

ALAN TAYLOR

P O BOX 700623; TULSA, OK 74170-0623

918-447-8951

alantaylorministries.org

All Consuming Fire

When I was a kid, I went into the neighbor's field, and with the help of a friend, we lit up a little fire for ourselves. It was fun as we played at camping out until the wind came. In a moment, the little fire hopped over our barrier and began to spread in a circle quickly growing wider and more massive. I can still remember our panic as it ran out of control with us running around like little chickens with our heads cut off. My mind was racing with fear of the nearby forest blowing up and all the houses around going up in flames. We tried our best to beat it out, using our coats in an attempt to beat it out, but it continued to devour the dry grass from the field. That little fire ate up a few acres of grass before the wind died down, and we were able to stamp it out. It was like the vast forest fires that you see on television but a smaller version, all these years later and I can still remember the emotion of fear that ran through me.

Can you imagine a flame so hot that everything in its way gets totally devoured and swallowed up in the heat? This is one of the images of God that we must accept if we are going to have a healthy relationship with Him. I personally am a long-standing preacher of the fact that God is Love, and I believe that many people still don't realize that truth enough. Yet, God is more than just Love, He is also Fire, and that is an All-Consuming Fire.

There can be strong emotions of fear when facing a fire that is so fierce that it consumes everything that it touches. It devours all and cannot be managed or controlled in any way. This is the experience we see from the Israelites when they first witnessed the incredible majesty of God; they were in great fear, even just hearing His words. The scripture says in Deuteronomy 4:24, "*For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*"

His command to them was to worship only Him and no other gods, and He was serious about that. We know that God doesn't change and that He is the same today as He was back then as it tells us in Hebrews 12:24, "*For our God is a consuming fire.*" Which means that He is still that fierce devourer of all things that touch Him.

Many believers attempt to establish a relationship with God in His Love for them, and that's where they want Him to stop. They are shocked when He begins to burn in their life and spread into areas of their life that they are uncomfortable in handing to Him. They are holding Him in one area of their heart and trying to put Him out in other areas. It reminds me of how my friend and I looked running back and forth, beating that fire trying to put it out.

The problem is we don't get to choose who God is just as we don't get to make Him who we want Him to be. He already is, and it is up to us to go into Him, all of Him, both the Love and the Fire. Many believers stand at the outside of this intense flame because they realize that they are unable to control the utter destruction that the fire can cause in our fleshly life. So, we continue to push 'God the fire' back while we embrace 'God of love' at the same time. Maybe you've been through this dance with Him in your life where you find His flame continually trying to burn into your life. He's relentlessly moving forward and never satisfied with a little but

always wanting more and more until He has all. I can see why the Apostle Paul wrote: *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20

He is a Fire, and He isn't changing, which demands that we allow Him to burn all of the old man off of us in our walk with Him. Before we were saved, we needed to be afraid of facing Him, but now as His children, we should embrace Him in both His Love and His Fire. In Hebrews, it tells us that the difference between the Israelites and us is our salvation; we are the ones who've changed because God does not change. Hebrews 12:18-21, *“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)*

We no longer need to be afraid of God because we are His children, and He desires for us to run into that white-hot furnace without fear as we give up the control of our life over to Him. *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”* Hebrews 12:22-24

For many of us, taking the step into the All-Consuming flame can feel intimidating because with fire also comes the inability to dictate to it what it can burn. But be encouraged! We do not need to be afraid of losing anything of importance to His plan for our lives. Let's dance with our Father in the midst of His Fire as everything is consumed around us and rejoice in who He is transforming us into.

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