life* takes on new dimensions as we experience Him intimately in His glory and majesty. (Also refer to the teaching of John 15 as studied in the last chapter)

And seek my face

We have found as I'm sure also did Savonarola, that as we *seek the face of the Lord* in His Word, we experience a new and exciting awareness of His divine presence, His incomprehensible grace and His awesome power.

4. Aware that we are God's army on the battlefield of life, that we are contending with a vicious and cunning enemy whose sole purpose is to *steal, kill and destroy* God's people, what

does it mean to you to *take the Sword of the Spirit* and what significance do you see in doing so as it relates to spiritual conflict in the every day affairs of life?

Ephesians 5:12-18 makes it very clear that we as God's children are involved in a very real war against a very real, evil and aggressive enemy. But he is not visible nor physically tangible. It is difficult for us to understand this because we live in a conspicuous, touchable world. Because this enemy can only be fought on a spiritual level we must use weapons that only the Lord can give. It is like flying with instruments in the dark. We can only follow the directions that are given in our instruction book and proceed.

The *Sword of the Spirit* is **the Word of God**. It is the only piece of armor that can be used for offense as well as defense so we must have it in hand and use it constantly as daily we are confronted with evil, both subtle and overt. With God's Word in mind we not only have our weapon, we also have encouragement, instructions and nourishment. Vital items in any battle.

5. Paul said: . . . a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

The unlimited potential available to those who make God's powerful Word a reality in their lives by memorizing it in its full context is indeed a vast open door for every Christian. Our great adversary is careful to target those who choose to take advantage of this door of opportunity. In a quiet moment with the Lord consider what strategy he might try to use on you. (There is space below for you to record your thoughts. Although they might be an encouragement to others in class, you need only share them if you are comfortable in doing so.)

No one knows the power of God's Word branded on the minds and lives of His people better than our mortal enemy. Surely accessing this resource that God has given us opens every door to spiritual growth and maturity. Why would the enemy not oppose it?

He will keep you from getting started if he possibly can and once you have begun he will do his best to take you out of the running through any means possible.

- a) convincing you that you are unable to do it
- b) telling you you will always have your Bible at hand and really don't need it.
- c) planting a fear of failure
- d) crowding your agenda
- e) bringing unanticipated problems into your life
- f) trying to rob you of the joy
- g) creating discouraging situations either from within or without

6. What steps can we take to help protect ourselves from Satan's hurtful arrows?

1. If the enemy has already infected your thinking with ideas like, "I can't memorize." or "I don't have time!" you may want to browse chapter 6 and/or 7 which address these arrows in detail. Or you may be encouraged by some of the testimonies in Appendix C

2. If the enemy has weighted you down with ideas of *dread* and *drudgery* as you contemplate starting to memorize God's precious Word in its full context or even after you have started to memorize, realize that this is the thinking of your adversary. This thinking does not come from your Lord. Pray and ask the Lord to remove these thoughts from your mind and replace them with joy and excitement in this great adventure with your Lord. If your negative perspective still

persists, have others pray with you and stand against your adversary. You may also be helped by reading Chapter 8, *Prepare Your Mind for Action!*

3. The Lord sent His disciples out by twos. (It is good to note the word *disciple* is from the same root word as *discipline*.) When you begin on this journey it is important to have a partner to travel with, perhaps a friend or family member. Or, we have found even better is to meet regularly with a like minded group even as you are doing now.

4. Realize that any hindrances in getting started, and any fears, discouragement or "snags" along the way are probably from the one who knows well the power and the joy awaiting those who delight in memorizing the holy, powerful Word of their holy God.

7. In such warfare what advantages do you see in meeting regularly with a friend or better still with a small group of memorizers versus trying to go it alone?

1. One of the important things in getting started to memorize Scripture is having someone to whom we can be accountable, someone to be excited with us, someone to encourage us if the going gets tough, someone to look out for us help us, keep us focused. It is a non-threatening atmosphere in which to share, a "safe" place to test and develop abilities. A small group provides a place where each one encourages the others and everyone is more or less accountable to everyone else. A small group is also a place where you can bring other people. Here they can see what a joy it is and how exciting it can be.

2. Another advantage of meeting in this way is the fellowship and bonding that naturally develops. This grows and becomes precious as everyone shares and grows together.

