

## OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

Maintaining the Fire on the Altar

SERIES

DATE

8/31/2025

KEY SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 6:13

SYNOPSIS

We need fresh fire in our hearts. What can we do to maintain the fire?

HIGHLIGHTS

Music video plays at the end





## 🔥 MAINTAINING THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR

We've been talking about the altar and how it applies to us today. Last week was about how you can have a personal meeting with God and experience the power of his presence. The altar is primarily in our hearts where we give ourselves to him; it's where we worship him, and renew our commitment to him. If you've allowed the altar of your heart to fall into disrepair, it's not too late to rebuild it. When you repent, restart, and return to your first love, the fire of the altar can be reignited in your heart.

Hopefully, your heart-altar is in decent condition with a fire there burning for God. I want us all to be on fire and stay on fire for God. Today, I want to talk about maintaining the fire on the altar of your heart. So, let's start with this...

Have you ever been camping on a cold night when the fire started to fade? Maybe you stepped away for a few minutes, or maybe you just got comfortable and stopped paying attention. Before long, that warm, roaring fire turns into a few flickering embers. And what happens? People start scooting closer, shivering, hoping the flame will somehow come back to life. But here's the thing: fires don't reignite themselves. Somebody has to put fresh wood on it; somebody has to stir it up; somebody has to tend to it.

🔥 And the same is true of our walk with God. Spiritual fires don't stay lit by accident. **Leviticus 6:13** says, **"The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out."** So today I want to talk about this simple question: how do we keep the fire alive?

### 🔥 TEND THE FIRE DAILY

Think of a woodstove in the winter. If you want the house to be warm, you can't just throw in one log and walk away. Morning and night, you've got to add more. That's what the priests did in Leviticus 6... every morning they got up, cleared the ashes, and added wood to keep the flame alive. "No fuel, no fire."

And spiritually, if we're giving God our leftovers, if we're only tossing Him a half-hearted prayer or a quick glance at His Word, how can we expect the fire to stay hot? How many of us sometimes expect God's fire to stay hot in our lives, but we don't put anything on the altar? We give Him our leftovers... a rushed prayer in the car... a half-asleep "Lord bless my day" before bed. And then we wonder, "Why do I feel so cold spiritually?"

🔥 Listen: **what you feed will grow, and what you starve will die.**

🔥 Luke 5:16 says Jesus **"often"** withdrew to lonely places and prayed." **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says that we should **"Pray without ceasing."** And, **Joshua 1:8** reminds us to **"meditate on the Word day and**



*night.*" Church, that's how you throw wood on your altar. That's how you keep the fire burning bright and hot.

If you want fresh fire, you've got to feed it... morning by morning, day by day. Prayer, scripture, and worship are the logs that keep the flame alive. So, tend to the fire daily.

### 🔥 REMOVE THE MESS

Here's something we sometimes forget: before you add wood, you've got to clear the mess. Sometimes, there's wet wood that needs to be cleared out. Or, someone might have thrown some trash in there that is not flammable. If those things remain, the flame will just smoke and sputter.

Likewise, sin and compromise suffocate spiritual fire. 1 Peter 1:16 says, "Be holy, for I am holy." And 🔥 Ephesians 4:30 says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." So, we need to **get rid of the things that stifle the fire.**

Here's another one we often forget: A fireplace full of yesterday's ashes can't draw fresh fire. The air can't quite get to it and the fire is smothered. Have you ever walked into an old restaurant that used to be packed and lively, but now it's just dusty and quiet? The pictures on the wall tell you what it *used to be*. The trophies on the shelf tell you the awards they *used to win*. But the life and the freshness are gone. That's what it's like when we live on old ashes.

Now, the ashes in our spiritual life aren't so much our sins as they are what *used* to burn: things like last year's victories, long-ago spiritual breakthroughs; old routines. But in Lamentations 3:22–23, God says His mercies are *new every morning*. You can't survive on last year's fire. So, you might need to remove the ashes... the old stuff.

D.L. Moody once said, *"A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him six months."*

🔥 In **Philippians 3:13**, Paul said, "Forgetting what is behind, I **press on toward what is ahead.**" So, don't let yesterday's fire, or even yesterday's mistakes, take up today's space. Every single day God wants to give you fresh grace, fresh mercy, fresh fire. Cooperate with God to clear out the clutter so that fresh flames can rise anew.

