

WHEN YOUR SPIRITUAL ENTHUSIASM IS WANING, REMEMBER PSALM 39
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"While I was musing the fire burned."

Solomon was a king to whom God gave great wisdom. He asked, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27). His question was most likely based on personal experience. When he considered the worship of God, fires of devotion burned within his soul, and his outward appearance reflected the glory of God. When he considered the carnal pleasures of self-indulgence, his ideas led to illicit associations with foreign women, and lust destroyed his soul. Modern techniques fight fire with fire. Firemen deliberately light fires ahead of the main blaze so that the dry bush will not supply fuel for the approaching inferno.

Illicit thoughts within the mind, if unchecked, lead to destruction. The only effective preventative is to kindle holy fires which remove potential hazards. David apparently knew this also for he wrote, "While I was musing the fire burned." When his mind was filled with thoughts of God, his soul was delivered from temptation. Perhaps Paul expressed the same truth when he urged the Christians in Ephesus to wear "a helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17).

David... Who Compromised

"And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed' and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and . . . saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman" (2 Sam 11:2-3). The night was still and serene, but the king's heart was pounding! The day had been hot and stifling, and vainly seeking rest, David had lain upon his bed. The afternoon seemed endless, but when the evening breezes offered respite from the oppressive conditions, the king walked on the roof of his palace.

Suddenly, he saw a very beautiful lady, and his heart seemed to miss a beat. Within the seclusion of her protected garden, Bathsheba was bathing, She also had suffered from the distressing heat of that eastern day. Believing herself safe from the attention of neighbors, the woman washed her perspiring body, completely unaware of David's watchful eyes. She could not have known at that moment the evil kindling a fire in the king's heart. Had he extinguished the initial spark, an inferno would have been prevented.

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Saul... Who Collapsed

He was mad and determined! Saul was convinced the Christians were undermining the faith of the fathers, and their irresponsibility had to be checked. While "he mused on these things, the fire burned within him."

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2). It was said of this man that "he made havock of the church" (Acts 8:3).

The word translated "havoc" is "elumaineto" which was often used to describe the work of a wild pig, whose snout literally tore up young plants in a vineyard. Saul of Tarsus, driven mercilessly by a troubled conscience, resembled an animal destroying God's garden. Relentlessly he went from house to house seeking Christians whom he threw into prison. Who would have thought that during this onslaught on the church, God was watching, waiting, and perhaps smiling? Saul was a large fish which the Spirit of God had hooked.

Knowing that something strange was happening, Saul resisted

WHEN YOUR SPIRITUAL ENTHUSIASM IS WANING, REMEMBER PSALM 39 fiercely. He would never surrender! He would fight to the end. Yet God was holding the line, and the end was never in doubt (from the author's commentary, *The Amazing Acts*, page 117. Published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan). God was lighting another fire to extinguish the first.

Stephen... Who Conquered

Stephen supplied the greatest example of this attractive truth. It has been said that prevention is better than any cure. There were numerous reasons why Stephen might have been filled with animosity, jealousy and frustration. He was one of the greatest preachers in the early church but was relegated to delivering aid to complaining widows. He might have been one of the greatest evangelists but became the first martyr.

He could have detested his persecutors but instead prayed for their forgiveness. It seems the only fire within his soul was kindled by God. While Stephen mused, the fire burned, and in its glow, he saw "the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). When your spiritual enthusiasm is waning—stop, think, and kindle a fire of spiritual passion!

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