3. There is great power and spiritual nourishment in hearing the Scriptures quoted from hearts in which the Lord is planting His Word. As I was meeting with a small group I realized that I could read my Bible all afternoon and not receive nearly the impact that is mine when I just spend a comparatively short time listening to the Word shared from the hearts of others—as well as having the privilege of sharing what I have learned with them.

4. Time set aside to share Scripture becomes a great haven that is shielded from the cares and tears of the world. Few places are so protected and it is a unique experience to be enveloped in pure truth for even a short period of time.

5. As those in your group become comfortable in sharing Scripture with each other, some of you will grow to the point where you'll be comfortable sharing it with others outside your circle, in your/their Sunday School Class, your/their Bible Study Group, in a church service or even at private dinners or in casual fellowship with family or friends. This often helps to awaken other people to the realization of the joy and power of making God's word their own personal treasure, by memorizing it for themselves.

6. Small Scripture memorizing groups could also be a valuable insurance policy. We take out insurance for protection in case a specific problem arises. We have seen the European Union take shape, the disturbing development of plagues and incurable diseases, the increase of climatic and natural disasters, earthquakes and floods, universal terrorism and other seeming "birth pangs" that are rapidly increasing before our eyes. Could it be that we are on a collision course with the end of the age? Even some who are staunch believers in a pre-tribulation rapture

are saying they don't know how bad it will get before that great day comes when our Lord will take us up to meet Him in the air. But, should He tarry, and should the time come when your church is forced to go underground, those who have Scripture hidden in their hearts could well be the back-bone of the surviving body of believers.

8. a) The illustration of Giralomo Savonarola is given in *The Sword* as an example of one person who significantly impacted his world and even subsequent generations. On the back of this page, make your own personal list of people who have significantly impacted your life. Indicate beside each name what dominant characteristic makes them stand out in your mind.

b) Do you think that your commitment to start memorizing Scripture could significantly affect the lives of others? Would you be willing to let the Lord use you to help move their focus from the passive state of wanting to be fed, to a more active approach, such as following your example of memorizing Scripture in its full context? (You may wish to record your thoughts below even if you do not choose to share them in class.)

Food for Thought:

As I think of the impact that Savonarola, just one man, had on his generation and on the millenniums that followed, I am reminded of the latter part of the second commandment: *I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.* Think of it, the impact of the wicked is for three or four generations, but the impact of the righteous extends for *a thousand*.

Consider the influence your life has on those around you. You may consider it to be very insignificant, but you do impact every life you touch, whether you know it or not, whether you want to or not. Ponder for a moment what significance your response to the admonition to memorize Scripture, to memorize it in its full context, might have, not only on your life, but also on the lives of others. **You** are only one person, but you **are** one person who will influence generations to come. Again, whether you know it or not and whether you want to or not. Do you think that memorizing God's Word, thus making it a practical and consistent part of your daily life, could be a major factor, not only in your life, but in that of others, now and in the years ahead?

"Is not My Word like fire," declares the Lord.... (Jeremiah 23:29 - emphasis added)
Fire gives light. The Psalmist said:

(God's) *Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 199:105)*

Be aware that the fire of His Word in your heart will not only light *your* path, it will also light the path for others.

Refiner's Fire:

A group of women studying the character and nature of God were puzzled when they came across, Malachi 3:3, *He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.* They pondered how this could apply, so one of the women offered to investigate the process of refining silver and let them know what she learned.

That week she made an appointment with a silversmith in order to watch the process. She mentioned nothing about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the refining process.

As the craftsman held a piece of silver over the fire, he explained to her that while it is being refined, silver has to be held right in the middle of the fire where the flames are hottest. This, he said was necessary to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in difficult places *as a refiner and purifier of silver.*

She asked him if it was true that he had to sit in front of the fire the entire time that the silver was being heated. "Oh, yes," he answered, "I not only have to sit here holding it, I have to watch over it carefully and keep my eyes on it the entire time. If silver is left in the flames even one moment too long it is completely destroyed."

The woman was silent for a moment, then asked, "And how do you know when it is completely refined?" The silversmith smiled, then answered, "Oh, that's easy, when I can see my image in it, I know the process is complete."

Consider this illustration as it applies to the *fire* of God's Word and the *fire* of God's Holy Spirit at work purifying your life.