

Romans 12

LIVING THE RESURRECTED LIFE

Keep your Spiritual Fervor, Serving the Lord

Romans 12:11

Serving is Non-Negotiable

- This passage commands us to keep our spiritual fervor while serving the Lord. Serving God and His kingdom is not an option for the follower of Christ, it is the expectation and it is our joy.
- The word “serving” or “servant” is the Greek word “doulos” which literally means, “to be a slave to, to be in bondage, to do service.” (Strong’s)
- Philippians 2 tells us that Jesus came to serve and not to be served. If we are to live like Christ, then we are God’s bond slaves, submitted to do His will.
- We are bought with a price and we are not our own. The word “Lord” in this passage literally means, “supreme in authority, controller, master, sir, God, Lord.” (Strong’s Concordance)
- So if our lives are given over to serve God and His kingdom, how do we keep our spiritual fervor as we continually serve Him day after day?

Keep Your Spiritual Fervor

- The word “fervor” is translated from a word that literally means, “to be hot (the boiling of liquids and glowing of solids); to be fervid [burning hot, having or showing feelings that are very strong]; to be earnest [a serious and intent mental state.]” (Strong’s Concordance, Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- The idea is the encouragement to stay burning hot in our spirit for God and to stay seriously intent on the mission as we serve Him everyday.
- In a world full of distractions, darkness, and the influence of satan; it can become difficult to remain on fire for God on a daily basis
- Lord we don’t want to just go through the motions, we want to burn with passion for you and to serve you with excitement and joy! Please teach us...

1. Honestly Evaluate Your “First Love”

- “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”
Revelation 2:4-5
- Some of us grew up thinking that being a “Christian” meant that we believed in God; but it has to be more than that because the Scripture says that even the demons believe in God. (James 2:19)
- No, Jesus said that to be a true Christian is to love God with ALL YOUR HEART. How can we stay burning hot for God if our relationship with Him is based on human intellect, logic, duty and the traditions of man?
- A burning lifestyle begins with a decision of the heart - to realize that we were separated from God forever, that Christ died to reunite us - and now we get to love Him and spend our lives in relationship with Him!

1. Honestly Evaluate Your “First Love”

- Do you have that kind of relationship with God through Christ?
- Who is the first love of your life? Is it money and possessions? Is it your career? Is it sports, hobbies, pleasure, security, your family or yourself?
- If we honestly look at how we spend the majority of our time, effort, thoughts, and money - would it point to God? Is He truly our first love?
- A genuine relationship with God will never be all smiles and roses; but it does begin with a covenant to love Him with all of your heart.
- If you haven't already, would you make that decision today?
- If you have but you've left Him, would you choose to come back to your first love today? He is waiting and willing to take you back. He loves you deeply.

2. Be Around People who Burn for God

- “When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, the LORD has sent me to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’” 2 Kings 2:1-2
- Throughout the history of God, men and women on fire for Him have inspired and encouraged others to love and serve God with all their hearts.
- There is something deep inside every true Christian that yearns to be a sold out, devoted follower of Jesus. When we find someone that’s living that out, it is attractive, and we are spurred on to take hold of that life for ourselves.
- Who do you have the closest relationships with on this earth? Do they burn for God? Do they draw you to God or away from Him? You must be intentional.

3. Spend Time with God Everyday

- Let's read John 17:20-26 together.
- Jesus had this kind of intimate relationship with God because He chose to. The Bible says that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are. (Hebrews 4:15) That means that he was tempted to be busy with all that He had to accomplish and neglect personal time in God's presence just like we are.
- Yet the Scriptures tell us that He was continually leaving the crowds and the disciples to spend time with His Father.
- There is no short cut to burning intimacy with God. It only exists through time spent in His presence. The great news is that we don't have to be a monk in a monastery to have this kind of relationship with God. It is available to everyone of us everyday. We can choose to fellowship with God in every moment and task of our daily lives. Are you choosing to spend time with Him?

4. Set Aside Special Times for God

- Not only did Jesus consistently spend time with His Father throughout His daily life; but He also set aside special blocks of time to intentionally encounter God's presence. These encounters had a profound impact on Him and others.
- Jesus' forty day fast in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1) Jesus went up on a mountainside and spent the whole night in prayer. (Luke 6:12) Jesus took Peter, John and James up on a mountain where they saw Moses, Elijah, and God's manifest presence. (Mark 9:2) Jesus goes to the garden to pray. (Matthew 26:36)
- God is always desiring to spend time with us; yet we rarely encounter His presence, as He desires, because our times with Him are often quick and rushed. We can only imagine what God would teach us, show us, and allow us to experience if we would intentionally make time to be with Him. Plan a conference, take a 48 hour retreat, take one day of vacation and spend it with God, spend one night in prayer - let God kindle a fire - you'll never regret it!

5. Stir Your Affection for God

- “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God. When can I go and meet with God?”
Psalm 42:1-1
- David was “a man after God’s own heart” and had a special intimacy with God. He stirred his affections for God through poetry and songs. He would often begin a psalm with frustration, anger or sadness; but by the end He would be praising God and declaring his love or devotion.
- We’re all different, and we are drawn to God in different ways. Music, being alone with the Scripture, walking, nature, art, silence, fasting, reading...
- Do you know what stirs your affection for God? What softens your heart and leads you to a genuine encounter with His presence? Begin to make time for these activities and let God stoke the fire of your heart till its burning hot.

6. Consistent Obedience

- “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” John 14:21
- “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” John 14:23
- One of the most overlooked ways to stay burning hot for God is simple but deliberate obedience in the big and small things of everyday life.
- The way we drive, the way we talk to others and about others, resisting temptations, eating in a healthy way, what we watch, how we spend our money and pay our taxes, spending time with God before social media - these are all opportunities to stay on fire for God. If we are obedient to Christ, then He will be continually showing Himself to us and we will have constant fellowship with God.

Final Thoughts

- As we've talked about staying burning hot in a love relationship with God, has the Spirit showed you that you do not have a genuine relationship with God. Do you need to get alone, cry out to Him, and receive His love and forgiveness? Will you receive the blood of Jesus as payment for your sin today?
- Is the Lord prompting you to be around people who are on fire for God?
- Has the Spirit convicted you about spending daily time with God so He can stoke the fire in your heart? Is He wanting you to set aside some special blocks of time to meet with Him in an unordinary way?
- Will you ask Him how to stir you affection for Him? Listen and commit to obey.
- Is God asking you to begin being obedient in the daily things of your life so that He can build a burning fire in you on a consistent basis?