You can't live today on yesterday's fire. You can't keep burning bright and hot if you don't clear out the ashes. Let go of what was and make room for what is. Remove the mess. You need a fresh fire. And...

### 🔥 OFFER FRESH SACRIFICE



Imagine you bought your spouse a bouquet of roses. At first, they're beautiful. The room smells sweet. But two weeks later, those flowers are drooping, the petals are falling, the water's brown and stinky. If you hand those wilted flowers to your spouse and say, "Here honey, I got these for you," what are they going to say? "Uh, thanks?"

☞ God doesn't want wilted, **stale worship** either. He delights in fresh offerings. You can be held back by the ashes of the past, or you can start building something fresh today.

☞ God doesn't want your **half-hearted efforts**, either. What he really wants is something much more personal...

☞ Psalm 51:17 says, "**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.**" And, Romans 12:1 tells us to "present our bodies as a living sacrifice." That means every day we come to Him fresh. We come with new surrender. New obedience. Fresh sacrifice.

Look at somebody near you and tell them, "You need fresh fire for today." So, offer a fresh sacrifice. What fresh step of surrender or obedience is God asking of you today?

### ☞ PROTECT THE FLAME

Like a candle on a windy night... unless you shield it, that little flame won't last long. The same is true for us. Proverbs 4:23 says, "**Guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.**" Sin, compromise, and distraction are like gusts of wind trying to snuff out what God is doing in you.

Think about Samson. The Spirit of God was on him, the fire was burning, but little compromises... one here, one there... eventually snuffed it out. He hung out with the enemy and married into their tribe. And, he toyed around with the enemy, even when it was obvious they were out to get him. Eventually, it caught up to him and he lost his sight in addition to his great strength.

The enemy doesn't mind if you start a fire; he just doesn't want you to keep it burning. So, stay vigilant. Stay humble. Stay close to Christ. 1 Peter 5:8 reminds us to, "**Be alert and of sober mind.**" Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Protect the flame.

### ☞ CARRY THE FIRE

Here's where it gets exciting. Fire was never meant to stay in one place. It's like the Olympic torch... carried from runner to runner until it lights the great cauldron.

Israel was led by God in a pillar of fire that moved from place to place. In Isaiah 6, a coal from the altar touched the prophet's lips and sent him out with God's message. In Acts 2, tongues of fire





rested on the disciples, and they went out to turn the world upside down. Jeremiah said God's word was like a fire in his bones that he couldn't keep in (Jeremiah 20:9).

☞ Church, **you are the light of the world** (Matthew 5:14). We don't build the altar and linger there just for ourselves. We meet God there so we can carry His fire everywhere we go. Don't just be an altar-builder... **be a fire-carrier**.

Too often, we cry out for fresh fire and then keep it all to ourselves. We love the warmth and the light, but there are others out there that need fresh fire too. And, there are still more that don't even know they could have a light-giving, soul-warming fire. And, here's the deal... you can share your fire with a ton of others and never lose your own. Fire can keep on growing and growing the more we share it.

Turn to your neighbor and say, "You're a fire-carrier." Don't just build an altar... carry the fire. Take it to your home, your workplace, your school, your city.

You've got to keep the fire on the altar burning. Tend to it daily; remove the mess; offer fresh sacrifice; protect the flame; and carry it with you. So let me ask you: has your flame flickered? Has your altar grown cold?

I'll be honest with you, there have been times in my life when my fire started to flicker. I was still going through the motions... still showing up, still serving, still doing "Christian things" ...but inside, the flame wasn't burning like it used to.

I have had times where my prayers were flat and worship felt empty. Have you ever been there? Where you know you *should* feel the fire, but instead, it feels like all you've got is cold ashes?

The Lord reminds us today, "The fire doesn't stay lit by accident. You've got to keep it going." Don't keep on giving God leftovers. Can anybody testify that when you give God your first, not your leftovers, He'll rekindle your fire?

You have to make a choice. Maybe it means waking up earlier. Maybe it means carving out time just to be with Him, not to get something done, but simply to meet with Him. And slowly... surely... the flame can start to burn again. Today can be a day of rekindling... A day of fresh sacrifice, fresh surrender, fresh fire.

If you're hungry for fresh fire today, would you lift your hands and say, "Lord, rekindle me"?

☞ (music video starts) Let's **keep the fire burning**. As this song plays, make it your prayer. Get rid of the mess and give yourself again to God. Let him build a blazing fire in you!